

Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership



PAN DORSET SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BCP	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
CAROLE	Children at Risk of or Linked to Exploitation Group
CCG/ICB	Clinic Commissioning Group/Integrated Children's Board
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CE	Criminal Exploitation
CIC	Children in Care
CSPR	Criminal exploitation
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
ETAC	Exploitation Team Around the Child
ILACS	Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer (for allegations made against staff)
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
MAQPAG	Multi-agency Quality and Performance Assurance Group
MASH	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub
PDSCP	Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership
PPN	Police Protection Notification
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
UASC	Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

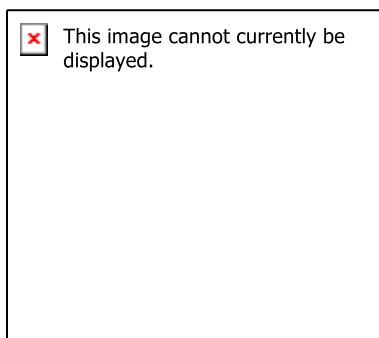
WELCOME

Dear colleagues, partners, and members of the public we are proud to publish the second Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report which covers 2021/2022.

We welcome James Vaughan, Independent Chairperson and Scrutineer, Cathi Hadley, Director of Children's Services, Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council and Assistant Chief Constable, Rachel Farrell, Dorset Police, as the most recent members to join the Partnership during the year.

We would like to extend our thanks to the previous Chairperson, Anthony Douglas CBE and BCP's Director Elaine Redding for their dedication and commitment to the Partnership from its inception in 2019 to 2021.

Current Executive Board Members



Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director, Children's Services, BCP Council



Theresa Leavy, Executive Director, People - Children Dorset Council



Vanessa Read, Director of Nursing and Quality, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group*



Rachel Farrell, Assistant Chief Constable, Dorset Police



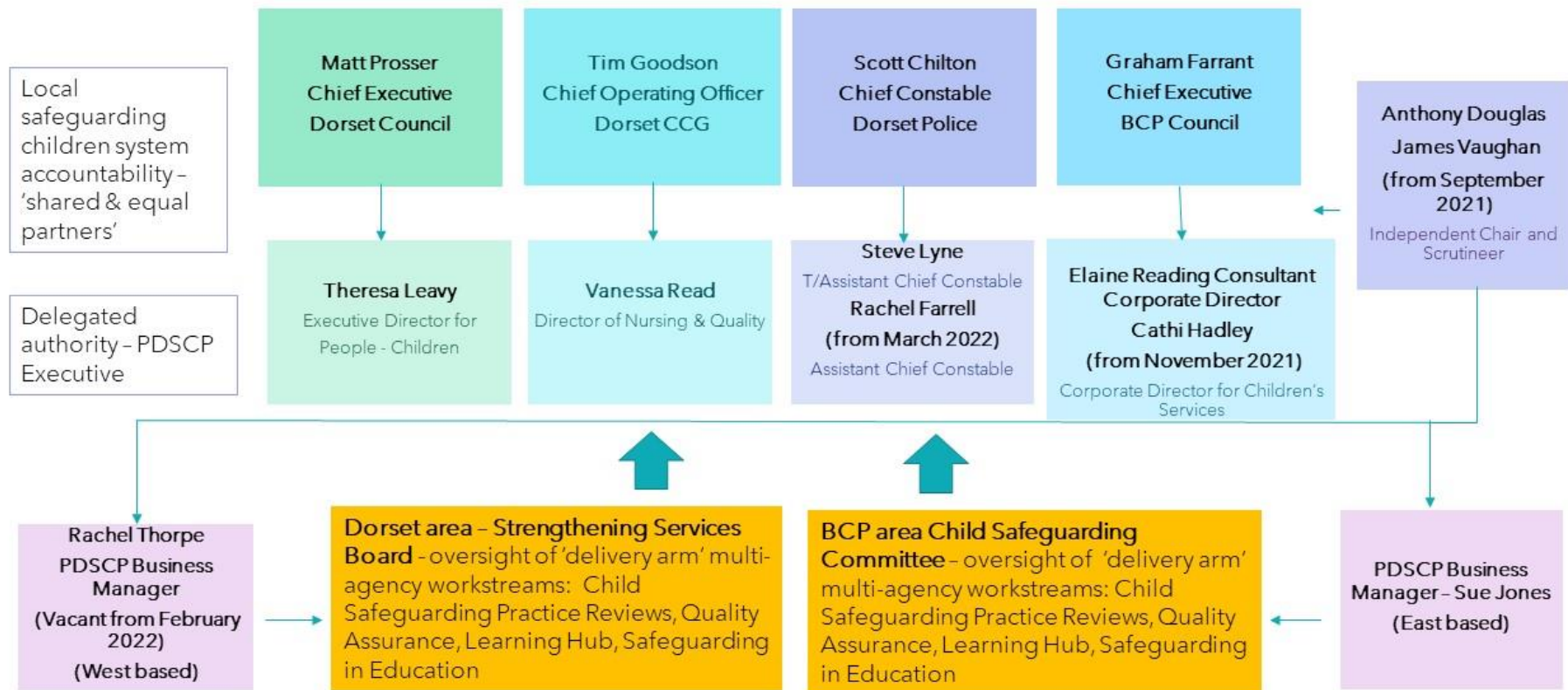
James Vaughan, PDSCP Independent Chairperson

* The Clinical Commissioning Group became Dorset Integrated Care Board on 01 July 2022. Reference to activity in this report refers to the Clinical Commissioning Group.

PART ONE

1. PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

PDSCP - Structure



2. REFLECTIONS ON 2021/2022

In 2019 the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership ('The Partnership') was implemented with governance from Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council. The aim was to provide a strong, productive, and valuable partnership that drives best outcomes for children and young people. Two years on the Partnership has continued to develop and reflect on what works well and where changes need to be made to improve its effectiveness.

The Partnership is pleased to share its progress during 2021/2022 despite the continuing challenges posed by the Covid-19 virus and its impact on children, families, and the workforce. Effective joint working continued during the year, building upon the strong working relationships developed throughout 2020/2021.

The Partnership maintains oversight and responsibility for the Partnership's statutory functions and seeks assurance about the effectiveness of the wider safeguarding system that supports children and families through receiving regular reporting from the two delivery arms.

The Partnership has continued to be agile, adaptable, and uses communication platforms for the delivery of its business as this model works well; it will develop face to face events such as an annual conference and how it engages with children and young people in 2022/2023.

The place-based, operational delivery arms of the two local authority areas have created the opportunity to tailor multi-agency safeguarding delivery in a more bespoke way to better reflect demographics and shape service provision according to local need. The Place-based arrangements also enable a timely response and enhanced focus on local area safeguarding priorities, stronger alignment with other local partnerships (e.g., SEND, MASH, Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing and Safeguarding Adult Board) and increased opportunities to develop a more inclusive approach with the wider safeguarding network, including schools, parent and young people participation forums and voluntary/community sector organisations.

The Executive Team ensure that whilst different approaches may be used at a place-based level, opportunities for alignment are maximised e.g., strategic sign off and publication of local Children Safeguarding Practice Reviews. The Partnership acknowledges it is often difficult for both Health and the Police to resource the growing demand for partnership working across both BCP and Dorset and will support its partners to manage any tensions or resource issues.

In September 2021 the Partnership appointed a new independent chairperson adding 'scrutineer' to the title. The role will act as a 'critical friend' to provide independent scrutiny and challenge on the effectiveness of the Partnership's multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements. The remit and potential impact of this role is yet to be fully developed and realised. However, to date scrutiny has focused on local Child

Safeguarding Practice Reviews, strategic risk management and Section 11 safeguarding audit and scrutiny for both statutory and non-statutory partners. In addition, an external review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Business Management Team for the partnership was undertaken at the start of the year.

Strategic priorities 2022/2024

In February 2022, the Partnership held a strategic planning session to determine and sharpen priorities for the 2022/2024, review how the Partnership business had evolved during the year and to agree a vision going forward.

These priorities were informed by an understanding of need across each of the partners’ areas of responsibility, utilising internal data sets, self-evaluations, strategic assessments, and inspection findings.

Chairs of the Safeguarding Adults Boards, Community Safety Partnerships and the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership have begun to meet regularly to ensure that strategic priorities are aligned and there is a clear understanding of which partnership is leading and delivering which key work streams.

The agreed strategic priorities set out below will be translated into a Partnership strategic delivery plan in 2022 and reflected in individual organisation service plans.

Following the independent review of the business management arrangements early in the year, the Partnership agreed to move to a single Business Manager across pan-Dorset. This will allow smoother and more joined up strategic delivery and more flexibility to ensure place-based support. At the time of publishing our report, we are pleased to say that we are in the late stages of recruitment for this key role. The review findings also demonstrated that the Dorset business management model compared well to national comparators on both efficiency and effectiveness. It also enabled the partnership to devise a plan to balance the financial contributions across the statutory agencies.

How we work as a Partnership		Our current challenges
Voice of Child Whole Family Working	How risk is identified at multi-agency level	
	How we ensure early multi-agency support	
	How we scrutinise as a Partnership	
OUTCOME FOCUSED How will we know we have made a difference?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling Child Exploitation, early intervention, effective disruption resulting from collaborative decision making • Sexual Abuse – intrafamilial, link to violence against women and girls and sexual abuse in schools - peer on peer • Recognising and responding to the impact of domestic abuse involving children and young people (including under 1’s and unborn safety and wellbeing) • Supporting children to maintain positive mental health and emotional wellbeing, understanding the longer-term impact of Covid-19. Access to services at all levels (e.g. Tier 4 beds locally, CAMHS demand

The voice of children and young people

This section provides examples of how both BCP and Dorset have sought to engage and involve children and young people, parents, and the wider community in its learning and in improving its multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In BCP area work was undertaken to engage the voice of children, young people, and their families, this includes;

One Thematic Learning Review (Child M) involved substantial engagement with the parents, wider family, and the wider community to raise awareness of child exploitation.

BCP have two forums for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young people, they are an invaluable source of the truth, both take an active part in the Corporate Parenting Board and young people co-chair. Young people are also represented on our Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with equal voice as members. They have been involved in developing services, contributing to the Childrens Services Improvement Plan, improving the collection of young people views prior to review, review of Health Passports.

Through Members of Youth Parliament POP (Pack of Positivity) cards have been developed by Young People and launched in all schools to support young people and staff in understanding and responding to mental health needs

In BCP young people are encouraged to chair their reviews or as a minimum take an active part through attendance and participation, some 'take over' and lead whilst other contribute and attend for parts.

Children and Young people in BCP are celebrated through annual Celebration Events and fun activities, for example Easter event in April 2022, Fun Day during the summer and a Jubilee Event.

Care Experienced Young people were involved in our Practice Week giving valuable feedback of their lived experience and offering suggestions and solutions as to how the service and support can be improved. Practice Weeks are held on a quarterly basis and children and young people are part of the team.

Care Experienced Young people have produced and launched the new Care Leavers Offer and been part of the Care Leaver Hub development team, designing the building and developing the offer in their exciting new 333 Hub. The 333 Hub has its own dedicated steering group of Young People to ensure the work of the Hub is relevant and accessible.

The Childrens Rights and Participation team worked with 6 children and young people aged between 10 yrs and 18yrs to understand their lived experience of being a child or young person within the CIN, CP, or Children in Care, they told us what good practice looks like to them, what they wanted their workers to consider and how we can become better at working with them. Colleagues met with the young people every two

weeks for a six-month period so they could get 'live' up to date feedback from the volunteers. There is a lived experience example in our Improvement Board on a regular basis for members to hear directly from young people their experiences.

Young people took part in Visioning activity to support the Vision setting through our Improvement Plan and they have informed the developing Youth Service Strategy.

Developing Services – A young people led panel supported with the recruitment and retention of BCP new Senior Leadership Team. They are involved in all Childrens Services recruitment, developing the new policy on their involvement. The senior leadership team have offered shadowing opportunities to young people where they have been involved in service development. Young People take part in our training offer and deliver workshops to staff to develop the understanding of their lived experience.

Dorset Council have reintegrated Dorset Youth Voice into its Children's Services including two young people on work experience placements, who were able to contribute to service development.

The Dorset Youth Voice Team have now hosted two whole fostering family days to get alongside and listen in to younger children in care. There are a further 4 events planned for the rest of this year.

What Dorset have heard from the younger children so far, has helped us to further improve the Dorset Foster Carers Handbook and the guide that children receive when they come into our care. The Dorset Children in Care Council is growing organically through these events and the team are taking the time to 'catch up' with these children to nurture the relationship.

The team are mindful of the trauma many of our children and young people have experienced and listen sensitively and skilfully. The approach to co-production must be done in a trauma-informed way.

Dorset Care leavers were involved in two workshops during National Care Leavers Week in October 2021, and they helped to co-produce how they want their achievements and successes to be recognised. They also worked on shaping improvements to the council's web pages which host their Dorset care leaver local offer.

Care leavers have also been involved in two interview panels for the recruitment of senior management positions and their feedback was an incredibly helpful part of the process.

Dorset Care leavers have worked with the Youth Council to co-produce a 'what's in it for me' chart for participation activities and to give their thoughts and views on the new branding for the team.

14 Dorset care leavers have been working with the Youth Voice Team in a variety of ways since August 2021. Twenty care leavers contributed their digital voice in January on an activity about foster care and 24 were involved last month, on the New Belongings project with Coram Voice.

Dorset took part in the Takeover Challenge, a national programme of engagement, which took place from the 14 June to 8 July 2022.

This included children and young people who are:

- in our care
- leaving our care
- young carers
- children and young people with SEND
- members of our current youth council

The final week of Takeover Challenge included the Summer Conferences. Young people led and delivered several workshops at the event with partners pledging to make real changes to service design and delivery. There will be a follow up event in November 2022, in line with the national event.

Learning from practice

Evidence from our local case reviews and audits indicate that Covid has affected the emotional health and well-being of our children and young people through missing school and social isolation. The challenges of Covid on the workforce, their families and their own sickness has been significant, however the Partnership remains vigilant to the potential for 'hidden' harm.

In the first 'lockdown' in 2020 there appeared to be higher levels of lower-level domestic abuse incidents, which reflected the stress some families were under. Findings this year indicate that domestic abuse continues to be a significant factor in safeguarding, bearing in mind the detrimental impact of domestic abuse on children and young people. In response conversations continue to be held to further strengthen communication and joint working across safeguarding and the Community Safety Partnerships.

Findings from child practice reviews and multi-agency case audits indicate the importance of face-to-face contact with a trusted consistent practitioner. There is recognition of the need to better engage with children and young people to hear more about their views and 'lived' experience to help us to continuously improve what we do; this is a key objective in the 2022/2023 PDSCP strategic plan.

Additionally, our learning has highlighted the importance of professional curiosity and challenge when cases are considered by partners to be closed too early; we are ensuring that the escalation policy is understood and implemented by all partners.

Across both BCP and Dorset the importance of a 'whole family' approach is acknowledged across the Partnership although this has progressed further with some partners than others. Learning has included a need to listen to the young person and the family and the need to undertake robust holistic family assessments. By doing this action plans will be more specific to the individual child or young person as they reflect how the young person sees themselves and with outcomes that can be monitored. Such engagement with the family will enable a more proactive approach to safeguarding. From more than one case review the importance of professionals seeing the young person on their own was highlighted. Also highlighted was the need to follow up with curiosity where a child who has made an allegation subsequently states that the abuse did not happen.

The BCP Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group developed a questionnaire to give to families engaged in child protection processes, where neglect was the main concern and where there appeared to be no improvement over a prolonged period. The purpose of this was to give parents an opportunity to share their views and experiences of the intervention they had received so that practice improvements could be identified. The evaluation is ongoing.

Dorset Council engaged the voice of users in several initiatives including the Harbour Project and with Children in Care to better understand their views and identify ways in which agencies can work more effectively with them. This work has informed service redesign for children in care including the appointment of emotional health and well-being practitioners and a Care Leaver nurse. The Harbour project has also been hugely successful in supporting those young people on the edge of care.

Gaining an understanding of the family within the context of the whole eco-system including community, school, extended family, different cultures and the importance of not seeing each separate referral to children's social care as a 'new' event was highlighted. In addition, work has been completed on refreshing the non-mobile infant protocol and the unborn child pathway as well as the development of practitioner toolkits covering neglect, domestic abuse, and child sexual abuse.

Intrafamilial child sexual abuse was a theme in two local CSPRs and emphasised the need to improve recognition and understanding of this topic among colleagues. In response, PDSCP has planned a conference this year to focus on this topic. Self-harm and understanding suicide and suicidal ideation were also themes identified in our reviews and work is being undertaken with mental health commissioners to take this forward, to include bespoke training.

Feedback from the independent case review authors in Dorset and BCP has shown how well the practitioners have fully engaged in the case review process. Comments have included how well agencies worked together and how pro-active practitioners were in protecting children and young people from harm. In CSPR panel meetings, representatives from User Groups including SPACE Youth project have provided subject expertise.

Across the Dorset and BCP areas the quality assurance and learning cycles are beginning to become embedded; this means that in future recommendations from reviews can be more readily implemented, there will be continuous practice improvement and outcomes will be more clearly understood and reported. Measuring the impact of learning will support the experience of children and families when accessing services.

All local CSPRs are published on the PDSCP website along with practitioner briefings <https://pdscp.co.uk/working-with-children/serious-case-reviews/> (unless anonymity is required); they will also be published on the NSPCC website.

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The Pan Dorset and Somerset CDOP convened six times during the year 2021/2022. This consisted of two neonatal panels and four main panels, reviewing 27 Dorset cases during this time. There were 23 new deaths of children which is 9 fewer deaths than the previous year of 32. Of the 23 deaths, 7 were neonatal and 16 were children.

Of the 27 reviews carried out, key learning and impact of the last year were as follows:

- a) In November 2021, the panel reviewed a Sudden Unexplained Death Infant cohort and recommended that the safe sleeping message needs to be reinforced and updated, to include the message of always needing 'clear, safe space around the baby'. The panel wrote to the PDSCP (Dorset) Multi-agency Quality and Performance Group recommending that multi agency work should be undertaken. Evidence indicates that families are aware of the advice but choose not to follow it. Further work is needed to understand the barriers to following the advice and how to overcome them. Public Health Dorset have just launched their summer safer sleeping campaign. Key messages included on PDSCP site on pages for parents/carers and practitioners. The out of routine report is referenced on the practitioner page [Out of Routine](#). There is now [Safer Sleeping Guidance for Parents/Carers with Babies and Infants - Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdscp.co.uk\)](#) as well as a [practitioners' page](#). The PDSCP will repeat the planned a Safe Sleeping campaign over the course of 2021/22 which will also include links to the Invisible Men report.
- b) The panel reviewed some cases where mothers were diabetic. As a result of this, the Designated Doctor met with the diabetes Consultant to discuss and review management during pregnancy. The maternity pathway for diabetic women has been amended and the diabetes specialists now provide a weekly clinic rather than fortnightly. A recent review of another infant death where diabetes was a factor noted that the new arrangements had been very successful in substantially improving the mother's diabetes control.

The Pan Dorset CDOP has collected information in this area beyond the statutory requirement, including information on mothers' raised BMI. It recently audited its data to explore a possible link between this and delivery at premature gestation. It concluded that its sample was too small to either indicate a trend or dismiss it. We have raised this nationally and as a result, the national forms have been amended to include this data field so that this can be reviewed on a country-wide scale.

The panel presented a learning event on the 4 November 2021 which was well received. Feedback was positive with requests for future learning events. There are plans for another event later in the Year.

The panel reflected on the impact of remote panel meetings initiated in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, given the nature of the content discussed; this has since been overcome as meetings are now face to face again.

Multi agency training

The pan-Dorset training function offers a central training offer for the multi-agency workforce, the administration and co-ordination of which is self-funding. The offer is accessed by a wide range of agencies and seen as a trusted and reliable source to ensure that organisations meet their safeguarding training requirements. Most courses are commissioned through the Dorset Council commissioning framework, which provides the function with quality control and contract compliance measures.

The menu of training includes:

- ❖ Multi-agency Working Together in Safeguarding Children Initial and Update (former Level 3)
- ❖ Managing Allegations
- ❖ Safer Recruitment and Safer Recruitment Update,
- ❖ Supervision for Safeguarding,
- ❖ Criminal Exploitation Basic Awareness, Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children (former L3 CE),
- ❖ Neglect, Safeguarding Children with SEND,
- ❖ Annual Online Safety Champions Update,
- ❖ Foundation in Safeguarding Children and Recognising and Responding to CSA.

The PDSCP also offered free sessions on the newly developed Dorset place-based Domestic Abuse toolkit.

All training remained virtual throughout 2021-22. In general, the delegates expressed their preference for attending virtual sessions with the main reasons (apart from Covid) being saving on commuting, parking time, petrol costs and environmental impact.

Over the past business year 132 courses were delivered and attended by 2,527 multi-agency practitioners. Occupancy rates for these courses averaged 90% of capacity. Day rates for courses have not changed from the previous year priced around £75/£80 with half days costed at £50. Small charities or voluntary sector organisations can apply for a free place to ensure we are inclusive.

Local authorities, schools and early years providers continue to make up the biggest cohort of staff attending courses. In response to requests, training has also been offered on Saturday mornings and twilight sessions to fit in with working patterns of some practitioners e.g., voluntary sector and early years staff.

Where partner agencies have a lower rate of engagement in multi-agency safeguarding training, we have challenged this. Our aim is to offer a fully multiagency experience to attendees and the opportunity to get to know each other's roles and build contact networks. This is balanced with the single agency training offer and the demands caused by continued Covid 19 pressures into this year.

During the year training has been offered to sports and activity clubs reinforcing statutory requirements and good practice in relation to adults in 'positions of trust'. As soon as any changes in legislation or statutory guidance become law relating to extending the 'position of trust' this is included in all relevant training and communication to relevant partner agencies or groups.

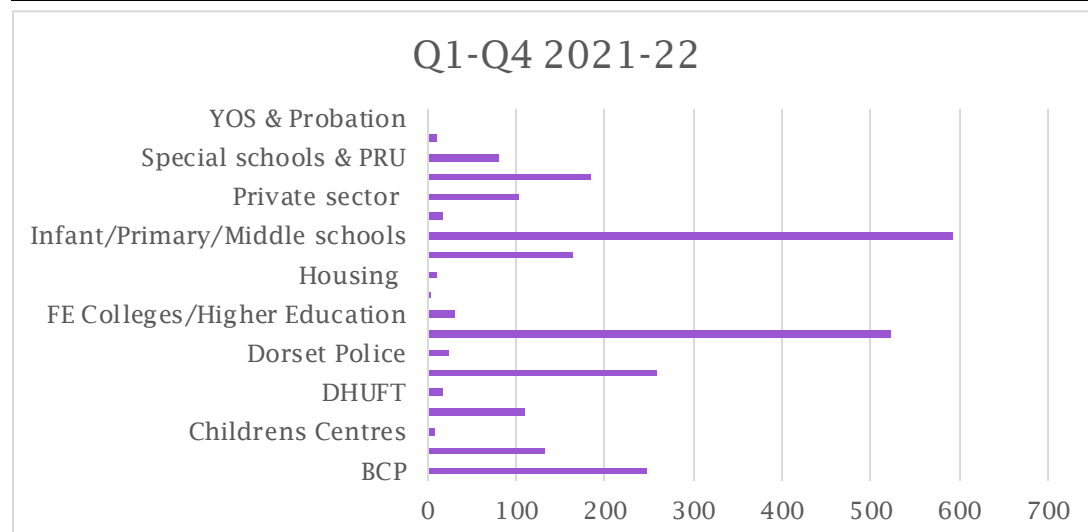
There is a high degree of synergy between the PDSCP Training offer and learning from the Pan-Dorset Learning Hub activity, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, case and thematic audits and service developments. Surplus in the budget in 2021-22 has enabled a programme of free training on specific topics identified in these ways for 2022-23:

- Safeguarding Supervision bespoke for schools
- Trauma-informed practice / Strength based restorative practice
- Supporting families where parental conflict is a feature
- Gender identity/Transgender/LGBTQ+
- Travelling Community – cultural competence
- Working with children and young people who describe suicidal thoughts or who self-harm
- Covid 19 impact on Young People's mental health

Qualitative data from evaluation feedback demonstrates that practitioners are using their learning when they return to the workplace. Courses are quality assured through the Learning Hub groups from Dorset and BCP which review feedback, impact, performance of providers and course design and planning.

Training delivery and participation

Financial Quarters	No of courses	Total spaces	Total bookings	Total attendance	Booking %	% Booking rate change compared to previous Q	Occupancy rate %	% Occupancy rate change compared to previous Q	Feedback received	Feedback %
Totals for Q4	41	879	846	750	96	-2	89	6	529	71
Totals for Q3	32	689	678	564	98	-1	83	-8	382	68
Totals for Q2	26	628	619	565	99	2	91	0	348	62
Totals for Q1 Apr-June 2021	33	731	708	648	97	-1	91	2	377	58



3. OBJECTIVES 2022/2023

The Partnership will review its multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements published in 2019 and will strengthen its governance with other partnerships e.g., Safeguarding Adults Boards, and how it can more effectively communicate with the public and practitioners in both areas.

It will appoint one Business Manager to co-ordinate and manage the day to business of the PDSCP across both Dorset and BCP areas. Place-based local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, based on the agreed PDSCP priorities, will be managed by local area business support officers/co-ordinator.

The Partnership will strengthen its quality assurance, learning, and scrutiny functions and will demonstrate better outcomes for children and young people, in accordance with its agreed priorities.

It will strengthen how it uses performance data to inform and drive its priorities and objectives and will consider how it implements learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, including the national reviews into the deaths of Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo Hughes, the National Independent Review of Children's Social Care and other local and national safeguarding issues as they arise.

The Partnership will strengthen the voice of children, young people, parents, and practitioners in its business through the role of the Independent Scrutineer and other means, such as participatory groups and engagement activity.

Dorset Police will lead an annual review of the effectiveness of Operation Encompass in schools.

There will be a focus on strengthening the transition between children's and adult services.

PART TWO

4. INDIVIDUAL PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

This section of the report provides an overview of individual partner organisations achievements during the year for safeguarding children and young people and how they intend to continue to improve their practice and systems.



The MASH Operational and Strategic Boards are split to align with the two Local Authority areas. The Operational Boards are working well to identify actions, risks, and development themes at the operational level. The Strategic Board enables appropriate oversight by strategic leaders across the partnership however causes duplication of Governance across what remains a Pan Dorset MASH. The membership and leadership of all boards has improved significantly throughout 2021/22 to broaden agencies representations.

The strategic intent during the year was to provide a collaborative approach to child safeguarding through information sharing, risk assessment, decision making and shared learning. A significant change programme has been implemented across the police MASH environment to improve services and embed these changes.

There has been a considerable investment in training 1200 staff to upskill their understanding of the importance of capturing the voice of the child; vulnerability 3 training, an internal communication campaign and 'power hour training' has resulted in officers having a greater understanding of the child's perspective and lived experience. The increased recording has identified contextual risk which has in turn been shared with partners.

Numerous frontline staff and child protection specialists have attended pan-Dorset child safeguarding training events during the year with positive feedback received.

Practitioners have been directly engaged in the force response to the HMICFRS¹¹ inspection and the development of safeguarding hubs and the missing persons teams across the organisation, to ensure the strategic direction is informed by the practitioner opinion. Dorset Police will

¹¹ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

embed local safeguarding hubs in both Local Policing Areas in 2023 to ensure place based earlier intervention to reduce the harm suffered in our communities.

As part of the Dorset Police monthly Tactical CAROLE² Group meeting there is a dip sample of the two of the children from the most at-risk list group. This is designed to scrutinise the multiagency response to the child, enable each agency present to consider their flagging of the child and to ensure that there is appropriate attendance and suitable safety planning at MACE meetings. The BCP CAROLE Group focuses more broadly on the themes to improve the safeguarding of Exploited Children.

The Multi-agency Child Exploitation Chairs toolkit was developed with oversight from the CAROLE Group. The direction and work of the CAROLE Group will be dependent on the updated Child Exploitation Strategy. It is anticipated the once the areas for improvement are identified a task and finish group will be convened in pursuit of the aims.

Information is shared by the Dorset Police IMPACT team in respect of the pursue work completed for child exploitation. This includes an update on the current County Lines operating in Dorset and intelligence requirements from partners.

During 2021/22 Dorset Police underwent two HMIC Child Protection Inspections. The first of which in April 2021 identified eight areas of development for the Force and prompted an inspection in April 2022. On reinspection it was noted the Forces leadership have demonstrated a strong commitment and resourcing to making widespread improvements in child protection. There remains work to improve the response at a tactical level around investigative standards but on the whole children are being made safer.

DORSET CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP 
*Dorset
Clinical Commissioning Group*

Health have continued to work alongside colleagues in Dorset and BCP Councils and Dorset Police to undertake our statutory duties to safeguard children and young people.

Within health we have developed a revised quality assurance framework to ensure that learning from statutory reviews is embedded and outcomes are achieved. In General Practice, a quality framework for assurance has now been in place for two years and significant improvements have been made to safeguarding reports by Primary Care. The new quality assurance framework across health will provide the

² CAROLE - Children at Risk of or Linked to Exploitation (CAROLE) tactical group

evidence that learning has been embedded and how outcomes are being met. The framework is cyclical allowing opportunity to reflect on the findings and amend as necessary.

Agreed processes are in place to escalate any concerns regarding the safeguarding system, which is shared to all Partners and has improved working practice. The Dorset Insight and Intelligence Service are working with all Partners to develop a population-based safeguarding dashboard across pan-Dorset.

The Children in Care Team engage with children and young people regularly attending a variety of forums to ensure their voices are heard. All health settings are required to distribute feedback forms to all users to provide opportunity to share their views and make changes to improve services. Health supported the BCP questionnaire for families attending Child Protection Reviews regarding neglect.

Health partners have been active participants in practitioner events and have received positive feedback for their contribution. They have also fed back how positive the experience has been for them in reflecting on practice and challenging their thoughts and views.

The number of statutory discussions has increased over the last year which has impacted on the workforce and how work is prioritised. Helpful multi-agency discussions have taken place to clarify processes and procedures.

There have been significant demands on mental health and well-being services throughout Covid with the impact of social isolation affecting some children more than others. The increase in domestic abuse incidents also impacted on workload, some universal services were unable to provide face-to-face contact throughout the pandemic and the impact of this has yet to be fully understood.

The place-based arrangements provide the opportunity to respond to population health need across pan-Dorset, this will inevitably provide a more focused service for those requiring services.

Health continues to support Dorset and BCP Councils in response to the two ILACS inspections this year. As the Clinical Commissioning Group (Integrated Children's Board from July 2022) move into 2022/2023 the quality assurance of GP Reports will be undertaken in partnership with both Councils monthly.

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH, AND POOLE COUNCIL



Children's Social Care

Since the ILACS inspection in December 2021, where BCP Children's Services was judged inadequate, further commitment has been made against the Statutory Direction from the Secretary of State, as has the Corporate Management Board to the improvement journey. Improvement Board has been put in place and membership extends to all partners and members of the Children's Senior Leadership Team. The Improvement Board is chaired by a new DfE Advisor, John Coughlan, and the improvement work is supported by Hampshire County Council with a wider Partners in Practice remit. A permanent Director of Children's Services, Cathi Hadley was appointed in February 2022.

At an operational level there are several developments to improve multi-agency working. Multi-agency governance of the MASH is undertaken through operational and strategic boards, which review data and analysis to assess performance. Multi-agency, weekly collaborative auditing has now been developed to provide a more qualitative understanding of practice. The MASH Operating Manual is currently being reviewed, to avoid and reduce unnecessary delay and drift in progressing contacts within 24 hours.

The Pan-Dorset Child Protection protocol is also now in place which confirms the commitment of health colleagues to the CP process, agrees a quality assurance process of compliance and quality of GP reports to conferences.

Complex Safeguarding teams and the wider service use the Exploitation Team Around the Child (ETAC) model for the assessment, planning and review of multi-agency intervention and disruption. A missing tracker is reviewed monthly to identify frequent and persistent missing children, together with performance in the timely completion of return home interviews.

Return Home Interviews are monitored by a Missing Co-ordinator, who assesses both quality and engagement. The service now has a Gold and Silver Command structure between the CST and Dorset Police, and has embedded the 3Ps model: Prosecution, Protection and Prevention.

BCP is committed to hear and respond to the voice of children, young people, and families. BCP Children's Services commissioned CORAM to run a Bright Spots survey with children in care aged 4 to 18-years-old between February and May 2021 to seek views on their well-being. 168 children responded which represents 44% of looked after population. An action plan has been completed and the 'You said We Did' progress is now being shared with and monitored by young people.

There is an engagement and participation offer for children in care and care leavers (aged 11 to 24-years-old). Children participate in the recruitment and retention of key management and social worker posts, recently including the permanent Director of Education, Director of Quality, Performance Improvement and Governance and Director of Safeguarding and Early Help.

Two key forums UNITE (Children in Care Council) and INSIGHT (Care Leavers) are an invaluable source of feedback and learning. Officers and managers alike consult and find the feedback to be mature and grounding.

The Corporate Parenting Board is co-chaired by members from UNITE and INSIGHT who directly support the Board in measuring and monitoring the effectiveness and quality of Corporate Parenting in BCP. Children and young people have been influential in developing formal and informal meetings to ensure their voices are heard listened to and acted upon, an example being the development of the Care Leavers Hub.

Children and young people requiring an advocate are supported to access this. Children report good relationships with their advocate who effectively represent children's views clearly at meetings. There have been no complaints regarding any advocate practice.

Feedback from a recent consultation of children and young people report an overall positive experience. All the young people reported good relations with their social worker. A parent also commented in respect of social workers, "Some have built good working relationships with the children and that has always been worth it -the children appear to have benefited from this". The impact of the turnover of social workers has had a negative impact on some children and young people, "When I was 14 there were so many different SWs it was annoying having to keep telling your story". Some feedback evidence positive impact: "the current social worker makes our family happy we love it when she visits everyone is happy".

Further activity is taking place to help raise young people's awareness of the health offer available to them. A Children's Services newsletter is dedicating one edition to 'Know Your Rights about Health'.

Children's Services is working hard to build confidence within the workforce and engage with frontline staff. The Progress (staff) Forum has been in place for 12 months and feedback is to focus on caseloads, more supervision, less paperwork, converting agency staff to permanent, work flexibility, stabilise the management team, increase communication, and give greater clarity on the vision and values. The Progress

Forum is an inclusive platform where staff can choose to participate as and when they need to, whether it's attending a workshop or completing the surveys. The Progress Forum is currently producing its first annual report and the results from the five surveys.

The latest corporate staff engagement survey took place in December 2021. Comments from the survey heavily centred around the desire of staff to return to the workplace to have face to face contact with colleagues and teams. BCP Council has a Return-to-Work plan, and the first phase has recently opened the new BCP Civic Centre with a Children's Services dedicated hot-desking space and local office spaces spread around the conurbation for Children's Services staff.

Towards the end of the year, a new governance structure for governance, improvement, quality assurance and partnerships were put in place with the focus on improving quality assurance of social care. This will be widened out across Children's Services once embedded. As well as assisting with understanding the quality of the service for children, young people and their families, this will strengthen the learning from CSPR, local reviews and other partnership quality assurance.

The priorities for BCP Children's Services in 2022/2023 is to stabilise the workforce, which is being achieved through the workforce development strategy and improving the impact and outcomes for young people through quality assurance and practice improvement.

Early Years Services

The Early Years Quality Improvement Specialist for Safeguarding ensures the development of multiagency working with wider partners within BCP, across Dorset and the Southwest continues. The Quality Improvement Specialist and Early Years team are responsible for continually raising awareness of the early years sector and the significant role they play in safeguarding children.

Regular links with the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership are maintained, including being a part of campaigns and awareness-raising, and contributions to multi-agency audits and questionnaires.

The Early Years Quality Improvement Specialist for Safeguarding and the Early Years and Childcare Advisors provide support to all BCP early years providers: nurseries, pre-schools, childminders and out of school provision.

Intensive and focused safeguarding support for settings with 'inadequate' and 'requires improvement' Ofsted inspection outcomes is provided. Some examples of this includes a detailed improvement plan put in place, which will include the identified Ofsted actions, other agreed areas of improvement, regular visits to the provision, observations of practice, clear understanding of when they have been achieved and what that looks like in practice, and a signed agreement to complete the actions by all the stakeholders in the provision.

The impact of the above is timely and effective action to safeguard children, and the development of skills and knowledge and safeguarding compliance by the early years' providers. Examples of this include increases in effective information sharing and multi-agency working, effective and timely referrals, attendance and inclusion at Early Years meetings and conferences, a growing range of early support for children, families, and professionals, and a growing number of opportunities for Early Years services to be represented in future campaigns plans and actions.

The Early Years' service provides a range of safeguarding training courses for providers including foundation safeguarding, neglect, and effective recording and the roles and responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). which included during 2021/2022 neglect and effective safeguarding recording. The impact of training is observed through practice and evaluations, which are completed after each training session and the feedback used when reviewing the content and delivery of the courses.

The BCP Early Years team supports early years providers to ensure the voice of the child and their families are heard and supported through supporting providers to provide effective timely safeguarding practice. Examples of this are through identifying concerns, discussions about their concerns, and using the PDSCP escalation policy.

Practitioner engagement and feedback is regularly encouraged through DSL forums and discussion groups take place regularly with early years providers. Engagement and feedback are actively encouraged through discussions, during visits, phone call and emails. Practitioner engagement provides the opportunity for providers to link with other professionals and provisions to share ideas and examples of good practice. This continuous engagement provides the opportunity for open dialogue to ensure providers can share issues they face and feel their voices can be heard.

BCP Early Years has safeguarding webpages on the BCP website, and a regular newsletter is sent to providers on a fortnightly basis with a section dedicated to safeguarding; special edition newsletters are also sent out to be able to share information as and when needed. Examples include updates to statutory guidance, legislation and/or BCP guidance documents, changes to key professionals and teams, and awareness of key issues, including dog safety, water safety and safer sleeping guidance.

Learning from local and national case reviews is shared with early years providers and the Early Years team. We recently shared the National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson and gave recommendations for areas of practice to review.

An Annual Safeguarding and inclusion self-assessment tool are provided to all BCP early years providers. This enables them to review their safeguarding arrangements on a regular basis and supports them to meet their safeguarding duties and responsibilities. Once completed they are reviewed by the Early Years team and any areas of identified development are discussed with the provider and support provided by the

Early Years team. This may include observations of practice, telephone calls to gain further clarification about information provided and signposting.

The Early Years team and early years providers quickly adapted practice to reduce the impacts from Covid. Providers continue to make regular contact with families who were not able to attend and keep close links with professionals. Challenges faced by our providers included maintaining contact with families and finding ways to manage staffing issues and barriers to accessing services. Virtual meetings and virtual training also provided some challenges at times. Regular contact continued with providers and during lockdowns this increased to a minimum of weekly to ensure providers were supported virtually and face to face where appropriate.

The Early years team and early years providers continue to work to address the impacts from Covid for children and their families. This includes identifying any delays in child development, financial difficulties, health, social and safeguarding issues.

Early years providers are inspected by Ofsted. (The figures below do not include out of school provision) Currently 100% of BCP providers are graded effective for safeguarding and over 96% are graded good or outstanding.

The plans and priorities for the Early Years team for the year ahead (2022/2023) include:

- Supporting practice development as required for Early Years providers, providing training, the continual review of practice and provision of bespoke support
- Continue to develop the support packages for out of school provisions
- Continue to work with the PDSCP and BCP Committee on agreed priorities
- Continue to grow the links with partners and the Early Years team to support effective safeguarding practice and to raise awareness of the significant role the Early Years team have in safeguarding

Training packages currently being developed for delivery in 2022/2023 include effective referrals, reintroduction of supervision for early years, safeguarding induction, PPN and MARAC workshops and chronology workshops.

Safeguarding in Education

BCP has two Education Safeguarding Advisors (advisors) who work in close working partnership with all education settings and all multi-agency partners. The advisors are members of many multi-agency working groups, such as School Watch, Operation Encompass, Prevent, Complex Safeguarding, Harmful Sexual Behaviour Working Party, School Monitoring Group, and Early Help Management Group Resources. The advisors represent the views of schools and the local college and share areas of strength, good practice, issues, and concerns from education settings with partners for discussion. Minutes and discussion outcomes are disseminated to education settings by the advisors, via

forums and newsletters. The advisors also work in close partnership with Dorset Police for the 'School Watch' procedures and with colleagues from across BCP, such as the LADO, Early Years Safeguarding Lead, Education Officer in the MASH, BCP SEND team and Pan-Dorset Partnership Business Manager. This includes promoting effective working relationships between settings and other agencies, such as Social Care, promoting the use of the escalation policy and increasing awareness and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all agencies and liaison with Early Help partners and the MASH/Assessment team to support the development of services (e.g., the BCP Navigator scheme) 11 BCP schools have received an external Ofsted inspection visit with 10 school graded as 'Good' (April 21 – March 22). DSLs share their experiences of Ofsted inspections with their colleagues at the DSL forums. Ofsted also provides an avenue for parents to raise a complaint about a school. 20 Ofsted complaints were received between April 2021 and March 2022 relating to BCP Schools. (13 different schools, with some repeat complaints from the same person). All Ofsted complaints received by BCP Council are acted upon and in accordance with the level of consent. Any trends or themes are noted and are used to direct attention to the area for reflection and development in the settings and where possible at the forums as a learning opportunity for all DSLs. The advisors have seen an increase in the number of Ofsted complaints where there has been a 'consent to share'. This has led to challenge and review by BCP Council, items as key learning opportunities and offers of support from other teams at BCP (e.g., behaviour, anti-bullying support, exclusion issues).

Some good examples of the work of the BCP advisors includes:

- Annual up-dates to and promoting of local guidance documents, local audit tool in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE); available on the PDSCP website
- Further development of our safeguarding leaflet into different languages, (this year into Ukrainian and Afghanistan languages) to respond to new cultural groups joining our schools
- Promoting developments from other teams during the DSL forums e.g., navigator role, school mental health support
- Audit discussions and outcomes ensure involvement of children and parents (e.g., safeguarding questionnaires, school council agenda, school governor involvement, parent workshops, parent forums, training offers)
- 2 online forums for DSLs held each term
- Anti-bullying Forums are held termly linking to the Anti bullying Alliance national United against bullying project
- Governor training and annual briefing provided by the ESAs
- A Questionnaire to all DSLs regarding harmful sexual behaviour in schools. Included feedback on requirements for further development of services. Data analysed by BCP senior team.
- Operation Encompass processes to move forward to PRONTO where reports should be received by the school before the child attends school
- MARAC – reviewing how schools are more directly involved in this process in knowing the outcomes for their children

DORSET COUNCIL



Dorset Council continues to ensure the lives of our residents are as good as they can be. With this in mind, we continually improve the services we deliver and commission to improve outcomes and ensure that every child and young person in Dorset has the best childhood possible. Dorset has worked with partners to develop and deliver a Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2020-23 which improves outcomes for our children, young people and families in Dorset. The Plan has clear governance arrangements reporting into strategic boards and member committees to ensure transparency and oversight, celebrating the success of positive impact where this is made.

Following our full ILACS inspection in September and October of 2021, we've progressed our partnership improvement plans, working through our Strengthening Services Board, which is the local delivery function of the PDSCP. Ofsted rated Dorset as "Good" with "Outstanding" leadership in its [published Report in November 2021](#). The Strengthening Services Board is the local delivery arm for the Dorset area in the Pan-Dorset partnership, chaired by the Chief Executive of Dorset Council with representatives at executive level across the partners. The Board meet every 6-weeks to ensure progress and impact on the actions in the Plan are translating into improved outcomes for children and young people. The Highlight Report from each Board is shared with the PDSCP Executive Team every month to enable strategic oversight.

In 2021 we embedded our fully integrated locality approach which is showing positive impact in school inclusion, Early Help and Social Work practice.

We have opened new Children's Homes, enabling us to keep our children and young people in Dorset, closer to their homes, families and friends. We have also delivered a grow-your-own approach to developing social workers and future leaders.

All of this has had a real impact on improving outcomes for our children and young people.

Context for Dorset

Dorset Council area population is 379,791 - 28% of whom are aged 65 and older (national 18%) with 74,305 children and young people aged 0-24 representing 20% of the total population. We have low birth rates and historically many working age young people have left the area.

The beautiful landscapes of Dorset can conceal hidden challenges: there are some significant areas of deprivation, mostly in urban areas (mainly Weymouth and Portland). Ten areas in Dorset are within the top 20% nationally for high levels of multiple deprivation, nine of these within Weymouth and Portland.

There is also rural deprivation due to isolation and difficulty accessing housing, transport and essential services. The Children's Society estimates that approximately 23% of Dorset Children are living in poverty.

There are 47,946 children from Reception to Year 14 in Dorset. The population is predominantly white British, with 4.4% of our residents from black and minority ethnic groups, rising to 8% for children of school age. We have 159 Schools, Academies, Maintained and Free. 77% of our children are educated in schools that are judged good or better by Ofsted – 83% of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are educated in schools that are judged good or better by Ofsted.

Crime is generally low in Dorset as are first time entrants into the Youth Justice System and this is an improving picture. Employment is high but earnings are below average and house prices are high with affordability issues for many young people and keyworkers.

Early Help

Dorset has published an Early Help Strategy, which is commended in Ofsted's Inspection Report, "Children receive the help that they need at the right time. Families benefit from a broad range of Early Help services, tailored to their needs and in the places where they live. Partnership working is well developed, offering a range of options that build on family's strengths and which can be provided without delay."

Early Help is the total support that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. We understand the importance of high-quality universal services as an important foundation of early help, building children, young people and family resilience. We are committed to providing help and support in communities, so that we are embedded in the places where families live, learn and thrive and alongside partners who want the best for our children. We recognise that an effective early help system is entirely reliant on strong relationships across the whole system as well as with our children, young people and families.

Our vision for Early Help is that we want our children to thrive. We believe that early help is an approach as much as it is a set of services and an offer for our families. To be effective, early help needs to be embedded in thinking and action across the system so that our children and families can say, "I got the help I needed, when I needed it". In Dorset, we have a strong commitment to early help across our partnership. We want our communities that wrap around children and families and provide opportunities for help and support, from conception to career. We believe we all have a role to play in helping families with the right support at the right time and that we can build and draw on existing community assets to create a system that helps our children to thrive.

Safeguarding in Education Offer to Schools

Within the Quality Assurance and Partnerships Team in Dorset Council we have created additional capacity to provide the strategic leadership and oversight of the education safeguarding offer by building in an additional Service Manager Post to our structure. In addition to this we employ Safeguarding and Standards Advisors who have discreet specialisms. These consist of:

- Safeguarding and Standards Advisor - Designated Officers (LADO), who provides support, advice and guidance to schools (along with other partners) when allegations have been made against adults working with children who are either employed by or who provide services on a voluntary basis for the school.
- Safeguarding and Standards Advisor – Schools, who provide dedicated support to education settings regarding safeguarding.
- Safeguarding and Standards Advisor – SEND, who focusses on the development of Quality Assurance of SEND

The Safeguarding and Standards Advisors - Schools and LADO are qualified social workers with extensive safeguarding and child protection experience who have access to a wide range of professional expertise and professional relationships with other agencies.

Managing allegations

When allegations are made against adults working with children who are either employed by, or who provide services on a voluntary basis for education settings, the LADO will support them through the management of allegations process offering support and guidance. The Safeguarding and Standards Advisor - Schools will be invited to the allegations meeting by the LADO so that the education settings can be supported with their safety planning and pick up on any recurrent trends or themes relating to schools.

Closing the loop – Learning from audits and reviews

There is a strong link with the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (PDSCP) and where actions or learnings are identified for specific education settings through a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR), or other multi-agency audits, the Safeguarding and Standards Advisor - Schools will support the education setting with the development of an action plan which is tracked and monitored through the PDSCP CSPR group.

The Safeguarding and Standards Advisor will also support schools with other Safeguarding Partnership developments or projects such as Operation Encompass, which is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

Where learning or recurrent themes are identified relating to safeguarding more generally across education settings, this will either be incorporated into the current training courses offered, or bespoke training may be developed if required working closely with the PDSCP.

The 175/157 audit is an annual safeguarding audit that the team sends to all schools in Dorset in September to gain assurance that schools are discharging their statutory safeguarding duties compliantly and to highlight where this may need strengthening.

The Safeguarding and Standards Advisor – Schools, provide feedback to the schools on their audit, highlighting any specific safeguarding issues, supporting with completion of an action plan, then monitoring and tracking progress until completion of all actions, which may include a follow up visit. This work will in turn provide the education setting with assurance that they are fulfilling their statutory duties through this external validation, which also supports schools to demonstrate robust safeguarding procedures to Ofsted.

Safeguarding Complaints about education settings

All safeguarding complaints about education settings reported to Children’s Services, which include by Ofsted, or the Department for Education are investigated by the Safeguarding and Standards Advisor - Schools. Where actions are identified, they support the education setting with the completion of an action plan to address any areas for improvement.

Where schools have received a ‘Requires Improvement’ or an ‘Inadequate’ judgement from Ofsted in relation to safeguarding, they will be offered support from the Safeguarding and Standards Advisor - Schools which will take the form of a visit to support completion of an action plan to address the areas for improvement identified.

School Watch

A ‘School Watch’ is in place within the localities, this is when the police may wish to highlight an urgent safeguarding risk that they feel relevant education settings need to be aware of. This is a system of mechanised telephone calls between schools, each receiving information and passing to the next, culminating in the last school on the list advising the team when they receive confirmation of receipt of the information. This provides a speedy cascade of information sharing to education settings that may be affected by safeguarding concerns in their community that the police have identified.

Work is due to commence with mainstream schools (as commissioners of alternative provision) and providers of alternative provision, to enhance staff knowledge in recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns, this will include development of risk assessments supporting decision making for individual children. This will also include the development of a safeguarding self-assessment, with an external quality assurance approach for alternative provision, with a focus on the risks associated with children experiencing extra-familial harm and how this is recognised and responded to.

The Safeguarding Advisor and the Education Challenge Leads in the Localities work together liaising when there are safeguarding issues that relate to their schools. We will be strengthening these links to ensure that the Safeguarding Advisor has a far broader understanding across Dorset of safeguarding themes and patterns for schools that will better inform their offer of support and training available to schools across Dorset.

Training offer

Training has been developed in addition to the training provided by the Partnership and all materials and training content is reviewed and updated by the Safeguarding and Standards Advisor - Schools in line with any updates in legislation or statutory guidance such as Keeping Children Safe in Education or Working Together to Safeguard Children with further oversight regarding quality of training and materials by the Dorset Council Practice, Policy and Procedure Group.

Quality Assurance

To ensure that social work in the Dorset area delivers the impact required. Quality Assurance teams have continued to monitor the quality of social work practice, policies and procedures in place. Regular, monthly reporting to senior managers and leadership across the council is embedded and enables rapid changes to policy, practice and procedures where required.

A local Multi-Agency Quality of Practice and Action Group (MAQPAG) brings partners across the system together to ensure joined-up and clear actions are delivered across the partnership, feeding into embedded governance reporting.

A series of toolkits has been developed and cascaded to the workforce to enable efficient and effective practice. Regular weekly communications are shared across the partnership with team meetings and supervision monitoring review of updated information, advice and guidance for policy, procedure and practice.

Quality Assurance embraces all activity that contributes to quality of practice and service improvement and helps us to understand how effectively services are being delivered to keep children safe. This is evidenced through:

- Audits
- Dip Samples
- Practice week
- Feedback from children and families
- Observations of practice
- Multi agency audits
- Themed Reviews
- Closing the learning loop



Quality Assurance also collates feedback from children, young people and families and progresses changes to policy, process, and practice through Dorset's local area arrangements. This function is being strengthened through the development of Family Hubs and the Family Advisory Group work.

5. DORSET AND BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH, AND POOLE SUBGROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

BCP SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN COMMITTEE

The BCP Safeguarding Children Committee is the BCP delivery arm of the PDSCP. It meets every six weeks and is responsible for promoting outstanding practice in the way that agencies work together to protect children and young people within the BCP area. The first meeting of the Committee was held in June 2021 and work during the year has focused on developing robust terms of reference, a standing agenda, strengthening governance and reporting from BCP subgroups, all of which drive the work of the Committee.

Plans for 2022/2023 are to develop a BCP area safeguarding children delivery plan informed by local data and learning and linked to the PDSCP priorities and challenges.

PDSCP CHALLENGE AND SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

At its meeting in March 2022 the PDSCP agreed for there to be individual area-based quality assurance groups, recognising that this would better meet the needs of the diverse populations of both areas, and allow for a better understanding of local context. These separate arrangements will be kept under review and standardised as much as possible across the two areas.

The PDSCP Challenge and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group were reformed as the BCP area-based Quality Assurance Group and Dorset area-based Quality Assurance Group.

The area-based groups are accountable to the local BCP Safeguarding Committee and the local Dorset Strengthening Services for Children and Families Board. They are established to provide assurance that appropriate and effective quality assurance mechanisms are in place and effective.

BCP AREA-BASED QUALITY ASSURANCE GROUP

In the year ahead the BCP Quality Assurance Group will develop its work plan for 2022/2023 and propose a program of work to the BCP Child Safeguarding Committee based on agreed priorities.

The Group will review and amend its terms of reference and membership to reflect the changes in local operational delivery and will develop a quality assurance framework and review its area-based data set and performance scorecard.

BCP AND DORSET CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEW GROUPS (CSPR)

During 2021 there was a shift from a Pan Dorset approach for managing child safeguarding practice reviews to place-based arrangements in the two Local Authority areas. Both groups have the same chairperson which provides consistency across the two areas and has provided the opportunity for multi-agency partners to review the terms of reference and membership of each group. Group members are all experienced safeguarding practitioners who hold each other to account and challenge where appropriate.

There were three CSPR's initiated in Dorset Council and one in Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council (BCP), and a thematic learning review in both Dorset and BCP, where there was significant engagement with the family, community, Dorset Police and BCP Council.

CSPR Reports can be found here: <https://pdscp.co.uk/working-with-children/serious-case-reviews/>

A further case was considered and agreed to be managed through the Child Death Overview Panel and one case is currently sitting within the criminal arena.

In addition, Dorset CSPR Group has been involved in two out of area cases; a young girl who appeared to have taken her own life and a sudden and unexpected infant death, in which neglect was a feature.

Of interest though has been national learning from other areas.

Detail about the learning from multi-agency case reviews is in the Reflection section – learning from Practice (page x).

DORSET AREA-BASED MULTI-AGENCY QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE ACTION GROUP (MAQPAG)

MAQPAG is Dorset's place-based quality assurance group. This has enabled a focus on the key partnership arrangements for children in Dorset and to support place-based focus of audit and improvements to the quality of practice. One of the key areas identified from this work was our response to families where domestic abuse is a factor, where risks were seen to be heightened by Covid-enforced isolation. The Domestic Abuse toolkit is a Dorset Multi agency toolkit for all front-line practitioners and the take up and use of this was evidenced in the children's services Ofsted inspection.

The quality assurance of the partnership has enabled identification of areas for improvement both as a partnership and individual partners. A particular focus has been Child Exploitation' a partnership audit for this will be available in July 22 along with publication of our updated strategy.

The Partnership has during this year been supported through a commissioned service to consider child and family feedback along with participation from them to ensure we have focus on the areas that are important to them. A governance process around this has now been implemented and the partnership continues to prioritise this area of the work. We had some powerful feedback from some of our children who have additional needs. As a result, direct learning and action was progressed to facilitate changes in practice. The partnership has also recently become part of the children's service practice observation week twice a year. This enables us as leaders to learn from observation of our partnership front-line work with children and families to build on good practice and support improvements. Action plans are then progressed through the Multi Agency Quality Assurance Group (MAQPAG) and governance arrangements.

Children's services have developed a sexual abuse toolkit for practitioners. A recent local CSPR recommended that this be adopted by the full PDSCP. Work has already commenced, and it is planned that we will have a Pan Dorset sexual abuse toolkit available by December 2022.

The development of several multi-agency toolkits means front line practitioners have one dedicated resource for practical guidance, access to services and research for each topic. The toolkits also mean that practitioners can give children and families consistent access to quality information and support when they need it. We have also worked on further initiatives such as the DRIVE³ programme and the Family Courts Pathfinder, which aims to make family's experience of court less adversarial.

³ DRIVE - The Drive Partnership works across the domestic abuse specialist sector, public sector partners and beyond to develop sustainable, national systems in England and Wales that respond effectively to all perpetrators of domestic abuse.

All parts of the partnership have had some form of inspection, the ILACS identified the strength of our front door arrangements but also highlighted the need to strengthen the process around strategy discussions. Police have also had a HMIC inspection and areas for improvement addressed which are heard and monitored through progress updates to the MA QPAG. We will look to oversee any further plans required. We have reviewed our Children's Services Quality Assurance Framework; we are now undertaking a peer review of safeguarding in education. We have recently published our safeguarding in schools offer and want to enhance this further and link to wider work within the partnership in a co-ordinated approach to support schools more broadly.

Future partnership working to implement Safeguarding Families Together has also been supported by committee and the partnership to implement a pilot in the Portland and Weymouth area. This will bring together adult practitioners to support a more holistic approach to working with families to manage risk and reduce children coming into care or subject to child protection plans.

DORSET MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB

Dorset MASH partners continued to work well together during Covid – Dorset Council Children's Services MASH arrangements, sits within the Children's Advice & Duty Service and the MASH model is a virtual one. We have continued to strengthen our multi-agency working practices, with 6 weekly MASH Operational meetings, 3 monthly MASH Strategic Group meetings and weekly audit/themes meetings. This has enabled us to provide a co-ordinated response when required, continue to develop, and strengthen practice where required and to learn from the audits to promote learning.

The Dorset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub is capturing the voice of children, young people, and their families through direct feedback. This includes the child's likely lived experience in decision-making, analysing the referral detail, history, risks, and strengths, to consider the likely impact of this for the child and their lived experience. This is central to decision-making, keeping the child at the heart of what is done, to ensure that right from our initial contact with families, the child is at the centre of practice.

The Dorset MASH continue to audit decision-making and information sharing with our statutory partners and meets weekly to confirm outcomes, themes and identify areas of good practice and development. Audit templates identify themes to focus on within the referral and decision-making process, for example: consent or involvement of fathers.

Learning from case reviews is taken forwards, within our partnerships to understand how this learning can be applied to strengthen decision-making and identify safeguarding needs and risks at the Front Door. This includes understanding the child's rights, lived experience and needs, with the aim of the child and their family receiving the right service, first time.

Safeguarding practices within the Dorset MASH continue to be developed, using learning from audits, conversations with partners and a review of the current MASH arrangements. This has led, to a task & finish group, which currently remains in place, to look at how we promote decision-making within the MASH, what good practice looks like, how will we get there, what support do we need to get there and how we will know when we are achieving this.

Our Consultant Social Workers have supported with Vulnerability and Safeguarding training with our Dorset Police colleagues. We continue to work closely with our Dorset MASH partners and contribute where required to training and development needs in respect of safeguarding and good practice.

Ofsted Children's Services inspection report published in November 2021, noted – The 'front door' provides a calm, well-organised service, where timely and appropriate decisions are made about how to protect and support children most effectively. Parental consent is obtained if appropriate, and families are not subjected to statutory intervention unnecessarily. However, when children are, or may be, at risk of significant harm, social workers investigate quickly, with the support of key partners, including Police, when needed.

Early Help triage process will be amalgamated into the Dorset MASH creating one central contact point and consistency in decision-making at the front door for all contacts and referrals.

DORSET CHILD EXPLOITATION STRATEGIC GROUP

The Dorset Child Exploitation Strategic Group meets on a quarterly basis and has oversight of the work of the Children at Risk of or Linked to Exploitation (CAROLE) tactical group and the Child Exploitation (CE) action plan.

During 20221 the contextual safeguarding toolkit was developed and implemented across the Dorset Council area. Multi Agency training was delivered between May and Sept 2021. Additional training has been delivered by Target Youth Workers to local businesses, RNLI, schools, libraries, youth clubs and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

We have embedded Youth at Risk meetings within each locality area, with good engagement from partners to identify emerging risks of exploitation and extra familial harm and explore how we can make contexts safer for young people.

Funding has been accessed from the Covid Recovery fund to support additional capacity from the voluntary and community sector to support an outreach youth worker in each of our locality areas. Outreach youth work has been effective in developing relationships with young people and identifying emerging concerns which can be addressed through our contextual safeguarding approach.

We have embedded Child Exploitation Champions across all our localities and some central services and hold monthly meetings to share information around key themes, areas of concerns, work being undertaken by Targeted youth workers and feedback from and to CAROLE and CE Strategic Group.

We have worked with Dorset Council's licencing team to ensure that the new licencing policy for taxi drivers includes safeguarding training including child exploitation; this must be completed on registration and yearly to maintain licence.

We have strengthened our approach to children in care who are placed in Dorset by other councils, particularly in unregulated homes, by ensuring that when notification is received, full details of any child exploitation risks are requested by our Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD), and these are shared with the Targeted Youth Worker for the locality the child is placed. This has been particularly helpful in the Chesil area where high risk young people have been placed in unregulated post-16 provisions where high-risk young people have been placed by other Local Authorities. The Targeted youth worker has been able to make proactive approaches to the placements, so that we can support disruption.

The Partnership has worked with the Tackling Child Exploitation Project led by Research in Practice and The Children's Society to consider how we can strengthen our work with young people to ensure their lived experiences are understood and that we work with young people and families to inform our next strategic plan.

We are seeking feedback from parents/ carers and young people as part of the PDSCP criminal exploitation audit which will inform our next action plan and strategy.

Following the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) audit undertaken in March 2022 we reviewed the MACE process and developed a chairs toolkit. We also now have Quality Assurance Reviewing Officers chairing MACE meetings for those children identified to be at significant risk of child exploitation. This has improved timeliness of reviews, strengthened action planning and reduced risks more quickly.

During 2022 the PDSCP Dorset Learning Hub has undertaken a multi-agency child exploitation audit which will be concluded in September 2022. Our priority for the year ahead is to conclude this audit to inform a new child exploitation strategy and action plan for 2023 onward.

6. PERFORMANCE DATA

BCP COUNCIL

The number of children identified as at risk of exploitation has stabilised in the latter part of the year, with 88 children on the profile at the end of March 2022. This includes 27 children experiencing harm from exploitation (including 13 children in care), 36 at risk of harm from exploitation (including 13 children in care) and a further 25 children with potential concerns (including 6 children in care). There were 564 missing episodes in Quarter 4, an increase of 20.3% compared to the previous quarter. This fell month on month to 175 episodes in March 2022 involving 88 children (23 children in care). 92.0% of missing episodes required a return home interview, with 78.9% completed. 86.6% of those completed were within 3 working days – the highest performance seen in the last 12 months. 3 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were missing at the end of March.

Complex Safeguarding teams and wider service use the Exploitation Team Around the Child (ETAC) model for the assessment, planning and review of multi-agency intervention and disruption. A missing tracker is reviewed monthly to identify frequent and persistent missing children, together with performance in the timely completion of return home interviews. Return Home Interviews are monitored by a Missing Co-ordinator, who assesses both quality and engagement. The service now has a Gold and Silver Command structure between the CST and Dorset Police, and has embedded the 3Ps model: Prosecution, Protection, and Prevention.

We continue to see a high number of Children in Need (CIN) with a further increase of 4% at the end of Quarter 3. Timely recording of visits to children and general case recording remains a challenge in the Safeguarding Service. Staff are providing assurance that they are undertaking visits and seeing children within the required frequency, however due to high caseloads they are not able to keep up with case recordings. At the end of March 2022, 89.7% of children in need had been seen in accordance with their plan. There is high level of daily, weekly, and monthly management scrutiny applied to ensure case recording and visits frequency are adhered to, and this remains a priority area.

Several agency social workers in the Children and Families First service resigned in April 2022, in part due to rising accommodation costs. Various options including Bournemouth University accommodation and deals with local hotels are being explored. The level of agency staff in this part of the service continues to be a concern.

DORSET COUNCIL

What is working well?

% Children in Care being placed closer to home: At the end of June, for the first time since November 2020 we have seen a drop to under 40% of our children in care placed 20 miles or more from home. Recruitment of foster carers remains a national issue that is also experienced in Dorset. However, in Dorset we continue to strive to make use of in-house local placements for our children. Operational staff and commissioning continue to work closely to ensure placements are in the community's our children have grown up in. This is positive for our children but may carry additional pressures on partnership resource to carry out the necessary statutory health checks.

Annual Health Assessments for Children in Care: At the end of June, timeliness of annual health assessments was above 90% for the first time since Covid. Children's Services continue to work closely with health colleagues to support ongoing improvement. Key developments to support the improving picture for these assessments are the increased capacity within the health service and the training that has been delivered by health recently. The training highlights the importance of review health assessments to health visiting staff and has moved from an annual rolling training program to 6 monthly. A further factor to improving performance is an improved escalation process within Dorset health for children placed out of county.

Areas of Concern

Missing: We have seen a steady increase of missing incidents over Q1, and whilst not unexpected due to the approaching summer months, there is work progressing on how we can plan and reduce the number of missing incidents. There are also several our young people who have repeat missing episodes and we are developing a weekly missing meeting, in addition to the daily missing meeting. The focus for the weekly meeting will be on key young people where repeat missing episodes and associated contextual safeguarding risks have been identified, to inform support, care and risk management plans with the aim of working with the young person to reduce repeat missing episodes/contextual safeguarding risks. There is a clear focus within the partnership and measures either in place or being developed, to reduce not only the number of missing episodes but also how we work with the young person to inform multi-agency support plans and risk reduction.

Initial Health Assessments for Children in Care: Most consents for new children arriving in care are obtained within the agreed 5 working days (on May 8 out of 12, on June 7 out of 8) but Initial Health assessments are not being completed within the agreed 20 working days (in April 9%, May 14% had their IHA on time). Current data for June suggests that at least 25% of IHAs will have been held in time, with a potential for 50% on time, showing an improvement from previous months but with more work to do. Regular discussions and escalations are taking place with health to ensure this is resolved and we are starting to see improvements with our initial June data. There remain capacity concerns within health to meet the increasing demand from our predicted increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Increase on a Child Protection Plan: Following an audit of 50 new children that came onto a plan in March, it was identified that 19 out of the 24 families (45 children) were appropriately started with a plan, whilst the remaining 5 families proceeded too quickly without alternative interventions first. We continue to monitor closely those identified for initial child protection conferences to ensure this is the most appropriate interventions. We are implementing a pilot of safeguarding families which will directly support a reduction of child protection numbers in the Chesil locality. Depending on the launch and success this may be rolled out wider and we continue to look at safe ways to reduce number of children on a plan.

Care Leavers in Bed and Breakfast: This has been an area of very close scrutiny for the council. We have seen the number of care leavers in bed and breakfast reduce to 2 (from 7 in April) and work is taking place with our Housing colleagues and holding exit planning meetings to ensure we bring this back down to 0 as soon as possible and to avoid further such arrangements.

Understanding the trends

Children in Care including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children: We continue to see a slight increase in the number of children coming into Dorset Council's care. Dorset Council is signed up to and part of the National Asylum-Seeking Children program and as part of this we continue to receive children into our care (during April and May 15 new children). It is likely that as we receive more children under this scheme that our overall children in care numbers will continue to increase. We continue to track children until they achieve permanence and are having a focused drive on reunification. Although overall numbers have risen, our numbers in care not including unaccompanied children have reduced since December (426 Dec to 419 June).

Children in Need: In Quarter 1 performance data we have seen a reduction in the rate of Children in Need. Dorset is still above the national average, but the direction of travel is good. Close focus has been paid to our data and child in need activity. Particular attention to the timeliness and impact of plans has taken place and there is further work to do with this. The focused attention to date will have contributed towards the reduction. Whilst we continue to see high demand and activity in some localities, as well as complexity, the focused attention on child in need planning, together with the maturity of our early help offer is resulting in reduction overall.

DORSET CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

What is working well?

- Fortnightly meetings with BCP and Police to escalate concerns quickly
- BCP QA group in development

- UASC IHA newly commissioned service
- Dorset Intelligence and insights service, good partners buy-in and momentum, BCP Council sharing of data.

Areas of Concern?

- Partners response to the PDSCP risk register in a timely manner
- Critical incident notification process poorly understood by all agencies
- UASC capacity to respond to increasing numbers across all agencies in BCP area
- Transitioning to place-based arrangements / Pan-Dorset model

Understanding the trends

- Increasing complexity of cases often including knife crime
- Partners response to sexual abuse / intrafamilial sexual abuse requires strengthening
- Children with complex needs / placement delays whilst in acute beds
- Increasing number of young people attending the emergency department for substance and alcohol misuse
- Safeguarding training compliance is improving following dip during covid

DORSET POLICE

What is working well?

HMIC returned to Dorset Police on 25th April 2022, for an update inspection regarding the force performance in child protection. The positive progress of the MASH was highlighted with good feedback on timeliness of referrals, prioritisation of risk, contextual information sharing for children's lived experience, partnership working across agencies in daily meetings and onward strategic boards.

Areas of Concern

The triggers for multi-agency strategy meetings/professional meetings regarding children whose contextual risk is increasing is a concern, for example children with repeat missing episodes, carrying weapons in the community. The escalation process and management of information sharing regarding these children requires some review to ensure an increasing contextual risk can be identified and used as a foundation for multi-agency plans that tackle the core vulnerabilities of the child.

Understanding the trends.

The neglect data shows a marked increase within February 2022. 41 of the crimes are attributable to only 9 families who have multiple children attached to one child protection conference, causing most of the spikes.

Police Protection Notification numbers remain high and have moved to the upper tolerances of the predicted demand thresholds for 2022. MASH processes and staffing are being flexed to accommodate these challenges.

7. BUDGET 2021/2022

Safeguarding partners are required to provide equitable and proportionate funding to cover all elements of their multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements (Working Together Guidance 2018).

SAFEGUARDING PARTNER	CONTRIBUTION
BCP COUNCIL	£79,605
DORSET COUNCIL	£72,359
DORSET POLICE	£48,846
DORSET CCG	£75,393
TOTAL	£276,203

