



■ Annual report 2023-2024





**Coventry
Safeguarding
Children**
PARTNERSHIP

Board partners

 <p>National Probation Service</p>	 <p>NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board</p>
 <p>NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust</p>	 <p>NHS West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust</p>
 <p>NHS South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust</p>	 <p>Coventry City Council</p>
 <p>CITIZEN</p>	 <p>WEST MIDLANDS POLICE</p>



Contents

Introduction from the Safeguarding Partners	4
Coventry's population figures	5
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements	6
Engagement of Education	7
Multi agency priorities	7
Impact on children, young people and families	20
Training	21
Impact on professionals	23
Scrutiny	25
National reforms	44
Looking forwards	44



Introduction from the Safeguarding Partners

This report is Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership yearly report for the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and sets out the work that has been undertaken by partners and the subgroups of the CSCP during that time.

Over the past year we have gone from strength to strength as a partnership and both strategic leaders and frontline practitioners strive within their roles to collaborate, learn, resource, be inclusive and mutually challenge one another to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Coventry.

The Safeguarding Partners are now considering the revised Working Together 2023 and looking at ways to strengthen our arrangements to provide the best possible outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank practitioners across all sectors as well as communities whose efforts make Coventry a Child friendly city every day.

Coventry's population figures

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 **55.9%** of school children are from an ethnic minority group



In the 2021 census, 45% of Coventry's population identified as an ethnic minority, an increase from 33% in 2011



England 26%. West Midlands 28%

91% of primary

85.8% of secondary

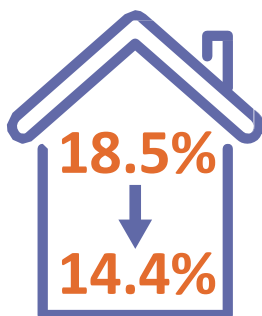


Pupils attend a good or outstanding school, below statistical neighbours at 94.5% and 88.2% and below the percentage nationally at 93.9% and 86.8%

The latest data for 2021-22 suggests that



27% Coventry children aged 0-15 live in relative low-income families compared with **20%** nationally and matching the percentage 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 measurement Coventry ranked 64th nationally in 2019 (with 1st being the most deprived), an improvement in ranking 46th in 2015

78,947
(22%) of the city's population were children and young people aged under 18

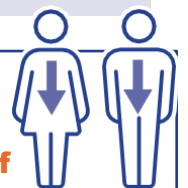
225,915
(64%) were of working age 18 - 64

50,738
(14%) were aged 65 and over

In 2022



Young city with a medium age of



34 years and is falling England average

40 years 2022 mid-year population estimate



Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements

Arrangements for Safeguarding Partners to work together and identify and respond to the needs of children and young people in Coventry.

Our values are:

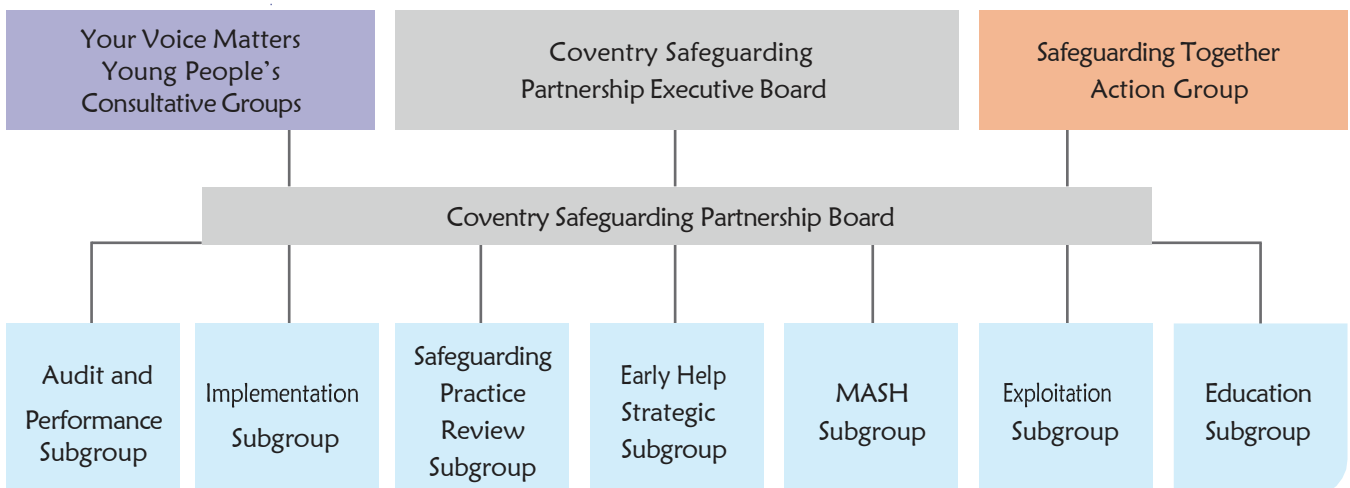
Our vision is to work in partnership to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm and neglect and that their welfare is promoted.

Our values are:

- To put children, young people and families at the heart of everything we do.
- To ensure that partners work together achieving better 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 ensure 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 benefits from strong, maturing relationships with partners which allows a greater degree of not only collaboration but challenge.

CSCP Organisational Chart



The current arrangements can be found here: [coventry_safeguarding_children_partnership_-_safeguarding_arrangements](#) The Safeguarding Partners are currently undertaking consultation as well as developmental work to look at updating the arrangements in line with Working Together 2023, Chapter 2. These will be published by 31st December 2024.

Engagement of Education

Coventry benefits from a strong and embedded education partnership approach with formalised communication channels and planned systemic engagement with Headteachers.

The Director of Children's Services and Education sits on the CSCP Board and Executive Group and a Headteacher also sits on the CSCP Board. There is also Primary and Secondary Headteacher representation on the EH Strategic Partnership.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) briefing sessions are held quarterly with meetings regularly having 150 plus attendees from across nurseries, primary, secondary education as well as colleges. The main purpose of the briefings is to deliver updated safeguarding legislation and guidance updates, whilst also raising awareness of support that is available not only in Coventry but nationally.

Multi-agency priorities

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership has three priorities Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Making the System work. The tables below some of the work that has been undertaken across the partnership to progress these priorities as well as outlining areas where there has been slower progress and what will be put in place to progress these.

For 2023-2024 the CSCP had 3 priorities

Child Sexual abuse
Exploitation
Making the system work

Progress against priorities

Priority: Child Sexual abuse

What's working well?

Coventry City Council Children's Services now has 17 Social Workers who have completed Child Sexual Abuse Leads training. Over the last year 147 Child Sexual Abuse advisory discussion notes have been recorded on LCS Children's Services database. This means that Child Sexual abuse Leads are able to work with the Social Worker who is able to identify areas of concern and safety and guide practitioners in their next steps. This means that children and their families benefit from well supported and skilled social workers.

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership held a Child Sexual Abuse Conference in Spring 2023. The recording can be found on the website here: [Child Sexual Abuse \(CSA\) – Coventry City Council](#)

The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA Centre) delivered training to RISE staff at CWPT on 22.06.23 and 29.06.23 with a report of 92 delegates who attended.

CV Partnerships run the Artemis project which is aimed at preventing violence and sexual violence against schoolgirls. The project is delivered in schools with pupils selected by the school Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Coventry City Council Child Sexual Abuse Leads meet with Anna Glinsky the Deputy Director for the Centre of Expertise on a monthly basis. The purpose of this is to support Child Sexual Abuse practice Leads but also to offer consultation on complex cases. All Practice Leads have also been invited to join the National Practice Leads network to share ideas and best practice.

Coventry College provides a swift and appropriate action when a learner discloses sexual abuse, supporting them with reporting to authorities and continuous emotional support to learner

A series of resources have been developed with the support of the CSA leads. These resources can be found here:- [Child Sexual Abuse \(CSA\) – Coventry City Council](#)

SWFT Safeguarding Team provides Level 3 Training for all clinical staff who work with children and young people. The Safeguarding Team are currently delivering a Sexual Abuse Level 3 training package, this is a Face-to-Face session and feedback has been positive. Following attending this staff will be able to recognise signs of Child Sexual Abuse understand the barriers to disclosing and what action to take to support those impacted by Sexual Abuse.

The training empowers staff to utilise "Professional Curiosity." Trauma informed practice is also discussed as well as aspects of the law designed to protect children from Sexual Abuse. Professionals are being provided with the knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to Child Sexual Abuse.

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership delivered a conference on unpicking Underage Child Sexual Activity. This can be found on the website here: [Unpicking underage sexual activity \(youtube.com\)](#)

West Midlands Police, Schools intervention and prevention officers work closely with schools and in particular Designated Safeguarding Leads to intervene when any incidents of abuse are suspected or identified.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust Safeguarding team delivers Safeguarding Supervision on a planned and AD-HOC basis. Reflective practice and professional curiosity are encouraged so Practitioners are confident in identifying and responding to child sexual abuse in supervision and during support calls.

At University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire Child Sexual Abuse is embedded into all internal level 3 safeguarding children training and features heavily in supervision sessions delivered. Numbers of referrals in relation to this have been noted to increase following the training.

The Integrated Care Board has Sexual Assault and Referral Centre information hosted on the GP Gateway/intranet.

Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust holds a Safeguarding Champions meeting every quarter and is very well attended, to date there are now 151 safeguarding champions. Guest speakers are invited at each meeting and have included representatives from Blue Sky Centre.

On 20.04.23, 08.04.23 representatives from Sexual Assault and Referral Centre attended the Champions Meetings and delivered a presentation that included an overview of Sexual Assault and Referral Centre processes and procedures for adults and children.

All Probation staff are required to complete 'Child protection and safeguarding' training every 3-years. As part of this training the four areas of abuse are discussed, including sexual abuse. Indicators and impacts of sexual abuse are covered, as well as what to do if there are concerns about sexual abuse.

West Midlands Police staff have embedded with family hubs to facilitate information sharing where concerns about families can be flagged which may include issues of suspected abuse. Referrals via Multi Agency Referral Form to go through the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub are made and actions are then set.

Individuals convicted of sexual offences and required to register have an assigned police offender manager who works closely with the assigned probation practitioner. The Probation service has a mature and developed working relationship with police sex offender managers and operate the joint supervision of this cohort through the MAPP (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements), a statutory process which mandates the oversight, monitoring and intervention with this (and other designated categories of sexual and violent offenders). Registered Sex Offenders who are on licence (released part way through the custodial element of a sentence) are subject to a suite of conditions. These include not to live with children, only to work as approved by the service, undertake Polygraph testing, prohibited activities e.g., Not to attend certain locations/premises, not to own internet enabled devices, to undertake Sex Offender Behaviour Programmes, not to travel abroad and not to associate with any other convicted sex offenders.

The Vanguard worked in partnership with Coventry Rape and Sexual Assault Centre to deliver a pre and post counselling offer for CYP ages 11-18 years that were on the waiting list for therapy, or who had received therapy. The value of this is evidence by CYP stating they feel more equipped to understand their emotions and triggers and feel ready for counselling.

The Probation Service delivers specialist accredited offending behaviour programmes for people with a sexual conviction, supporting the protection and safety of children.

The Probation Service enforces Orders and Licences and where information of increased risky behaviour, evidence of new offending or failure to meaningfully engage in rehabilitative interventions, is present then individuals are recalled to serve further time (up to the remainder of their sentence) in prison or returned to Court for breach/re-sentence.

School intervention officers will intervene in cases where inappropriate images are circulated amongst school pupils. Referrals are made and children are given an educational input in an effort to prevent further incidents occurring.

What are we worried about?

CSA Practice Leads are identifying a number of cases that are being referred in which feature harmful sexual behaviour, however since the removal of the NSPCC service there is no specialist service for this cohort of children.

There is some variable practice in identifying child sexual abuse.

There is still some evidence that the Sexual Assault Referral Centre are not being invited to attend all MASH and area team strategy meetings where sexual abuse is suspected. The participation of these SARC practitioners within these meetings allows for specialist advice and guidance to be provided, in turn responding to the needs and risks of children in a timely manner with a robust and co-ordinated approach.

The Probation Service continues to have a shortage of qualified Probation Officers. This can result in high workloads and turnover of staff managing cases.

National figures state that 1 in 20 children are likely to suffer child sexual abuse. The CSCP recognises that there are potentially still a large number of children who are affected by this type of abuse who are not identified by agencies.

The number of prosecutions in relation to Child Sexual Abuse is still low and means that many perpetrators of sexual abuse may continue to offend.

What needs to happen?

Coventry Safeguarding Partnership will consider the findings of the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panels national report into Child Sexual Abuse in the family environment and what needs to be done as a result.

Work needs to continue to raise awareness of the signs of child sexual abuse. To support this the CSCP will continue to deliver training in relation to child sexual abuse.

Awareness raising needs to continue in relation to raising awareness around the role of the SARC and the importance of inviting them to strategy meetings.

Priority: Exploitation

What's working well?

Risk is managed effectively within Horizon due to the strong multi-agency working relationships with a focus on parents being partners in the safeguarding plan. The impact of this approach has reduced families needing to move out of City, children becoming looked after and support being offered in the community.

Integrated Care Board Professional Learning Time (PLT) held an event 'All age exploitation' in March 2024 which included presentations from the Violence Reduction Partnership, Horizon Team and Modern Slavery Lead. Over 400 General Practice staff attended. Evaluation following the event indicates that nearly all found the training to be highly relevant and most would change their practice in light of information shared.

Quarterly Schools Panels for both Primary and Secondary Schools are used to share intelligence and to discuss and prioritise a response to current trends. These panels have led to improved and more relationships with Head Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads. This in turn improves the flow of information and intelligence.

Daily SOCEX (Serious Organised Child Exploitation) is now well established. Daily SOCEX briefings consisting of West Midlands Police, Horizon, Health, Education and Youth Justice representatives are held to review information linked to children. There is evidence of strong information sharing and early intervention offers to children and young people.

CEMOG – Governance (Child Exploitation and Missing Group) – this focuses on locations and offenders, identified through intelligence, crimes, missing debriefs etc and from partners including the Horizon team. Monthly meeting held by WMP PPU.

The multi-agency Daily Missing Triage meeting is well embedded across Coventry Children's Services, West Midlands Police LOCATE (missing persons team), Education and Health Partners. This forum discusses missing and found children that creates opportunities for prevention, intervention and disruption. The Daily Missing Triage meeting will also consider and discuss approaches for children missing from Education, ensuring timely responses to the identified needs or risks. All missing children from home, care or education are tracked robustly via the Daily Missing Triage meetings.

Horizon has skilled Team Managers and Practitioners who provide case consultations for all new referrals and children open to social workers within the Area Teams and Through Care when Child Exploitation or Serious Youth Violence has been identified.

An All-Age Exploitation level 3 training package is to be currently being offered to all CWPT-eligible staff. This package includes the process of children and young people transitioning to adult services and what support is available for them when they are survivors of sexual abuse.

Horizon continues to deliver multi agency training and awareness raising of Child Exploitation via Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Dedicated Intelligence Officers sit within the Exploitation Hub. They scan 24hr crime, intelligence, custody records and create a SOCEX document which is used to inform the weekday SOCEX Triage meeting as well as the wider Dept. This process ensures a force overview and a view of the bigger picture. It helps to drive/impact local decision making and ensures staff are aware of emerging trends/issues elsewhere that may inform our thinking and approach. These officers also provide intelligence products for the exploitation hub supporting and informing operational activity.

An E-learning package has been developed for businesses and communities across the City to log onto to learn more about exploitation and how to identify and respond to exploited children.

The Integrated Care Board took part in exploitation week. Resources were shared and electronic messaging was displayed in GP surgeries on screens. The Protected Learning Time event took place during Exploitation week.

The Integrated Care Board has worked with Partners to develop the Integrated Health and Care Delivery Plan which is the response to the implementation of the Integrated Care Strategy. There are 3 priorities underpinned by 9 key areas of focus and enablers. Through this work a population level safeguarding impact will be achieved by reducing inequalities, prioritising prevention and focussing on the wider determinants of health. There is also a workstream focussing on enabling the best start in life for children and young people. This will reduce the pull/pull factors of exploitation.

A strong joined up offer between statutory and voluntary sector services reduces risk in places and spaces.

LPA Firearms Portal- This is managed and investigated by dedicated officers assigned to this task: managing all firearms intelligence from inception to finalisation. The portal is also reviewed daily by the gangs Sergeant. This ensures consistency, correct prioritisation and managerial oversight.

The Vanguard project has piloted a Speech and Language therapist in Coventry Youth Justice Team to assist in providing training and expert advice to staff, as well as assessing and working directly with young people open to the service. In July 2023, the Speech and Language Practitioner received a prestigious national award at the Skills for Health Our Health Heroes Awards. The service was named 'Best Healthcare Initiative in a Community or Criminal Justice Setting' by an expert panel of judges. Working in close collaboration with the Youth Justice Team in Coventry. Evaluation of this post has had a direct effect on Children and Young People with a reduction in re-offending and breaching their court orders, and an increase in those accessing education, training and employment.

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.

The Named Nurse provides Safeguarding Level Three Exploitation Training, which is available to all staff who work with children and young people. They are also involved in creating resources, disseminating information, and working closely with all partner agencies. The training aims to ensure practitioners are able to recognise and act upon exploitation concerns in a timely fashion.

St Giles Trust continue to operate within UHCW across all clinical areas. They liaise with the Safeguarding Team and jointly young people up to the age of 25 are identified where they may be a victim of exploitation so that support can be offered. Often the episode of care in an acute trust can be those teachable and reachable moments and the support of St Giles at this time can be very positive.

At University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire Exploitation is on the Level 3 training for both Adults and Children and will remain.

A series of lunch and learns have been delivered in Coventry to probation practitioners. Two topics delivered was serious organised crime, in which exploitation is one of the strands.

The Coventry 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.

What are we worried about?

Recruitment to the Horizon team has been slow, which has impacted on the number of children able to be directly supported by the team. For these children, the Horizon Managers increased joint supervision and case consultation offers.

At times children wait too long for Mental Health Assessments, and children who become looked after wait too long for their initial health assessment.

University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire report that there have been occasions when a child or young person has presented with significant injuries such as those from shooting and there has been a lack of professional curiosity. This can lead to a delay in sharing information with Children's Social Care or the police about these presentations.

At times some professionals can accept children's explanations at face value and are not professionally curious.

Children who have been issued with a threat to life warning continue to be a concern for Children's Services. There needs to be greater sharing of information between agencies.

Transition for children as they approach 18 is not always sufficiently considered.

What needs to happen?

Work needs to be undertaken in relation to transition including the development of a transitions panel.

The CSCP needs to maintain an oversight of Mental Health Assessment waiting times and promote any mitigating community measures.

Work with parents is needed to help parents to spot the signs of exploitation and enable the family to support the protection of the young person. A community e-learning package has been developed and this needs to be promoted.

The CSCP needs to undertake work to promote professional curiosity.

The CSCP needs to continue its work to understand any issues of disproportionality in relation to exploitation.

Priority: Making the system work

What's working well?

The CSCP is responsive to emerging issues and has in line with this has completed work in relation the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panels reports on Children with complex disabilities in residential settings and Domestic Abuse.

The CSCP was subject to a Joint Targeted Area Inspection in relation to Serious Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation in March 2023 and inspectors reported mature partnership arrangements in place.

On 3rd April 2023 West Midlands Police (WMP) moved to a new operating model with the creation of 7 Local Policing Areas (LPAs) to deliver an effective and efficient service to the public which enshrines the principle of local neighbourhood policing. The Coventry LPA is led by a Chief Superintendent with authority and control of resources to meet local needs more effectively. This means that investigations, response, offender management and neighbourhood policing come together under one local command enabling WMP to meet the needs of the public better through improved engagement, enhanced understanding of local priorities and flexing our resources accordingly.

Most agencies maintained their compliance with child safeguarding awareness training and were at 90% or above.

The STAG frontline practitioner group is well attended and allows information to be disseminated across the partnership.

IRIS is commissioned throughout General Practice to aid recognition and support of families where domestic abuse is present.

The Trust is committed to supporting Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) to make the system work. The Family Health & Lifestyle Service (FH&LS) attends and supports the Early Help Advisory Group and the Early Help Strategic Group.

SWFT, FH&LS (0-19) frontline practitioners attend all appropriate meetings including Strategy Meetings, Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups etc. to improve outcomes for children and young people and support partners.

Right help, right time training continues to be delivered across the partnership. This is promoted by all agencies. Audits routinely show good application of RHRT thresholds.

Voice of the child practice standards have been developed and are being socialised across the partnership.

ICON has been commissioned by the Integrated Care Board with the Integrated Care Board steering roll out at system level. This is a licenced program that helps people who care for babies cope with crying and has been evidenced to prevent abusive head trauma.

The Integrated Care Board commissions a Named Nurse to work within MASH to provide the health oversight and contribute to multi- agency analysis and decision making.

Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust is committed to the Early Help Strategy. All training packages have been updated with Early Help processes and signposting and promoted at the Safeguarding Champions group and throughout all Trust bulletins and Intranet sites.

The University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire Safeguarding Team remain fully staffed and accessible to all staff, offering guidance in relation to all aspects of safeguarding, in addition to supervision and visibility within clinical areas.

South Warwickshire Foundation Trust has two Nurses currently working within the Coventry Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This facilitates the safeguarding of our young people due to Partnership working and the sharing of relevant information. 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.

While Registered Providers of Housing do not have primary responsibility for safeguarding subject to the Childrens Act 2004, they are expected to mirror organisations. Citizen does this by:

- Having a designated safeguarding lead
- Sharing information with professionals
- Having safe recruitment practices and whistleblowing procedures
- Training their staff in safeguarding
- Having a clear safeguarding policy; and
- Having a procedure on how to respond - We call these Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

West Midlands Police is supported by a Force Public Protection Unit (PPU) which strives for investigative excellence, ensuring justice for our vulnerable community members. The PPU consists of local Adult Investigation Teams, Rape & Serious Sexual Offences Investigation Teams, Child Abuse Investigation Teams, Safeguarding Teams and Sex Offender Managers.

Coventry and Warwickshire Foundation Trust is implementing the trial of the early help module targeting RISE teams as early adopters.

At Citizens customers can report safeguarding concerns in confidence either through our dedicated safeguarding phone line or email address.

The implementation of a standard proforma for probation requests for information from MASH has been jointly developed and implemented, resulting in timely responses of quality.

The Early Help strategy has been developed and is starting to embed.

Citizen has partnered with Coventry City Council to deliver 'The House Project'. The project supports young care leavers in to permanent accommodation from the age of 16 plus. Citizen's role in the partnership is to offer 1 bed flats which are directly matched to the cohort of care leavers when they are ready to move into their own home. The Council provide the support, which includes several months of pre-tenancy support and training.

The Probation Service implemented a national mandate for Child Safeguarding Checks to be completed at Court at the point of sentence or within 48 hours of sentence. In Coventry the Probation Service has worked closely with Coventry Childrens Services to implement these new procedures. The intention is to expedite the risk assessment so that risks to children can be understood and mitigated quickly and to manage the impact of a parent going to custody on a child. Court Case Administrators (CAs) now have read only access to MASH systems to support with swift returns into Court when people are now known. A MASH Probation Service Officer now sits and works within the Coventry MASH.

Probation managers have monthly meetings with MASH managers to discuss the processes and any improvements that are required, this is effective and ensures that any barriers to sharing information is addressed and resolved.

Making the system work, Vanguard Youth Worker Pilot in Children's Services in Coventry and Warwickshire Local Authorities and St Giles (Coventry) with 7 new posts called Positive Directions workers who are Trauma Informed Youth Worker Practitioners that work directly with young people that have experienced trauma and adversity, using relationship based approach using a Social Prescribing model to engage and empower young people and re-connect them to their community. The services mobilised in January 2023 working with over 150 young people and their families across Coventry and Warwickshire.

There is clear evidence of the impact of the pilot service that includes:

- Building trusting relationships with Practitioners
- More positive relationships with parents/carers
- More positive relationships with siblings
- More positive relationship with school/college
- Returning to education (school/college)
- Accessing apprenticeships
- Decrease offending
- Decrease of going missing episodes
- Decrease in young people presenting in crisis
- CYP developing business and social enterprises (3 nail art businesses and 1 investment business) to find alternatives to criminality to make money.

University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) have use of the internal intranet which can be updated by the Team with any current changes / updates. At UHCW the number of Safeguarding referrals and enquiries are maintained, demonstrating consistent awareness amongst staff. There is daily liaison with the MASH and information sharing is felt to be good between the two teams.

South Warwickshire Foundation Trust appropriately disseminates information from the Partnership and Partner Agencies via their Safeguarding Board, Safeguarding Operational Group and Link Group. This includes lessons learned from Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Review's. There is an emphasis on supporting staff to embed the learning through feedback and monitoring actions taken.

The South Warwickshire Foundation Trust Safeguarding Link Group Meetings are held monthly both face to face and 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.

To ensure that staff working with young people are Trauma Informed to identify and respond to the needs of young people, a suite of 8 Trauma Informed Bitesize training modules have been developed by the Vanguard Practice Educators and endorsed by both Coventry and Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnerships.

The Vanguard project has developed an open access repository of the Universal Social Prescribing offers already in place across Coventry and Warwickshire. The Young People have named the platform Positive Pathways, they have designed the logo and the website. It will continue to be curated and added to and was launched in February 2024. The Vanguard has worked with Positive Impact Foundation to develop and curate a Warwickshire look up tool to assist young people navigate the opportunities and activities in their area, to compliment the look up tool already in place in Coventry.

Please find the link to the platform:

www.happyhealthylives.uk/positivepathways

In addition, we have worked with a young person to assist us in providing a voice over for a demystifying social prescribing info hosted on the platform.

What are we worried about?

The complexity of cases that require a multi-agency response have continued to increase. This is reflected in the number of rising cases being referred into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The number of cases that are referred to MASH that result in no further action continue to be significant. The result of this is that workloads in the MASH are extremely high.

Recruitment and retention are concerns for a number of partner agencies.

The lack of suitable placements at times continues to be a challenge. Placements that are available are at a premium cost which puts a significant financial burden on the local authority.

The waiting list for CAMHS assessments is a concern as children can wait a significant period of time for an assessment and during this time their needs can escalate significantly.

At times there is variable practice in capturing the Voice of the Child and using this to establish the daily lived experience of the child.

What needs to happen?

The CSCP threshold document Right help, right time needs to be reviewed and promoted across the partnership.

The CSCP needs to maintain an active overview of waiting times for CAMHS assessments.

There needs to be national consideration in relation to the lack of suitable placements.

The newly developed Voice of the Child Practice Standards need to be promoted across the partnership.



Impact on children, young people and their families

Your Voice Matters

Over the last five months, the Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership have been out to three schools in order to run a Your Voice Matters session with the children of Coventry. These sessions have been done within both primary and secondary schools in order to get a range of age perspectives. The true aim of these sessions is to understand where the children feel both safe and unsafe, and what can be done about this: what they would like to see change in Coventry. The sessions also are used to gauge the children's understanding of safeguarding and tests if they are able to identify abuse/neglect and challenges them on who they would feel comfortable speaking to, should they encounter it. All of the children within each school had an understanding of what safeguarding was, with the older students able to give a very detailed description and example. When identifying neglect or abuse within scenarios all of the children were generally able to depict what is abuse and situations of neglect. This has demonstrated that the children do have a good awareness of abuse and neglect. All children were able to identify several groups of people that they would be able to talk to if they were experiencing or believed someone else, they knew to be experiencing abuse/neglect. The identified safe people to talk to were:

- Parents
- Family members
- Teachers
- Afterschool club leaders
- A friend's parents

The sessions also questioned the use of social media platforms, in which all three of the schools' results showed a wide usage of multiple platforms. The platforms included (but were not limited to) YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok and Snapchat. Despite the age restrictions associated with the platforms, the vast majority of children either used, accessed, or had their own accounts. When asked what they would do if they were to receive negative messages or bullying on social media platforms, children from all three of the schools answered that they knew how to use the blocking system, report the comments, as well as provide a list of the people they would feel confident talking to if they were to feel bullied or uncomfortable with what they had seen online.

The results from the questions on safety within both the primary and secondary schools ranged from feeling safest at home, at school, with family/friends or in their room. The areas in which they felt least safe were more diverse, but a common theme were alleyways and dark places, buses, and the town centre. When asked what these groups of children would like to see added/changed within Coventry the answers varied from:

- Adding lights to alleyways
- Adding security on buses
- More parks/public spaces
- Young girls swimming sessions/leisure sessions
- More cameras (including hidden cameras) within the town

A copy of the report is provided to each school to summarise the findings from each session and a You Said, We Did will be completed once the findings have been taken to the board's subgroups.

You Said, We Did...

Young people said that they would feel safer if there were more patrols in the community, this was fed back to Board members and Safer Spaces is under development.

Young people said they felt unsafe walking in the dark and in alleyways, we have spoken with local partnerships to investigate further, as a result of this, lighting has been improved in certain areas.

Young people said they would like there to be more CCTV in the town centre, we have contacted the CCTV team and Community Spaces, and a grant has been applied for.

Young people said that they felt unsafe and uncomfortable on buses, we have fed this through to bus companies and are assured that CCTV on buses is monitored

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership is currently identifying parents' groups across the city to ensure that as part of the new arrangements parents views are also sought. Parents are currently involved in Safeguarding Practice Reviews so their views feed into the framing of recommendations as seen on page 25.

Training

The CSCP deliver a programme of specialist multi-agency training and development opportunities. This has been developed utilising support and co-facilitation from partner agencies and specialist organisations. The CSCP regularly assess where there are training gaps and implement methods to ensure key messages are shared, for example: the CSCP have recently launched a level 1 safeguarding e-learning module which is available to all professionals, community members and small businesses in Coventry.

Right Help, Right Time Workshop	204
Level 1 Safeguarding E-Learning	130
Level 2 Working Together to Safeguard Children	112
Child Sexual Abuse Awareness	61
Understanding Sexual Abusers	16
Technology Assisted Sexually Harmful Behaviours	46

Non-Accidental Injuries	60
Cultural Harms & Spiritual Abuse	23
Having Difficult Conversations	39
Effective Supervision	24
Female Genital Mutilation Awareness	15
Fabricated Illness	28
Emotional Abuse & Neglect	50
Domestic Abuse, Violence & Safeguarding	70
Financial & Economic Abuse from a BME Perspective	14
Contextual Safeguarding	24
SoS 1 Day	121
SoS 2 Day	201
SoS ½ Day	14
SoS Safety Planning	16
LADO	115
Reducing Parental Conflict	165
Reducing Parental Conflict Toolkit	48
Reducing Parental Conflict Managers & Leaders Training	24
Lunch & Learn Trauma Informed Practice Sessions	214
Father Inclusive Approach	64
Relationship Leader Train the Trainer	8
Learning Events	208

The Partnership are proud to say that we have had over 2000 practitioners attend our training, webinars and learning events!



Impact on professionals

One of this year’s priorities within the CSCP is Child Sexual Abuse, the CSCP developed a new multi-agency CSA awareness session and have evaluated the overall impact of this training. Our multiagency training programme is regularly evaluated to ensure that the impact on practice is understood. The evaluation includes an analysis of three-month post course feedback, specifically linked to impact on practice and evidence of how training has resulted in better outcomes for children. Three courses in total were evaluated to review impact.

Course	Child Sexual Abuse Awareness	Level 2 Working Together to Safeguard Children	Level 3 Non-Accidental Injuries in Children
General Comments	<p>“The training was fantastic and very engaging”</p> <p>“This gave you a great insight to the subject, made you more aware, supported you in what to do as a professional”</p> <p>“It was very engaging and thought provoking!”</p>	<p>“Lots of new and useful information around MASH”</p> <p>“I enjoyed the wide breadth of knowledge from all the leaders of the course. Also the Accessibility means I only needed the morning off and not the entire school day”</p>	<p>“Very clear explanations and good key messages”</p> <p>“As I do daily assessments of the under-fives, I will utilise this information, as needed”</p> <p>“The scenarios I felt were an eye opener, bruising coming out 2-3 days later when doing a medical and being mindful of this... as things can be missed”</p>
Evidence of Impact	<p>“My confidence is extremely high since completing the course”</p> <p>“I always consider CSA and ask the questions”</p> <p>“It’s been helpful having knowledge of the SARC and what services they offer”</p> <p>“This has helped me identify behaviours that could indicate sexual abuse in young and teenage children”</p>	<p>“I now have a more in-depth knowledge of how to action any safeguarding concerns I might have through the correct channels”</p> <p>“I am now confident in approaching a crisis needing safeguarding with confidence and much more knowledge”</p> <p>“I am better able to support staff in reporting safeguarding concerns and how to support when they report concerns to me”</p>	<p>“When thinking about a situation – I ensure that I focus on the effect on the child not the intended motive by the perpetrator”</p> <p>“I have been more direct about asking about any marks I have seen on children on my caseload and made sure the story matches the mark”</p> <p>“The course has increased my confidence in recognising and identifying concerns”</p>

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 181 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: the Mental Health Directory, Domestic abuse, the Sexual Assault and Referral Centre and Coventry family valued.

The forum has adapted in innovative ways to maintain communication and discussions with partners, utilising chat functions and virtual polling software to obtain feedback on the forum, current safeguarding concerns and what members would like to see in future meetings. 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 breath 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 3,439 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.

As part of the update to Working Together 2023 the partnership will be looking at ways of evaluating this impact with practitioners.

Scrutiny

Coventry Safeguarding Partnership currently has five levels of scrutiny:

- Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Rapid Reviews
- Multi agency audits
- Multi agency dataset
- Quality assurance visits
- External scrutiny

Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership published two Safeguarding Practice Reviews in 2023-2024.

Stephen

Stephen was admitted to hospital when he was 15 years of age from an inpatient adolescent mental health unit. On admission to hospital staff expressed concerns about his physical and emotional health. Stephen appeared emaciated and dehydrated, his clothes were dirty and was distressed and afraid. There were significant concerns Stephen had suffered neglect and emotional harm whilst at the inpatient unit. A Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and criminal investigation commenced. The conclusion of these investigations was that Stephen's welfare had been put at risk of significant harm due to institutional processes.

The full report can be found here:- [sw-child-safeguarding-practice-review \(coventry.gov.uk\)](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/sw-child-safeguarding-practice-review)

Recommendation	Implementation
<p>The CSCP to seek assurances that primary schools in the local area are routinely identifying children who may struggle with transition and that these children are supported/prepared for transition at an early point. A particular focus should be on children with symptoms of/diagnosis of an ASC.</p>	<p>The Safeguarding Reference Group has agreed a process and this has now been shared with Designated Safeguarding Leads.</p> <p>The Section 175 audit has also been amended to include a question in relation to transition.</p>
<p>The CSCP to determine what may need to be done to strengthen multi-agency working with children who have mental ill health which should include addressing the need for services to regard mental ill health as a safeguarding matter and establishing how informed consent for referral to CS will be achieved.</p>	<p>Coventry Local Authority has created an online mental health directory. https://www.coventry.gov.uk/mental-health/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support/2</p> <p>This directory was promoted at the STAG in January.</p> <p>Having difficult conversations training has been updated to include a section on gaining consent.</p>
<p>The CSCP to maintain an active overview of the waiting times for ASD assessment in the local area and provide support and challenge to the CCG in the reduction of waiting times. CSCP to share the learning in this report with the Learning Disability and Autism Executive Board (LDAEB) and provide support and challenge to this board in the implementation of the relevant CIC recommendation. This should include a requirement to strengthen an understanding by multi-agency services, parents/carers and children about the services available and any gaps. Outcomes to be measured by LDAEB and reviewed by CSCP.</p>	<p>The CSCP Board is now receiving regular updates in ASD waiting times. This has included information on sources of support that have been put in place in the community to support children, young people and their families whilst they are waiting for an assessment.</p>

Recommendation	Implementation
<p>Coventry local education services to review the current EHCP strategy to ensure that the importance of EHCPs for children with ASD and/or mental health needs is adequately set out, and that an assessment is commenced at the earliest possible point. This strategy should reflect the urgent need for an EHCPA to be expedited for children at the point of admission to an inpatient unit. Awareness raising about the importance of EHCPs to be completed with schools and multi-agency partners. CSCP to oversee implementation and provide support and challenge.</p>	<p>An online portal has been created which makes it more straightforward to apply for a EHCP Statutory assessment. Ongoing awareness raising is undertaken with SENCo's 3 times a year and in the Autumn a workshop is held with Early years. SENDEAS advises parents on how to apply for EHCP. The number of referrals has increased significantly from 400 to 800 and 25% of these are in relation to Mental health needs.</p>
<p>The CSCP to request that partner agencies review their approach to children with severe complex needs arising from ASD and/or mental health needs in the community and demonstrate how relevant disability guidance and legislation is effectively used to meet a child's needs, including how relevant specialisms are engaged where needed.</p>	<p>Rise Children and Young People's Mental Health has completed a Skills audit for clinical staff to understand the level of training, skills and confidence Children and Young People Mental Health clinicians have when working with Children and Young People with co morbidity needs of Neuro diverse and mental health. This has lead to an action plan of relevant training to achieve the aim of ensuring there is an appropriate and accessible offer within Emotional Wellbeing and Specialist Mental Health provision for autistic children, young people through a combination of staff training, and increased joint working between emotional wellbeing, specialist mental health and autism services.</p>

Recommendation	Implementation
<p>National Health Service England (NHSE) regional managers to provide regular updates to CSCP about service developments in the relevant areas set out in the Mental Health Implementation Plan, the Rapid Review and this CSCR and determine how NHSE is tackling the lack of availability and suitability of inpatient treatment for children with ASD & severe complex needs.</p>	<p>The starting position and vision is admission avoidance for young people with ASD and complex needs and work with a range of stakeholders in order to achieve this.</p> <p>NHSE have in post a senior Clinical Pathways specialist who works with the young people with particularly complex needs and who are hard to place.</p> <p>West Midlands CAMHS Provider Collaborative have in post coproduction and Family Ambassador staff.</p> <p>Quality Assurance teams and case managers review care plans and records whilst undertaking their various functions – these record reviews include risk management/care plans/Behaviour support plans. A review of the environment is also undertaken.</p> <p>Any concerns are managed through the quality assurance framework.</p>
<p>The CSCP make representation to the National Panel about the need to conduct a National Review on relevant matters highlighted in this CSCR about the lack of availability and suitability of mental health inpatient units for children.</p>	<p>This was highlighted as part of the report submission as a National issue. The National panel have responded to say that they will not be picking this up as a national issue at the moment but they may do in the future.</p>
<p>The CSCP to seek assurances that the support provided to staff on general paediatric wards enables the best possible care to be provided to children suffering from a mental health crisis. This support should include support to meet a child's needs, support in meeting the needs of other children on the ward and in contending with the impact on their own wellbeing.</p>	<p>Work is currently being undertaken in relation to this specifically in the form of risk assessing the needs of young people prior to their admission to the Paediatric Unit.</p> <p>There is now mandatory updates for Paediatric nurses for Children in crisis across the unit and W14 are all undertaking on-line learning for Neuro-diversity training.</p> <p>Safeguarding supervision is also delivered to all W14 nurses on a 1:1 basis and there is also peer review once a month for Doctors.</p> <p>The risk assessments are all being re-aligned to identify need at the earliest point.</p>

Recommendation	Implementation
<p>The CSCP to review whether the role of the LADO, in leading investigations into concerns about harm to children as a result of the care provided in an institutional setting, is clearly defined and seek assurances that this crucial role is sufficiently understood and prompted across multi agency partners. LADO escalation processes, to seek rapid resolution to protect a child from significant harm, to be reviewed to ensure they are robust.</p>	<p>The role of the LADO is a statutory role set out in legislation and local policy. There are however Practice Standards currently drafted, to which Coventry's LADO has contributed, as part of the National LADO Network. The aim of these is to support there being clear parameters around the role, well define responsibilities, and consistency and robustness in practice.</p> <p>The LADO has increased its training/ briefing offer and this is available to all who have a role with children and young people in Coventry. There is also work underway to further improve the LADO Service's webpages, to ensure that members of the public and professionals can easily access guidance. In addition, the LADO operates a daily duty system to ensure availability to provide individualised advice and support via telephone and email during office hours.</p>
<p>NHSE, and relevant providers of NHSE commissioned care, to review the practice and processes of responding to concerns about a child in real time and to demonstrate to CSCP their compliance with their relevant safeguarding duties under the Children Act 1989. Commissioning practices should adequately reflect this requirement.</p>	<p>The existing national mental health model contract has in place processes for monitoring service compliance and all Providers are required to comply with safeguarding legislation and guidance for both vulnerable children and adults.</p>
<p>NHSE to provide assurances to CSCP that all providers of treatment and care to children within mental health inpatient units are contractually obliged to submit an SI notification and SIR that meets expected NHSE standard and set out what action will be taken if these standards are not met.</p>	<p>NHSE CAMHS Tier 4 services are commissioned under the National Mental Health model contract. This contract includes the requirement for all providers to comply with the Serious Incident Framework https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-safety/serious-incident-framework/</p>

Recommendation	Implementation
The CSCP to review referral pathways for notifying CSCP of serious incidents, including incidents involving children placed out of area, and raise awareness of the requirement to make timely referrals.	A guide has been created outlining the process for Serious incident notifications and this has been socialised across the partnership.
The CSCP to issue a framework of expected multi -agency working based on the recommendations from the recent JTAI and the good practice currently in place in the care and treatment of Stephen - this framework should include how joint working will be achieved at the front line and across the organisational hierarchies.	Coventry Early help strategy has been launched and socialised across the partnership.
Mental Health Surge Group to extend current work related to trusted adults to include all agencies. CSCP to include the importance of trusted adults in the multi-agency framework for children with mental ill health/complex needs.	This has been shared with the Mental Health Surge Group. The importance of relationships is also highlighted in the Right help, right time threshold guidance.
Children in inpatient mental health units to be offered an independent advocate to support the child and the multi-agency system in hearing a child's voice and advocating for them.	All providers report through contracts their advocacy activity and confirmation that they have services in place. West Midlands CAMHS Provider Collaborative are reviewing their Key Performance Indicators to more specific and molecular scrutiny of advocacy activity and contacts.

Anya

Anya, aged two years and two months, was found at home alone after her mother had sadly died in the family home. At the time of the incident, Anya was the subject of a child protection plan. Over two days, various unsuccessful attempts had been made to gain access to the home by Children's Services - the local police force were requested to complete an urgent visit. Twenty-four hours later, Anya was found by police. She was physically unharmed although cold, wet and hungry. Family members have said that she continues to suffer with fears and nightmares associated with the trauma of this event.

The full report can be found here: [anya-safeguarding-practice-review \(coventry.gov.uk\)](https://coventry.gov.uk/anyasafeguardingpractice-review)

Recommendation	Implementation
<p>When considering the learning from this case, Children's Social Care to determine whether further development work is needed to consider the implications of using the emotional harm category in child protection planning, as opposed to the neglect category.</p>	<p>Dip sampling is taking place to understand if this is a more systems wide issue to inform future work</p>
<p>Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to consider what further service development work may be needed to promote the importance of multi-agency professional ownership and challenge in safeguarding children.</p>	<p>Level 2 and Right help, right time training has been strengthened to incorporate this.</p> <p>The Escalation procedure has been promoted through the CSCP newsletter and via a webinar. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kfy4-6PqJXk&feature=youtu.be</p>
<p>West Midlands Police to report findings of the Internal office of Police Conduct and local investigation to Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership, relevant multi-agency learning and action to be progressed with oversight from Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership.</p>	<p>The IOPC have advised that this investigation is still ongoing.</p>
<p>CSCP to seek assurances, including evidence of outcomes, from Coventry Children's Services that practitioners and managers are fully aware of private fostering regulations, the limitations of written agreements and the legal steps required to secure a child with connected carers where there are concerns about a child's safety.</p>	<p>The CSCP has created a One Minute Board on Private Fostering and this has been socialised across the partnership.</p> <p>Board members have received a presentation in relation to private fostering.</p>

Recommendation	Implementation
<p>Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to consider what further service development work may be needed to promote the importance of multi- agency professional ownership and challenge in safeguarding children.</p>	<p>Level 2 and Right help, right time training has been strengthened to incorporate this.</p> <p>The Escalation procedure has been promoted through the CSCP newsletter and via a webinar. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kfy4-6PqJXk&feature=youtu.be</p>

Recommendation	Implementation
<p>Contingency planning that includes legal action to safeguard a child should form part of child protection chairs in legal consultations and planning meetings should be reviewed.</p>	<p>Child Protection chairs have access to Local authority legal representatives for provision of advice.</p>
<p>Learning from this CSPR, about the need to promote an equal partnership of father's and extended families in safeguarding children, should inform future service design/ developments to achieve the new government strategy. CSCP to maintain oversight.</p>	<p>The Family Group Conferencing Service routinely explores family network and identifies sources of support within the family.</p> <p>Agencies are now routinely capturing fathers' details within the records and also seeking out opportunities to improve engagement with fathers.</p> <p>A webinar in relation to the Myth of Invisible Men has now been delivered across the partnership.</p>
<p>When safeguarding children from domestic abuse or substance misuse, the information held in relevant services, including GP's, must be routinely available to Children's Services. A lack of consistent proactive engagement in safety planning by relevant services, including providing information to triangulate the evidence used to inform child protection plans, must be routinely escalated.</p>	<p>The importance of triangulating information is included in both Right help, right time and level 2 training. Agencies are also encouraged to escalate where there are concerns about the level of risk that is agreed.</p> <p>Understanding parental substances misuse and hidden harms training is now delivered across the partnership as well as lunch and learns on opiates, non-opiates and alcohol dependency.</p>
<p>Domestic abuse services in Coventry and West Midlands Police to demonstrate how voice of the child, in cases of domestic abuse, is understood and reflected in service provision and clarify the services available to perpetrators of domestic abuse. CSCP to provide support and challenge based on the four core principles set out by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel</p>	<p>West Midlands Police have now developed an app which demonstrates how children's voices are sought and captured in a meaningful way.</p> <p>Victims Voices, including children's, are consulted with in respect of the Domestic Abuse Strategy in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p>

Recommendation	Implementation
<p>CSCP to review how cultural competency/ Social graces are promoted as a practice model in relevant CSCP policies, training and supervision with particular reference to how engagement with families is understood and achieved. Single and multi-agency audits to routinely include this as an audit variable and report to CSCP on outcomes to inform any future developments.</p>	<p>CSCP are scoping out cultural competency training with a view to incorporating it into the training brochure.</p>

Multi agency audits

Multi-agency audits provide a valuable means of identifying strengths and areas of good practice alongside key lessons for improvement and the CSCP has a systematic auditing process in place that allows them to monitor the quality of practice and target areas that require further development. This year there was a planned programme of audit activity which focused on statutory and thematic audits chosen by the Partnership: linked to priorities, in response to identified areas of concern or emerging themes, or as a result of inspections or learning from local and national reviews.

Early Help

In response to the findings from the joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk, the CSCP decided to carry out quality assurance activity to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of practice in supporting families early, whether through statutory services or early help, and the impact this had on children, young people and their families. This involved two elements: a Quality Assurance (QA) visit by the CSCP Executive Group to the Woodside Family Hub in Coventry, followed by a multi-agency case file audit.

During the QA Visit, the CSCP Executive Group were able to liaise with frontline practitioners from across the partnership via a range of bespoke activity including structured interviews and informal discussions, observations of practice and dip sampling. The visit afforded the Executives with an interesting and positive insight into the work carried out within the Woodside Family Hub. They found the Hub to be a warm, welcoming, family-friendly environment for children and young people. Hub workers were passionate and displayed a positive approach to the work they carry out with a strong sense of trying to make a difference. Multi-agency, partnership working between agencies was identified as an area of strength, and all staff said they enjoyed working there and felt it was well-led and well-managed. It was evident that the Hub operates an ethos of ‘never turning people away’ – they strive to build trusting relationships and provide a service tailored to the individual needs of the whole family.

The multi-agency Early Help audit also highlighted some positive, effective work

being carried out with families in need of early help and support in Coventry. It was evident that practitioners were trained and well-equipped to identify risks and vulnerabilities for children and families; any risks or unmet needs were identified quickly, thresholds applied, and appropriate referrals made followed by quality assessments that were detailed, comprehensive and informed by family history. Information gathering and sharing amongst the wider partnership was found to be timely and appropriate. The voice of the child and an understanding of their lived experience was evident in the case files audited.

However, both the QA Visit and Early Help Audit identified some areas that would benefit from further development to help support practitioners working with children and families in need of help and support and ensure agencies are working together to provide early intervention and the right support to children and families in Coventry at the right time.

How have we responded?

Area for development	What we did?
Voice of the child	The CSCP Implementation Subgroup and Children's Services Participation Team worked collaboratively to produce a practice standards guide on the importance of capturing and acting on the voice of the child. This practice guide was launched formally in 2024 followed by promotion across the partnership via the CSCP website, briefing papers, webinars, STAG and newsletter. Partner agencies were also be tasked with cascading the guidance within their organisations.
Immigration and NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds)	Early Help practitioners received training in relation to immigration and NRPF delivered by Central England Law Centre and the Coventry City Council Migration Team. The Early Help Strategic Subgroup are now in the process of considering how this can rolled out across the wider partnership.
Engagement with Fathers	The Implementation Subgroup completed a scoping exercise to gain an understanding around what organisations already have in place to support engagement with fathers and how the partnership can further develop practice in this area. The outcome of the scoping produced a number of recommendations, and this will remain on the subgroup agenda. Engagement with fathers continues to be golden thread running through all CSCP training and a standard KLOE in audits.
Reducing parental conflict	The workforce development activity in this area remains ongoing and the CSCP regularly promotes 'Reducing Parent Conflict' training sessions that are delivered via the Early Help Partnership at all CSCP subgroups and features in the quarterly newsletter.

Domestic Abuse

Coventry has one of the highest rates of domestic abuse in the West Midlands and are above average compared to the rest of the UK – in 2022/23, West Midlands Police recorded 10, 547 incidents of domestic abuse in Coventry. In their briefing ‘Multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse’, the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel highlighted key areas of practice that required attention by safeguarding partners.

In response, the CSCP decided to carry out an audit to evaluate the effectiveness of current multi-agency practice and partnership work undertaken to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. The key lines of enquiry were specifically designed, using the learning from the report, to capture information the Board could use to gain assurance.

The findings from the case file audit presented a positive picture of the work carried out with children experiencing domestic abuse; risks related to domestic abuse were identified and responded to in a timely manner, followed by timely arrests and information sharing between partners. Added to this was some good evidence of practitioners consistently striving to hear the child’s voice and keeping them central to all work taking place. However, some of the findings in the National Panel’s review were echoed in this audit, particularly in relation to two of their four core practice principles – practitioners being domestic-abuse informed and an adopting an intersectional approach when working with children and young people, their parents, wider families and networks in relation to domestic abuse. The audit also identified some other areas that would benefit from further development to help support partners and drive work being undertaken with children experiencing domestic abuse across the city.

How have we responded?

Area for development	What we did?
Awareness of the Early Help offer	The delivery of the Early Help Strategy 2023-2025 is focused on effectively communicating the Early Help offer and role/function of the family hubs to children and families to ensure they know how and where to access help.
Quality of risk assessments and safety plans	A Task & Finish Group of key members was convened to consider ways to strengthen risk assessments, safety plans and sharing information in relation to domestic abuse which led to the Public Health Domestic Abuse Programme Lead and Responsive Services Operational Lead from Children’s Services working collaboratively to produce a Domestic Abuse Toolkit. Training on the response to non-fatal strangulation and victim support was also delivered to MASH practitioners.

Area for development	What we did?
Promoting the Think Family/ Whole Family Model health organisations	<p>'Think Family' was discussed at the Lead Safeguarding GP Forum, Primary Care Safeguarding Co-ordinator induction and during supervision sessions. It is also discussed regularly within MDT meetings.</p> <p>Acute health settings ensured professional curiosity, domestic abuse and 'Think Family' featured in both Level 3 safeguarding Training for children and adults and the bespoke training package offered to Emergency Department staff.</p>
Intersectionality	<p>The Implementation Subgroup seek innovative solutions for implementing learning from local and national reviews and audits, and so they carried out the following actions to ensure intersectionality was promoted across the partnership:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commissioned a cultural competency learning event. 2. Added intersectionality to RHRT workshops. 3. Intersectionality was incorporated as key component in all safeguarding training packages at all levels. 4. Requested all partners incorporate this into their single agency training.
Awareness and understanding of specialist domestic abuse service	<p>Safeguarding Together Action Group / Learning Event entitled 'Identifying and Dealing with Domestic Abuse' featured presentations from Public Health and representatives from local domestic abuse support services and covered a range of topics relating to domestic abuse such as the current landscape, indicators/signs, safety planning, practical tools and how to access support and advice.</p> <p>The CSCP Claire's Law OMG was also reviewed to ensure it was up to date and disseminated across the partnership.</p>
Domestic Abuse - Informed	<p>The Public Health Domestic Abuse Training subgroup are tasked with commissioning domestic abuse training and this group now has representation from the CSCP Implementation subgroup. They review the training periodically and ensured 'domestic abuse-informed' approach/response and the use of non-victim blaming language was incorporated.</p>

Area for development	What we did?
Understanding lived experience	<p>The CSCP Implementation Subgroup and Children’s Services Participation Team worked collaboratively to produce a practice standards guide on the importance of capturing and acting on the voice of the child. A key component of this guidance is on using creative approaches and child-friendly tools to gain a better understanding of the child’s daily life. This practice guide was launched formally in 2024 followed by promotion across the partnership via the CSCP website, briefing papers, webinars, STAG, and newsletter.</p> <p>West Midlands Police shared the content of their ‘Aware App’ with the Implementation Subgroup so this could be used by partners to inform their internal training and presentations in relation to capturing the voice of the child.</p>
Working with perpetrators of abuse	<p>Public Health and the CSCP commissioned training delivered by Coventry Relate and Coventry Haven. This training package aims to improve participants knowledge and skills to understand the challenges related to working one-to-one with perpetrators of domestic abuse through early identification techniques and working with and managing risk and vulnerability.</p>

Serious Youth Violence

In August 2023, Ofsted, CQC, HMICFRS and HMIP published guidance for their next programme of joint targeted area inspections (JTAs) which focused on serious youth violence and began in September 2023. In readiness, the CSCP undertook audit activity to evaluate the experiences of children and young people involved in serious violence and child criminal exploitation including: the quality and effectiveness of practice, the impact this has on children, young people and their families and whether this reduced risk, kept them safe from further harm and improved outcomes.

A joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to serious youth violence in Coventry took place from 18th to 22nd March 2024 and as part of the inspection, the partnership carried out a further audit in relation to the experiences of children and young people involved in serious violence and child criminal exploitation.

Both audits offered assurance about the quality of work being undertaken with children and young people; the audits revealed that practitioners were able to identify the early warning signs of youth violence and exploitation, and joined up partnership work during assessments and planning to disrupt activity and reduce risk was an area of strength. The significant improvements that have been made to the system over the last two years to tackle serious youth violence in Coventry were acknowledged, such as the success of the CIRV programme. The evidence within case file audits indicated that the voices of children and young people in the

cohort was clear, informed planning and influenced any decisions made. The child's views were consistently being explored and the children were able to speak openly and honestly about their views on the topics being discussed, helping practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experience. There was minimal to no offender based language, adultification or racial disparity identified within the case files audited and it was clear that practitioners were viewing the children through a child-focused lens. Many examples of persistent, committed, relationship-based practice were also identified.

Still, there were some areas that needed further development to help support partners working with children and young involved in serious youth violence and child exploitation.

How have we responded?

Area for development	What we did?
Engagement with parent and families	CSCP Training Officer and Horizon Team Manager reviewed and updated the Exploitation Training to ensure the importance of engaging parents/families was included. RHRT workshops were also updated.
Sequencing of interventions	The Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting is a forum to share and clarify information, establish risk, consider disruption, and develop a multi-agency support plan to meet the needs of children and young people who are involved in child exploitation (including support for parents/carers) and this process was strengthened by updating the meeting template/documentation, so this now includes sequenced interventions, clear and defined roles, and identification of a lead practitioner.
Awareness of the Horizon low risk pathway	Horizon reviewed and updated the Low-Risk Guidance and this now includes both types of exploitation. The updated guidance was shared widely across the partnership before being uploaded to the Coventry City Council website. Additionally, when concerns relating to the older child are significant and require an assessment by Children's Services for the other siblings, this will be undertaken by the Horizon Team who have expert knowledge in relation to exploitation.
Parental criminality/imprisonment	Supporting children with a parent in prison is a priority for the Coventry Serious Violence Prevention Partnership and a key area of work being carried out by the Early Help Outcome group chaired by the Youth Justice Service Operational Lead. Implementation subgroup also collated resources for children with parent in prison that have been developed in other areas and disseminated across the partnership.

Area for development	What we did?
Measuring performance	The Coventry Serious Violence Prevention Partnership led by West Midlands Police will be reviewing serious youth violence data and representatives from the CSCP will form part of a Task & Finish Group convened to produce a multi-agency dataset that can be held centrally.
Curious practice	<p>The Implementation Subgroup considered the best way of taking professional curiosity forwards in a coordinated way and carried out the following activity:</p> <p>Primary Care developed and launched a ‘professional curiosity’ toolkit that was shared with other agencies across the partnership for use within their own organisations.</p> <p>Curious practice featured as a section in the new RHRT guidance and the RHRT training workshops.</p> <p>A session on curious practice was held during Children’s Services Practice Week from 24th – 28th June 2024.</p> <p>The Implementation Subgroup reviewed and updated the CSCP OMG on professional curiosity and promoted this across the partnership.</p>
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	The CSCP will maintain an overview of agencies’ approaches to addressing and promoting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion within their organisations via the Section 11 Audit which will be carried out in the Autumn of 2024.

Section 175/157 Schools 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.

Schools were asked to complete the self-assessment using the Partnership’s new online audit system Phew. The Phew Audit System is a secure web hosted audit tool purpose built for safeguarding audit compliance and allows schools to easily correlate insights into what is working well, and where there are opportunities to improve their safeguarding arrangements and practice.

There was a 100% completion rate this year and 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 by schools, which offers a good level of assurance to the Partnership. There were some clear areas of outstanding performance in areas such as policies and procedures, reporting and recording, the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, training and safer recruitment.

It is important for schools to use their self-assessment and the key learning from this year's audit as a basis to continually develop their safeguarding arrangements. All schools were able to generate an action plan within the audit system to address any areas where improvement was required which was exportable into an Excel document, equipping school staff with the ability to review, amend, or update the plan throughout the year. Schools are ultimately responsible for ensuring the identified areas for improvement are addressed and their action plans are completed within the specified timescales.

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

Joint Targeted Area Inspection

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership was subject to a Joint Targeted Area inspection in relation to Serious Youth Violence in Coventry between 18th -22nd March 2024. This is where inspectors from Ofsted, The Care Quality Commission, His Majesty's Fire and Rescue Service, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation visit an area to evaluate the effectiveness of the multi-agency partnership in relation to a particular theme, in this case serious youth violence and/ or criminal exploitation.

Inspectors found that, Children at risk of criminal exploitation and serious youth violence are safer as a result of the effective partnership work undertaken by both statutory services and the third sector to reduce risks in places and spaces as well as for individual young people in Coventry. Mature partnership arrangements are in place'. Further positive areas included:

- A range of aligned subgroups with exploitation as a clear priority.
- Leaders and partners use nearly every opportunity to learn and improve practice.
- A strong culture of support, collaboration and learning at every level of the partnership.
- A systemic approach to identifying new and emerging threats.
- A clear focus on prevention and early intervention.
- Children and communities are thoroughly engaged.
- A well-considered and tailored approach to each child's needs.
- The specialist Horizon teams is a highly effective resource.
- Sophisticated mapping of places and people is done in real time.
- A well embedded trauma informed approach.
- Effective strategic partnerships.

Areas for development included:

- The emergency duty team provides a minimal safeguarding response to incidents of serious youth violence, meaning that strategy meetings are not held at the earliest opportunity and plans are made to provide immediate protection for younger children in the family without a social worker seeing the child or family to assess.
- Children wait too long to receive mental health assessments from the child and adolescent mental health services crisis teams, and children who become looked after wait too long for their initial health assessment.
- Some professionals are not sufficiently curious and accept children's explanations at face value, which results in risks to children and young people not being wholly understood
- Transition for children between service provision is not always well enough considered for them, particularly as they approach 18.
- The understanding of the impact for different cohorts of children in relation to serious youth violence and particularly the potential for disproportionate responses to Black boys.

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership is now progressing an action plan to respond to these areas for development.

Key themes

Following analysis of rapid reviews, safeguarding practice reviews and multi-agency audits Coventry Safeguarding Partnership has identified the following key themes:

Area of learning	Implementation
Practitioners understanding of family composition/ roles of males- despite improving practice in this area, variable practice is still being noted. At times practitioners makes assumptions about family members without fully understanding individuals' roles. It is imperative that practitioners fully explore the role of individuals within the household to fully understand the potential source of support/risk.	<p>At the heart of Coventry family valued is exploring family networks and understanding sources of support.</p> <p>CSCP training re-enforces the need to explore family networks and understand the role of males.</p> <p>The role of males continues to be a Key line of enquiry in all CSCP audits to support a better understanding of this area of work.</p>

Area of learning	Implementation
<p>Languages matters- the CSCP have noted the importance of the language of that is used in case recording to effectively communicate the risks to others. An example of this is ‘intoxicated’ this can mean different things to different people and if it members X is so drunk that he/ she cannot get up off the sofa and look after the child then it needs to be recorded explicitly.</p>	<p>A booklet has been produced by Children’s Services titled ‘Language Matters’. This has been shared across the partnership.</p> <p>This key message has been promoted through the ‘Drug and Alcohol’ and ‘Having difficult conversations’ training.</p>
<p>Understanding the lived experience of the Child by capturing the voice of the child- it is vital that practitioners use innovative ways to capture the voice of the child to fully understand what they are seeing and how it impacts on the day-to-day life of the child. A lack of understanding in relation to this sometimes means that the risk at times is not fully understood.</p>	<p>Voice of the child practice standards have been developed and these will be socialised across the partnership.</p>
<p>Whole family approach- examples have been noted where parents are unable to support the child as their own needs, for example medical needs, are not met. At other times there is too much focus on parents needs and these can overshadow the needs of the child. It is important that practitioners take a Whole family approach but with a focus on what this means for the child.</p>	<p>Coventry family valued supports a whole family approach.</p> <p>Right help, right time is being reviewed and there will be a focus on think child, think family, think child again.</p>
<p>Children with parents in prison- examples have been seen where children with a parent or significant other in prison can follow a similar trajectory and become involved in serious youth violence or criminal exploitation.</p>	<p>The CSCP is scoping out training for practitioners on ‘Children with parents in prison’.</p>
<p>The need for mental health pathways to be communicated to schools and communities- without an understanding of these we have seen examples of where children’s mental health can deteriorate dramatically.</p>	<p>The CSCP Board now receives regular updates on community mental health provision and CAHMS waiting times.</p> <p>A Mental Health online directory has been created and socialised at the STAG and across the Partnership.</p>



National reforms

The Safeguarding Partners continually seek to identify national learning and consider its impact on local practice. Across 2023-2024 the following work has been undertaken:-

The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel- briefing paper on Domestic Abuse - The Safeguarding Partners requested that an audit be undertaken in relation to the findings. The findings of the audit can be found on page 36.

Joint Targeted Area inspections (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk- in response to this publication the Safeguarding partners undertook a Quality assurance visit to one of the Early help hubs. The findings can be found on page 39.



Looking forwards

In determining the priorities for April 2024- March 2026 the Safeguarding Partners undertook consultation work with a range of statutory, community and voluntary partners to understand those common themes that agencies felt need to be the focus of our collaborative efforts. The Business Plan that has been created is laid out below:

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 coordinated 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

