

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Health and Wellbeing Board

To: Councillors Steels-Walshaw (Chair), Runciman, Webb, and Cullwick,
Anja Hazebroek - Executive Director of Communications, Marketing and Media Relations, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership (Interim Vice Chair)
Michael Ash-McMahon – Interim York Place Director, Humber and North Yorkshire ICB
Peter Roderick - Director of Public Health, City of York Council
Siân Balsom – Manager, Healthwatch York
Dr Emma Broughton – Joint Chair of York Health & Care Collaborative
Zoe Campbell – Managing Director, Yorkshire, York & Selby - Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
Sara Storey – Corporate Director, Adults and Integration, City of York Council
Martin Kelly - Corporate Director of Children's and Education, City of York Council
Pauline Stuchfield – Director of Housing and Communities, City of York Council
Simon Morritt - Chief Executive, York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Mike Padgham – Chair, Independent Care Group
Alison Semmence - Chief Executive, York CVS
Fiona Willey – Chief Superintendent, North Yorkshire Police
Tom Hirst – Area Manager Director of Community Risk and Resilience, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Date: Wednesday, 24 September 2025

Time: 4.30 pm

Venue: West Offices - Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on **16 September 2025**. The attached additional documents are now available for the following agenda item:

5. Report of the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/2025 and the Independent Scrutineer Report (Pages 3 - 70)

Annexes A and B for this item were missing from the original agenda publication and have been included in this supplement.

Annex A: City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/25

Annex B: Independent Scrutineer Report

This agenda supplement was published on **23 September 2025**

City of York
Safeguarding Children Partnership



Annual Report

2024/25



Contents

Foreward from the Three Statutory Safeguarding Partners	3
National Context	5
Executive Summary	7
Vision, Values and Principles	13
Key Achievements 2024/25	14
Priority One: Prevention, Early Support and Early Help	15
Priority Two: Child Exploitation	24
Priority Three: Children Missing from Education	30
Priority Four: Working with Fathers and Male Carers	33
Priority Five: Mental Health and Wellbeing	36
Improving Further	40
Voice and Lived Experience of Child or Young Person	40
Learning and Development	45
Training	47
Safeguarding in Education	53
Communication and Engagement	56
Child Death Review Panel (CDOP)	58
Partnership Finance 2024/25	59

Foreward from the Three Statutory Safeguarding Partners

Martin Kelly

Director of Children's Services, City of York Council

This report reflects the depth of work being done across agencies in the city to safeguard children, particularly those who are most vulnerable to risk. It is especially important to understand the lived experience of every child and for some this can go unnoticed without purposeful strategies to strengthen their sense of belonging. The partnership priorities rightly place a laser focus therefore on issues such as young carers, missing education, mental health and exploitation. Strong trusting relationships and networks are critical to empowering young people's healthy development. The work that is being done on these issues across the partnership demonstrates the maturity of relationships using appropriate levels of support, challenge and common purpose to make a real and tangible difference. This is evidenced well in the case studies throughout the report.

The partners at every level are ambitious and continue to grow in strength and determination to make York a safe place to live and grow.

Paula South

Director Nursing Statutory Partnerships, Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership

The Annual Report is a comprehensive review of our collective efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of children across the city of York, highlighting our achievements along with areas for further work.

Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership has a golden ambition to radically improve children's well-being, ensuring children are safe, healthy, and thriving. Over the past year, our commitment to safeguarding children has been unwavering. Staff in Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership have worked diligently, in collaboration with our partners, to create a safer environment for children.

The commitment of staff has made a significant impact on the lives of many children and their families.

As we look forward, we must continue to build on our successes and address the challenges that lie ahead. Our focus will remain on strengthening safeguarding practices across the partnership, and enhancing our system wide working, to ensure every child is protected from harm. Together, we can create a community where every child feels safe, heard, valued, and supported.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to safeguarding children. I look forward to our ongoing collaboration and the positive impact we will continue to make in the lives of children and families in the City of York.

Catherine Clarke

Assistant Chief Constable, Local Policing & Safeguarding, North Yorkshire Police

This year's report highlights the commitment and dedication of people working across the City of York Children's Safeguarding Partnership. Keeping children safe, and feeling safe, is a priority for North Yorkshire Police and has to be done in partnership so that we can effectively and sustainably identify, respond to, and eliminate risk to the children and young people who live in and visit the City of York. This remains a challenge to all partners, due to the complexity of threats both in our communities and online, however the strength of this partnership enables us to respond in a coordinated, professional and positive way to keep children safe

Together we continue to build on our strong foundations and our past improvements, and we continuously seek opportunities to improve.

National Context

Since 2023, we have seen nationally some significant changes within safeguarding policy following the publication of the Government's Strategy: Stable homes, Built on Love (2023) and Josh MacAlister's Independent review of Children's Social Care in 2022. The Government's Strategy emphasises the need for a whole system approach to reforming children's social care, requiring input from health, police, schools, family courts, youth justice, businesses and civil society alongside central government, local authorities and the workforce.

The government published its updated guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance in December 2023](#) which sets out our shared partnership responsibility of successful outcomes being dependent on strong multi-agency partnership working and child-centred practice focusing on the whole family approach. During 2024-25, the Partnership were responsible for implementing the changes across the partnership outlined in Working Together (2023). This work was overseen by the Safeguarding Executive and our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the City of York were published in December 2024.

Additionally, in 2023 the Government also published the following documents: Working Together Statutory Framework (statute updates), the Children's Social Care National Framework and guidance on Improving Practice with Children, Young People and Families.

The Children's Social Care National Framework lays out in statutory guidance the purpose, principles for practice and expected outcomes of Children's Social Care. The guidance recognises that to achieve the right outcomes for children and young people, partnership vision and working needs to be at the centre of our work.

During 2024/25, the government also published other key guidance including: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), Kinship Care, Statutory Guidance, Children's Well-Being and Schools Bill and the Families First Partnership Programme (FFP) and Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme.

Across all of these reforms and policy documents the main themes are:

- Partnership working to an agreed practice framework
- Strengthening of education as a key agency in safeguarding partnerships

- Reducing the number of children accessing acute services – meeting the need at ‘the right time’ for the family
- Destigmatise support – reshape as ‘Family Help’
- Engaging families as partners
- Reducing the number of children in care
- Decisive for children and young people when we need to be
- Stability of the workforce – implementation of new agency rules

The three statutory partners continue to work with the partnership and with agencies to monitor the safeguarding landscape and implement any changes required. Within the City of York, a Families First Executive Board has been established to consider as a partnership how we embed Family Help across the city, including the development of multi-agency disciplinary teams.



Executive Summary

This is the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report which covers the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 and sets out the work that has been undertaken by partners and the Sub-groups of the partnership during that time. The focus of this report is on our priority areas:

Priority One: Prevention, Early Support and Early Help

Priority Two: Child Exploitation

Priority Three: Children Missing from Education

Priority Four: Engaging with Fathers

Priority Five: Mental Health and Wellbeing

In response to Prevention, Early Support and Early Help, we refreshed our partnership Early Help Strategy and this was launched across the city in Autumn 2024, which promotes our shared vision about how we can support children and their families at the earliest opportunity. A significant amount of training and briefings to the partnership have taken place in relation to the Children's Social Care practice model 'Building Brighter Futures'. The practice model has been embedded across the partnership and we have seen a shared understanding of this model and language being used across the partnership. This was also evidenced in the City of York Children's Services Ofsted Inspection report.

Updates to Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) highlighted the importance of identifying, assessing, and supporting young carers. It emphasises the need for agencies to collaborate and work in partnership to support families of young carers through a whole-family approach. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by the partnership and the three statutory partner organisations alongside other partners have signed up to the Young Carers Covenant to ensure that we are working within the expected guidelines around supporting Young Carers.

Our multi-agency Threshold Guidance (Guidance on Continuum of Need) was reviewed and updated in line with Working Together (2023) where Family Help and the role of the lead practitioner has been strengthened. We know that in the City of York our thresholds are well understood and applied (Ofsted,

2025). Therefore, the updated guidance has built on the strength of the work we already do. We have also continued to develop our Raise York Family Hub network. There are now seven Family Hubs operating across the city making use of existing community assets.

The focus of our Child Exploitation priority has been launching our Contextual Safeguarding Strategy which outlines how the partnership works to protect children and young people from harm outside their home, recognising that significant harm can also occur in peer groups, communities, and online. It emphasises understanding the diverse relationships young people form and the potential for violence and abuse in those contexts. Our strategy is underpinned by the “Four P’s” (Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue), a framework widely used in UK policing and increasingly embraced by safeguarding partnerships, which supports our continued commitment to a co-ordinated partnership approach to tackle all forms of child exploitation and extra-familial harm across the City of York. As part of the launch of the strategy we also reviewed other practice guidance and reviewed our partnership processes.

We undertook a mock Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) multi-agency audit on the theme of Serious Youth Violence in April 2024 which was to understand the effectiveness of our multi-agency response to children who are at risk of Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation.

We have continued to develop and enhance our Multi-Agency Missing, Vulnerable to Exploitation and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Data Set to include analysis. The data set now includes a data headlines section which includes emerging trends and themes.

With the Children Missing from Education priority we have focused our efforts on school attendance and how, as a partnership, we can make attendance ‘everybody’s business’. We continue to monitor data in relation to attendance and partners have put forward pledges as to how their organisation will support improving this. We undertook a multi-agency audit to better understand our response to children with persistent/severe absence from education.

During 2024/25 we implemented ‘Operation Endeavour’ across the city which is an initiative that aims to support children and young people who go missing from home through the sharing of information between our partners and schools.

Following the National Panel's report of the Myth of Invisible Men and through learning identified within our multi-agency audits and reviews, we continued to raise awareness of the importance of building relationships with fathers, in relation to improving outcomes for children and encourage practitioners to 'think family' and consider significant others in the home when working with families. During 2024/25 the partnership launched a campaign alongside the Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership and Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership to help raise awareness regarding the importance of building relationships and connecting with fathers.

The partnership created a new webpage on the partnership website which pulls together useful resources and links for professionals working with fathers and male carers. We continue to promote key messages across the partnership regarding the importance of male carers.

Young People told us at our development day and through feedback surveys that one of their main priority areas is Mental Health and Wellbeing and in response the partnership has adopted this as a priority area as we hear about how important this is to them. As part of this priority area, the partnership have been seeking assurance from partners agencies to understand how they involve young people in accessing support in relation to Mental Health and Wellbeing. Our partners came together for an in-person workshop session which included a presentation from the ICB co-production lead and a young person from the young person advisory group 'Nothing About us Without Us'.

As a result of the workshop carried out, a dedicated group in York has been established, bringing together professionals from various agencies to develop a plan or strategy based on feedback from young people. This will be shared back with young people to keep them informed about ongoing efforts to improve access to mental health services.

The partnership's Children's Rights and Involvement Strategy has been reviewed adopting the Lundy model to guide how we work, which provides a practical framework to bring to life children's right to participation.

A Snapshot of Children and Young people in York

Children and young people aged 0-18 make up 16.73% of York's population (mid 2023 estimate)

First 1001 Days



- 5.9% mothers smoking at the time of delivery (Q2 24/25)
- 63.55% of infants are breastfed at 6-8 weeks (Q2 24/25)
- 2.70% of total births where low birth weight recorded (under 2500g) - term babies (22/23)
- 3.1 Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (22-23)
- 2.6 Neonatal Mortality Rate per 1,000 (21-23)
- 0.6 Post-Neonatal Mortality Rate per 1,000 (21-23)
- 31.18% face-to-face new birth visits undertaken by a health visitor after 14 days (Q2 24/25)

Aged 2-5



- 22.80% of reception year children recorded as carrying excess weight (23/24)
- 90.96% of children who were at or above the expected level of development at 2- 2½ year review (Q2 24/25)
- 1.4% of children attending state-funded nurseries are eligible for free school meals (23/24)
- 22.5% of children attending state-funded nurseries receive special educational support (23/24)
- 6.8% of children attending state-funded nurseries have an Education, Health and Care Plan (23/24)

Children and Young People in York aged 0-18 are more likely to: (data taken from 2021 Census)

- Identify as male (50.59%)
- Identify as white (90.08%)
- Follow no religion (55.71%)
- Identify as being from the UK (95.08%)

Aged 5-11

- 19.20% of year 6 children recorded as carrying excess weight (23/24)
- 17% of children attending state-funded primary school are eligible for free school meals (23/24)
- 2.7% of children attending state-funded primary schools have an Education Health Care Plan (23/24)
- 10.8% of primary school aged children receive Special Educational Needs support (23/24)
- 10% of primary school pupils reported that they have used e-cigarettes and 6% said that they have smoked cigarettes (23/24)
- 33% of primary school pupils said that they drink or have tried alcohol once or twice (23/24)
- 73% of primary school children said that they brush their teeth more than once a day and just over half remembered visiting a dentist in the last year (23/24)



The York Director of Public Health Report on Adolescence for 2024-25 found that:

- 5.6% of the 10-19 population are registered as having asthma, type 1 diabetes or epilepsy
- York secondary/sixth-form pupils scored a mean value of 14.9 out of 35 on the The Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. This suggests that the mental wellbeing of York pupils in 2023 was significantly worse than similar populations.
- There is a rapidly rising trend in children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs being identified and supported in York schools.

Aged 12+

- 1.0% Teenage mothers (delivery episodes aged under 18) (22/23)
- 1.30% of 16-17 year olds who are not in Employment, Education or Training (Q4 24/25)
- 15.2% of secondary-aged young people are eligible for free school meals (23/24)
- 2.4% of secondary school aged children have an Education Health Care Plan (23/24)
- 10.2% of secondary school aged children receive Special Educational Needs Support (23/24)
- 90% of secondary/sixth form pupils have never smoked cigarettes and a quarter use/used e-cigarettes (23/24)
- 66% of secondary/sixth form pupils said that they have tried or drink alcohol (23/24)
- 13% of year 12 pupils have tried drugs (23/24)
- Around a quarter of secondary/sixth-form pupils reported that they had self-harmed in the past year (23/24)
- 84% of secondary/sixth-form pupils said that they 'brush their teeth more than once a day' and 75% remembered visiting a dentist in the last year (23/24)



More stats about children and young people

- 6.18% are considered disabled under the Equality Act (2021 Census)
- 0.22% are Homeless (2021 Census)
- 95.1 % of 10-19s in the city described their health as being either very good or good (2021 Census)

Vision, Values and Principles

The Partnership has a vision at its core which is underpinned by its values and principles; these set out how the three statutory safeguarding partners work together with relevant agencies.

The overarching vision for the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership is:

“For all the children of York to grow up in safety and to always feel safe”.

Values

- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Children are safeguarded by a whole system, agencies, stakeholders, families, and communities.
- The voice and lived experience of children and families is at the centre of everything that we do.

Principles

Empowerment. We will support, respect and empower families to make their own informed decisions.

Learning. We are a partnership that reflects, learns and are committed to continuous improvement.

Prevention. We are committed to early help and early support, preventing harm from occurring.

Relational Practice. We will work in a strength-based way, in collaboration with families and with each other, to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.



Key Achievements 2024/25

The Partnership have continuously worked together throughout 2024/25 and have progressed a number of key pieces of work through the Executive and Sub-groups. The Sub-groups have also taken forward different strands of work related to our five priorities. Below outlines the work we have undertaken, how we know we are making a difference and what we will do next.

Priority One: Prevention, Early Support and Early Help

In 2024/25 we refreshed our partnership Early Help Strategy and launched this across the city in Autumn 2024 which promoted our shared vision about how we can support children and their families at the earliest opportunity. The launch of the Early Help Strategy was received well by partners who have been fully committed and engaged in supporting children and their families to ensure that needs for children and their families are identified early and that we are ensuring the right help is in place at the right time and at the right level.

During 2024/25, a significant amount of training and briefings have taken place in relation to the Children's Social Care practice model 'Building Brighter Futures' which has been well received by partners. There is now a shared level of understanding and language being used across the partnership. The City of York Children's Services Ofsted Inspection recognised that the practice model is embedded and practitioners show an in-depth knowledge of the model and are able to articulate the positive impact this has had on the quality of practice. This has created consistency across the service and has enabled partners with a framework around how we offer support and services to families.

Updates to Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) highlights the importance of identifying, assessing, and supporting young carers. It emphasises the need for agencies to collaborate and work in partnership to support families of young carers through a whole-family approach, which is a method of support and intervention that considers the needs, strengths, and dynamics of the entire family unit rather than focusing on individual members in isolation. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by the partnership and a Young Carers Action Plan across the partnership has been developed and regular updates in relation to this are received by the Safeguarding and Professional Practice Sub-Group. The action plan focusses on four key areas including: skilling up our workforce to understand the needs of Young Carers, for this to be a golden thread throughout our work with them and have an awareness of support and intervention needed.

This partnership plan is supported by online information, training and briefing sessions, and a significant amount of work undertaken by York Carers Centre on increasing awareness e.g. some schools have now progressed to running their own Young Carer groups. Children who have been identified as a Young Carer receive support from a range of services including the York Carer's Centre, partner led Early Help, local authority Targeted Intervention

and Children's Social Care Assessment Team. Within Children's Social Care there is now improved head of service oversight for children with young carer status over 6 months to ensure their plans are moving forward and effective service is in place.

Across the City, school drop-in sessions have continued to be delivered. In January 2025 the first school network meeting was held to share best practice identifying and responding to new Young Carers.

Young Adult Carers have also been contributing to the City of York Carers Strategy Working Group including attending meetings and giving thoughts and feedback on the priorities and dissemination plan.

The three statutory partner organisations alongside other partners have signed up to the Young Carers Covenant to ensure that we are working within the expected guidelines around supporting Young Carers.

York Carers Forum carry out Young Carers Assessments and Carers Assessments of Need (Young Adult Carers aged between 18-25) to assess early intervention and ongoing support. They discuss the involvement of the Early Help Strategy when planning support for a child and family, seeking advice and making referrals as necessary. They are well engaged and embedded now within the Partnership.

The partnership is also working together to ensure that they gain feedback from carers about what they need and what works for them. During March 2025, at the Partnership's Safeguarding in Education Conference, Young Carers aged between 7-18 years olds were invited to speak about their experiences as a Young Carer. This was an impactful and powerful presentation which explored what life is like for them as a young carer and what could schools do more to support them whilst in an educational setting.

During 2024/25, our multi-agency Threshold Guidance (Guidance on Continuum of Need) was reviewed and updated in line with Working Together (2023) where Family Help and the role of the lead practitioner has been strengthened. We know that in the City of York our thresholds are well understood and applied (Ofsted, 2025). Therefore, the updated guidance has built on the strength of the work we already do. The partnership continues to monitor the role of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) through both a strategic and operational Sub-group which continues reviews data and undertaking audits to understand the impact of our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

We have continued to develop our Raise York Family Hub network. There are now seven Family Hubs operating across the city making use of existing community assets. Key achievements in 2024/25 include:

- The opening of our newest Family Hub at Clifton Explore with local health partners moving in to offer community support to local families.
- Beginning the development of our Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Family Hub at Clifton. Our first step has been to co-located key partners into the SEND Family Hub and to recruit a dedicated hub manager to help drive forward it's development. Co-production will remain at the heart of developing our SEND Family Hub into 2025/26 and beyond.
- Launching our Solihull programme of online parenting programmes and commissioned a programme of face-to-face parenting programmes across the city.
- Piloting two new evidenced based parenting programmes as part of the Changemakers programme aimed at improving the impact of evidence use and delivering better outcomes for families.
- Continued to grow out network of Parent Champion volunteers providing peer-to-peer information and support in communities.
- Promoted information and support available to families linked to the six priority areas for Raise York.
- Launched our new Youth Strategy and commissioned a partner to grow our local youth partnership to better meet the needs of young people in the city.
- Supported the expansion of the 'Team Around the School' model alongside our revised Supporting Families offer. This is showing great results in helping different partners work together and connect families to the right support.
- Completed the redevelopment of The Avenue's Family Hub to create new shared office space to allow different agencies to work together in the community.
- Developed out evaluation framework that will allow us to track and understand the impact of the Raise York network.

How do we know we are making a difference?

Young Carers needs are continuously reviewed to ensure that there is oversight of the support they are receiving. There has been an increase of Young Carers identified within City of York Council and we have now developed a flow chart of support to help us understand how to continually review and meet their needs. This flow chart supports practitioners to consider best practice tools to use within assessments and places emphasis on family network meetings or family group conferences to work whole family approach whilst reducing impact on children's needs and risks.

Although there remains work to do, the numbers of Young Carers identified within the City have significantly increased. In June 2023, only 28 Young Carers were identified across the city however by January 2025 this had increased to 95 identified Young Carers. Within Children's Services work has taken place to increase awareness and strengthen practice to better identify young carers. This includes workshops and sessions with the Multi-Agency Children's Hub. A monthly tracking meeting also enables senior leaders to ensure children identified as a young carer receive effective support and intervention. Within this process, scrutiny is given to direct work to ensure the child's lived experiences is central to planning.

The young carer service and the young adult carer service has delivered over 250 one to one support sessions to help carers cope with the impact of their caring role. The young carer service and young adult carer service were actively involved in the York Carers Centre "Love January" festival, the theme for which was 'Wellbeing Through Connection'. Since April 2024, the National Lottery Fund and Whole Family Support project has delivered 192 Cognitive Behavioural Therapy sessions to young carers and young adult carers.

The young carers service continued to run small peer group support sessions in addition to its 1:1 support and full youth club activities.

York Carers Centre has also supported parent carers by providing them with information, advice and one to one or peer support as well as a small counselling service. They regularly respond to carers who feel suicidal. All York Carers staff have undertaken suicide awareness training and are currently working through the trauma informed practice self-assessment tool made supported by Humber & North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership which includes the ARC Framework Trauma Informed Care training.

York Carers Forum have shared a couple of case studies to highlight the importance of identifying young carers and the work of the partnership in supporting young carers.

Case Study

This involves a family consisting of mum, a child aged 8 and child aged 14 who fled domestic abuse.

Mum was suffering from a mental illness due to trauma and the younger child was registered as a Young Carer for mum. There were concerns for this Young Carer as she became angry and physically aggressive towards her mum and sibling which mum found it difficult to manage as it triggered a trauma response.

Registering as a Young Carer enabled a family worker to support them through 1:1 sessions using creative play to identify feelings, behaviours and impact of trauma. This also enabled this Young Carer to access support which included liaising with IDAS, Court Service, School and Brownies.

Case Study

This involved a family of mum, child aged 12, and an adult child.

Mum suffers from mental illness because of trauma and a long-term physical health condition and as such the child is registered as young carer for their mum. This young carer struggles to attend school or the Young Carers youth group due to their mental health struggles, trauma and also undiagnosed Neurodivergence.

What we have done: A Family Worker was able to support this Young Carer through 1:1 sessions and supported helping them to understand the impact of Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences. Joint partnership working was carried out with Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and school to support this young person.

School Liaison Officers from North Yorkshire Police have completed a high number of interventions across all areas of the City and have improved relationships with schools, children and families.

Within North Yorkshire Police, a considerable amount of training has been undertaken with front line police officers to promote the capturing of child voice and lived experience including the promotion of the AWARE (We are Emotionally Aware) document, which is a guide to use when observing children at incidents and to support officers in what should be recorded. Members of the Sub-group are also aware through reviews that North Yorkshire Police are capturing voice within Public Protection Notices' (PPN's) and have heard positive feedback about how this has helped in decision-making within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Multi-Agency audits and Case Reviews have demonstrated that the quality of Police Protection Notices (PPN's) have significantly improved.

Schools are generally well placed to capture the child's voice and their lived experience due to regularity of contact with both the children and their families. School records from recent reviews have shown good examples of the recording of the child's voice. Safeguarding reviews have shown that pupil voice work is also used widely to ascertain children's views and ensure that they are aware of who they can talk to in school if they have any worries. We know that our schools at both primary and secondary level continue to support children, young people and their families through providing support at a preventative level and lead on the majority of our multi-agency assessments across the partnership.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub are undertaking Multi-Agency audits within the team which is providing oversight about the quality of referrals and the work of the wider safeguarding system ensuring the 'right service at the right time' is being offered to families. In addition, the multi-agency Safeguarding Hub Operational Sub-group continues to review data and undertake dip samples to understand the impact of implementing and embedding the updated threshold guidance in 2025.

The partnership continues to support the development of a multi-agency data set regarding Early Help and Prevention which will support partners understanding of early help across the City of York.

Children's Services are continuing implementing their new practice model Building Brighter Futures across the City of York. Through discussions with partners at the Safeguarding Professional Practice Sub-group and through audits, it is evident that partners are working alongside Children's Services in

a strength-based way to provide a consistent approach to all of our children and families. The use of the Signs of Safety approach is continuing to support decision making with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and at the point of stepping up/stepping down from Child Protection to Child in Need which means children and young people are getting the right support at the right time.

Children's Social Care has continued a programme of training and development to embed the 'Building Brighter Futures' practice model. Thematic audits consistently identify the increased use of signs of safety tools and resources within practice, and this was also recognised in the recent Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services inspection (March 2025). A recent audit of practice related to Young Carers showed an increase in effectiveness in the identification of young carers, and an opportunity to further strengthen practice in how the identified needs and voice of young carers impact their plans.

Earlier interventions with families are reducing the number of children being made subject to child protection plans and this is allowing stronger and more positive relationships with families. Agencies are working together to develop plans which means families are made aware of all the support available aimed to help make meaningful change and improve outcomes for children.

Practitioners working with children, young people and their families seek their views through planning, assessments and interventions. The Building Brighter Futures practice model has ensured that the voice of the child is considered and used in practice when developing plans and safety for children. The introduction of the Safe and Together model has begun to support children's services to improve their approach to supporting children and their families through concerns of domestic abuse. This has included partner agency briefings to inform and invite practitioners to remain focused on the key principles of the model and support changes in practice, such as changes in language. Children's services is committed to working with the partnership to better support survivors of domestic abuse whilst affecting assessing and intervening with those that cause harm to improve outcomes for children.

The launch of the Early Help Strategy alongside the implementation of the Family Hub model, RAISE York which has supported children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity. Additionally, RAISE York and the Family Information Service (FIS) have a plethora of resources on their website which have significantly increased awareness amongst the generally community. An example of this is in General Practice (GP's) on their role within early help and the local resources available to families and children to support them.

Case Study

Primary Care

A GP contacted the Primary Care Safeguarding team to discuss a 3-year-old child and their mother, whom he has been supporting. The mother recently returned to work and her benefits were being stopped. She had recently come out of an abusive relationship, which severely impacted her confidence and had caused significant anxiety. Although mum found employment and her youngest child started nursery, the GP was concerned about the increasing impact of her anxiety, which led to frequent panic attacks. The mother reported that she could keep her children safe but was requesting help for herself and them.

In response, the GP took several steps:

Early Help support: The GP discussed available local early help support with the mother, providing her with information and options.

Mental Health Referral: A referral was made to mental health services to address the mother's anxiety and provide her with the necessary psychological support.

Social Prescriber Involvement: The practice's social prescriber was involved to support the mother with signposting to local support services and resources.

Follow Up: The GP followed up mum regularly to ensure she was well, safe and the issues were addressed.

Outcome: Through this multi-agency approach, the mother received support addressing both her mental health needs and practical challenges.

What we will do next

The Young Carers action plan will continue to be overseen by the Safeguarding and Professional Practice Sub-Group. Work will continue to further increase the identification of Young Carers, focussing around transitions for Young Carers as they approach adulthood to ensure that support for them continues as they move between services.

Work will continue across the partnership, to embed the four priorities within the Early Help Strategy (Best Start in Life, Staying Safe, Happy and Healthy and Ready for the Future) to ensure that Early Help is everyone's business and that children and their families receive support at the earliest opportunity. The multi-agency early help steering group members will continue to promote and raise awareness of Early Help across schools, health and other agencies to ensure support is offered early for families.

In 2025/26 we will continue to develop our Raise York Family Hub network. In particular growing our SEND Family Hub, launching a pilot to address health inequalities in local communities, enhancing the Family Hub offer through Explore York sites and building integrated working linked to our developing locality model.

As a partnership we will continue to implement the changes as set out in Working Together (2023) and the published Families First Partnership (FFP) programme guide (March 2025) which has been produced to support safeguarding partners implement Family Help and multi-agency child protection reforms and make greater use of Family Group Decision Making.



Priority Two: Child Exploitation

The Partnership's Contextual Safeguarding Strategy was launched on 27th January 2025 as part of a wider launch event that involved a keynote from Dez Holmes (Director, Research in Practice) on the topic of 'Working with Adolescents'. The event was attended by a wide variety of our partners including schools, Early Years Providers, York Mind, Afterschool/Childcare Providers, North Yorkshire Police, University of York, York Carers Centre, Children's Social Care and health colleagues. Recordings of both the launch event and the keynote speaker are available to partners by request.

The Contextual Safeguarding Strategy outlines how the partnership works to protect children and young people from harm outside their home, recognising that significant harm can also occur in peer groups, communities, and online. It emphasises understanding the diverse relationships young people form and the potential for violence and abuse in those contexts.

Our strategy is underpinned by the "Four P's" (Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue), a framework widely used in UK policing and increasingly embraced by safeguarding partnerships, which supports our continued commitment to a co-ordinated partnership approach to tackle all forms of child exploitation and extra-familial harm across the City of York.

Alongside the launch of our Contextual Safeguarding Strategy, other Child Exploitation documents (Child Exploitation Guidance, Missing from Home and Care and the Out-of-Area Young People Arrested Protocol) were also updated to ensure any national and/or local changes were reflective within our local multi-agency guidance. Additionally, we strengthened information on the partnership website to reflect the strategy which also includes information regarding extra-familial harm and contextual safeguarding.

The City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed to review what was previously called the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Meeting (MACEM) and Risk Assessment Meeting (RAM) following a recommendation made within one of our Rapid Review's in December 2023 where exploitation was a theme. Taking this into consideration, it was agreed that the weekly Risk Assessment Meeting would be renamed to the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Meeting and would become a decision-making panel with a focus on determining/agreeing whether a child or young person is deemed vulnerable or at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation/Child Criminal Exploitation and where applicable agree as a multi-agency partnership a risk status/adopted (High/Medium/Low). This has enabled consistency across the

partnership regarding flagging on systems and also ensures that risk assessments are updated, relevant information is shared at the meeting and key actions identified.

The monthly meeting was renamed to the Child Exploitation Disruption Meeting and rather than being a forum to discuss all children and young people, this meeting instead focuses on contextual factors; places, spaces, perpetrators and persons of interest and focuses on sharing intelligence and discussing how partners can effectively disrupt these external risks to children and young people. The core attendees of this meeting was reviewed and expanded to include partners from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Community Safety Partnership, Fire and Rescue, Healthy Child Service, British Transport Police and areas within the Local Authority with responsibility for the following areas; Rough Sleep, Preparing for Adulthood, CCTV, Sport and Leisure, Licensing, Anti-Social Behaviour.

We have continued to develop and enhance our Multi-Agency Missing, Vulnerable to Exploitation and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Data Set to include analysis. The data set now includes a data headlines section which includes emerging trends and themes. This data set is used as part of discussions as well as identifying any actions partners are taking/can take. "Spotlight Topics" identified through this dataset have resulted in professionals with expertise on the subjects attending the Child Exploitation Sub-Group meetings to provide insight, enhance members' understanding, and respond to questions. Topics that have been spotlighted in 2024-25 have been Artificial Intelligence (AI) and AI-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material, Drugs and Alcohol, and upcoming spotlight topics include Children Missing from Education and technology-assisted Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

A mock Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) multi-agency audit on the theme of Serious Youth Violence was held on 16th April 2024. The aim of this audit was to understand the effectiveness of our multi-agency response to children who are at risk of Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation.

The themes highlighted through this audit included: Youth Violence, Neurodiversity, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Substance misuse. The audit identified areas of good practice and where we could do better. Overall, it was found that partners were assured that children in York who commit serious crime receive a robust multi-agency response and support to prevent further offences and work with young people to support a positive future. The full learning on a page can be found [here](#).

The Exploitation Sub-group also reviews and considers current research. During 2024-25 the following reports were considered by the Sub-group:

- Internet Watch Foundation’s report on Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material (Initial 2023 report and July 2024 update)
- National Crime Agency’s Warning about Sextortion
- Young people’s experiences of Online Sexual Extortion or ‘Sextortion’
- The report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse
- The Jay Review of Criminally Exploited Children
- The role of systems of support in serious youth violence: evidence and gaps
- Generative Artificial Intelligence and children’s safety in the round
- New Serious Violence Strategy - York and North Yorkshire
- Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce shines light on Group-Based Offending,
- New online safety priorities for Ofcom and launch of study into effects of social media on children
- Department for Education’s Thematic Report – Joint Targeted Area Inspection: Serious Youth Violence.

North Yorkshire Police and Children’s Social Care have undertaken some joint audits As part of the North Yorkshire Police’s National Child Protection Inspection Audits. These occur regularly. Such audits identify where exploitation is occurring and prompts referrals to specialist teams. It also monitors our performance in this area.

How do we know we are making a difference?

The Contextual Safeguarding Strategy includes meaningful measures to help us assess our progress against our shared priorities, with specific actions incorporated into an action plan that is being monitored by the Child

Exploitation Sub-Group. The Chair of the Sub-group attends the Partnership Executive on a regular basis and provides assurance of both the work of the Sub-group and the operational activity.

Primary Care have shared that the implementation of a flagging process for children at high/medium risk of exploitation which has improved the identification and support for these individuals.

Professional's ability to identify exploitation indicators and risks to children and young people have improved and is being identified earlier. This is evidenced by an increased number of children being identified at risk of exploitation. (i.e. highest number to date). There are qualitative examples of children being engaged with at an earlier stage therefore by association prevented from a higher level of risk than if this were to be later in their exploitation. The Joint-Targeted Area Inspection Mock Domestic Abuse Audit has been an example of how police and partners review cases to identify learning and good practice. This was recently undertaken for children affected by Domestic Abuse however, another Joint-Targeted Area Inspection theme considered was Serious Youth Violence including knife crime.

St Giles Trust (support services in York) have worked with partners to identify schools where exploitation is a concern and delivered group awareness raising sessions on the signs and symptoms of exploitation as a result. Between May and September 2024 the SOS+ service delivered awareness raising sessions to 657 secondary school aged children in York and North Yorkshire on topics such as internet safety and criminal and sexual exploitation.

School liaison officers from North Yorkshire Police have also delivered topical assemblies and lessons and their inputs have reached over 10,000 young people within the academic school year, with an additional 2,000 11 year olds attending Crucial Crew. Crucial topics have included One Punch, Sexting, Hate Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour, County Lines, Healthy Relationships, and Internet Safety. In addition, targeted one to one interventions have been delivered which have not been included in the above figures. In addition, there has been positive partnership working to increase support to young people across areas of concern following the increase of alerts from schools. These topics include Hate Crime (All About Respect) and Vaping (Public Health).

Case Study

North Yorkshire Police 1:1 Intervention

A young male at a secondary school, was originally seen by a Police School Liaison Officer due to mum finding cannabis at their home. The Operation Choice¹ process was subsequently followed which included support and intervention to the young person. This intervention resulted in longer term support via the Police School Liaison Officer and Youth Justice Service, giving the young person a positive male role model reducing the harm and risk related to drugs. There was a moment of crisis for the young person and instead of resorting to drugs or self-harm, the young person contacted agencies for support, which was a huge positive for this individual and family.

1 Op Choice – Drugs Intervention – When a young person is stopped for drug offences (possession) – they can consent to the Op Choice process which is them engaging in education/prevention sessions rather than criminalisation, they have to engage in these session otherwise the individual is passed back to the officer dealing with that crime. We find that the young person will also then consent to longer term support (YJS or Change, Grow, Live) if they go through the Op Choice process rather than criminalisation.



Case Study

St Giles Trust

A young person working with us had been advertising naked photos on social media and had made over £400 by sending older males naked photos and videos. This young person had arranged to meet one of these men in real life, but staff had found out about this and the Police were called who took away the young person's devices before they got a chance to meet this man.

Our staff worked with this young person at their home and the young person engaged well in 1-2-1 sessions. The worker reported that each week they saw progress and little by little the young person started to realise the risks they had taken and vowed they would no longer advertise themselves online.

To date, the sessions have focused on;

- Healthy relationships
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Online safety and social media awareness
- Self-esteem
- Consent
- Dangers of sending nudes online

We have started to focus on sexual health as the young person has little knowledge in this area. At his Child in Need meeting, other professionals asked if I would discuss this with them as they responds well to our worker.

What we will do next

Using the meaningful measures that were developed as part of the Contextual Safeguarding Strategy, the Child Exploitation Sub-Group will be taking forward areas of work and actions, which include; holding appreciative enquiries to determine what worked in individual cases to develop patterns and encourage systemic change, a multi-agency audit on the theme of contextual safeguarding, develop Practice Workshops regarding the new Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Meeting processes, continue to develop resources for our practitioners, updating the partnership safeguarding awareness e-learning, and include sessions on Child Exploitation and related topics during Safeguarding Week 2025 and at

the next Partnership Development Day in June 2025. We will also arrange joint contributions to learning reviews and outlining where things have gone well in cases and showcasing good practice. Results of audits/appreciative enquiries, attendance and feedback from training, and analysing learning reviews will help us measure the impact of these actions.

We will continue to monitor any trends within the data set and record actions partners are taking to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

We will continue to include a “spotlight topic” at each meeting in response with any emerging trends and themes identified within the data set.

We will continue to review any national, regional or local learning and develop learning resources such as briefings, one-minute guides and reports which can be disseminated to front line professionals, partners and stakeholders in respect of Child Exploitation.

Priority Three: Children Missing from Education

Attendance for both primary and secondary school children remains a concern and this is the case in York too, particularly for students with additional vulnerabilities.

The Partnership has continued with their multi-agency task and finish Sub-group which looks at improving ways in which school attendance across York is seen as ‘Everybody’s Business’. Partners have developed a multi-agency attendance pledge which outlines what their service/organisation will do about ensuring that attendance is everybody’s business. Regular updates are received by the Education Service at both the Safeguarding Professional Practice Sub-group and the Executive in relation to the attendance picture across the City of York. We know that those with additional needs such as Special Educational Need/Disability and free school meal children have low attendance across the city. The local authority has links with the regional Department for Education Advisor and are part of the best practice network.

A multi-agency audit was undertaken in 2024 to better understand our response to children with persistent/severe absence from education. There was extensive evidence and examples of multi-agency partnership working and it was evident that there has been a great deal of multi-agency support

offered to the young people and their families in supporting them into school. The audit did identify that for the majority of the families there were other things happening within their life that was affecting school attendance such as, drugs and alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, trauma and mental health wellbeing. Five recommendations were identified, tracked via an action plan and completed. A learning on a page was subsequently published on the Partnership website, and further actions have been adopted by the Exploitation Sub-group.

York's data shows our rate of children missing from education is consistent with the national trend of 0.5%, identifying that missing from education remains a complex national issue, and should remain a priority focus. A multi-agency Attendance Task & Finish group has been set up and learning and other actions have been disseminated to partners for single agency development. For example, in children's social care, the 7-point briefing and further agency actions will be reviewed via the Quality Assurance Plan.

Education colleagues are represented at our Exploitation Sub-group meetings. We receive data from our Education colleagues which feeds into our quarterly Multi-Agency Missing, Vulnerable to Exploitation and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Data Set around children missing from education, those who are Electively Home Educated and information regarding the steps taken to locate them. This feeds into the wider partnership data also. Actions identified are monitored through the relevant Sub-groups.

During 2025 the partnership implemented 'Operation Endeavour' across the City of York. This is an initiative that aims to support children and young people who go missing from home by sharing of information between our partners and schools.

Following the publication of the Carers Trust report 'Caring and Classes' which highlights an increased absence of young carers compared to non-carers, York Carers Forum delivered various presentations regarding young carers and education across the partnership and delivered a 'Masterclass' training session. The Young Carers School Network is currently being established and York Carers Centre is also building stronger links with Travellers Trust to help young carers from traveller communities who may not be regularly attending school. Their core work aims to support families so that caring roles have a minimal impact on attendance.

Training for schools and partners on new Elective Home Educated procedures, Children Missing from Education procedures and the Graduated Response and Fast Track information have been delivered.

How do we know we are making a difference?

We know that 93% of children's case records (quarter 2 quality assurance report) within children's social care included consideration of school attendance in the assessment/intervention and work is now being undertaken to ensure that it is clear who is working with school by a health partner to ensure that those children who are persistently absent due to sickness are supported. Audit activity continues to focus on multi-agency collaboration in supporting children who are persistently absent from school so that we retain a clear line of sight into practice.

The data in relation to school attendance is regularly reviewed across various meetings across the partnership. The numbers of children and young people with no additional vulnerabilities who are persistently absent from primary school and secondary school is improving, with upwards of 300 less pupils in this demographic per school phase when compared to this time last year. The numbers of children and young people who are elected to be home education are increasing but the numbers registered as Electively Home Educated are below the regional and national data.

Within the recently published Children's Services recent Ofsted Inspection report, the report made reference to clear processes regarding Children Missing from Education and Elected Home Education procedures. In addition, there has been enhancements to Children Missing from Education search request (such as requesting information from the Home Office) which has enabled the local authority to find and close children from system with a destination.

Work has continued within children's social care to ensure that attendance is a priority when considering plans for children. There is increased reference to attendance in child in need and child protection plans and professionals are talking to parents about not only the importance of education but how getting children to school can impact positively on their day to day routine and support their care of their children.

What we will do next

As a partnership we need to continue to understand and address the barriers/challenges which prevent children going to school. We will continue to review data to understand the overall attendance picture in York and to see what difference our work as a partnership has made.

During 2024, partners were asked to pledge what they plan to do in their single agency response to attendance. We will gain assurance from our

partners regarding what they have pledged to do in response to attendance. An update is planned for a forthcoming Safeguarding and Professional Practice Sub-Group.

We know that through our multi-agency audit we have seen an increase of young people who are neurodivergent and also may display additional vulnerabilities or complex needs. The partnership have commissioned an audit to consider those children who are known to Early Help and have Special Educational Needs and/or Disability as a contributing factor.

Priority Four: Working with Fathers and Male Carers

Engaging with fathers has been identified as a priority area in relation to professionals actively working to build and form relationships with fathers and male carers. It has been regularly highlighted both within learning from local reviews and within multi-agency audits the difficulties professionals have in building relationships with fathers and male carers when working with families, recognising that often the focus is usually around mothers. This theme has also be highlighted with the National Panel's report of the Myth of Invisible Men.

During 2024/25 the partnership launched a campaign alongside the Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership and Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership to help raise awareness regarding the importance of building relationships and connecting with fathers.

The partnership created a new webpage on the partnership website which pulls together useful resources and links for professionals working with fathers and male carers.

A briefing session was held during Safeguarding Week 2024 regarding the importance of engaging with fathers and the partnership promoted across our front-line professionals the importance of included fathers within our work

We continued to promote the message on the importance of fathers across our front-line professionals and the importance of including wider family networks and fathers as part of our work.

York Carers Forum have has male participants on its PAACES parenting

course. Male carers and fathers have been frequent attendees on Family Trips and peer-support activities. The young adult carer service held Men's Wellbeing Mondays throughout January 2025 as part of the York Carers Centre 'Love January' festival. The Young Adult Carer service has seen the regular attendance of male carers at peer support sessions double this year.

How do we know we have made a difference?

As part of the implementation of the Building Brighter Futures Practice Model within children's social care, engaging with not only fathers but the whole family network is continually being worked on. Learning has been undertaken to enable social workers to empower non-resident parents to be part of the process but also find a way to work with male carers in the home, especially when tackling abusive behaviour. This helps develop more robust safety planning with open and transparent conversations. Children are seeing both their parents involved in multi-agency planning, therefore seeing them build a resilient plan of network and support around them.

A difference has been noted by health professionals in narrative discussions and supervisions around inclusion of father's information and details and consideration of a whole family approach. Following the Partnership 'Engaging with Fathers' campaign and the training delivered within Primary Care, there has been raised awareness about the importance of involving fathers in the care of their children. This initiative has encouraged GP practices to consider and include fathers more actively, which can lead to more comprehensive family support and better outcomes for children.

Case Study 1

Following a maternal death, professionals within maternity, Special Care Baby Unit, and the named midwife worked collaboratively to support the father in caring for his baby under very difficult circumstances. This included enabling him to facilitate the burial of his wife, according to religious beliefs and practices, whilst safeguarding the baby's care and needs.

Case Study 2

I have worked with a father and his partner, they are a young couple who met online. The couple had an unplanned pregnancy and dad became the main carer shortly after the birth of their baby. The Health Visitor worked with dad as he was the main carer for the baby and signposted dad to DadPad app which is a great resource for fathers (and mothers). The Health Visitor, Social Worker and Homestart worked with him around child development, safety, how to register and use other professional support services such as GP and dentist, immunisations, safe sleep and referred to other charities such as York Children's Trust, Bundles of Joy and Beesome. The Health Visitor also encouraged dad to attend parent and baby groups so that both he and Scarlet would benefit from other social interaction. Dad was unsure of this initially and attended with a friend but he built up the confidence to attend several free parent and baby groups and the baby benefitted from these by being confident around others and being keen to explore her environment.

Sadly Dad became worn out being the baby's main carer, home conditions began to decline as did his mental health. The Health Visitor encouraged Dad to try and talk to someone about how he felt but he struggled having Talking Therapies as talking about his feelings was something he had never managed to do. With support from the health visitor he did however manage to register and make contact with his GP for medication.

During this time Dad managed to get back on top of his mental health, seek help from his GP and find full time work. Their baby passed their 9-12 month review with flying colours and is now walking, saying single words, eating all foods, feeding themselves with a spoon and communicating well with their parents. The baby presents as confident and happy.

What we will do next

As a partnership we have agreed that the Engagement of fathers will continue to be promoted and embedded across the partnership. However, Engagement of Fathers will no longer be a focused priority and will be replaced with Young Carers as a priority.

Priority Five: Mental Health and Wellbeing

What we have done

Young People told us at our development day and through feedback surveys that one of their main priority areas is Mental Health and Wellbeing and in response the partnership has adopted this as a priority area as we hear about how important this is to them. As part of this priority area, the Voice and Involvement Sub-group have been seeking assurance from partners agencies to understand how they involve young people in accessing support in relation to Mental Health and Wellbeing. Our partners came together for an in-person workshop session which included a presentation from the ICB co-production lead and a young person from the young person advisory group 'Nothing About us Without Us' to consider the following:

1. What are children and young people telling us about mental health?
2. What are the key things young people in the city are asking for?

And what action should be taken:

- a) What we as a voice and involvement group should do?
- b) What we as a voice and involvement group should be asking of partners?

Actions by individual agencies were identified and a summary report of the learning from this session was shared with the Executive. As a result of the workshop carried out by the Voice and Involvement Sub-Group, a dedicated group in York has been established, bringing together professionals from various agencies to develop a plan or strategy based on feedback from young people. This will be shared back with young people to keep them informed about ongoing efforts to improve access to mental health services. Updates on the work of this group have been provided by the Integrated Care Board Implementation Lead to the Partnership Executive.

Our Children's Rights and Involvement Strategy has been reviewed by the Voice and Involvement Sub-group, adopting the Lundy model to guide how we work, which provides a practical framework to bring to life children's right to participation. The Lundy Model helps guide the practical application of children's participation rights, ensuring that their voices are not just heard but

have real impact on the decisions made about their lives. Using this model, the Voice and Involvement Sub-group will take a sharper focus on providing support and challenge to mental health and wellbeing, as well as other priorities.

An animation was developed regarding the findings of the City of York School Health and Wellbeing Survey. The School Health and Wellbeing Survey was commissioned by City of York Council Public Health team. This is the second large scale survey on the health and wellbeing of children and young people in the city carried out between 2021/2024. The aim of the survey is to inform and support policy and decision making across the local authority, in schools, and among other key stakeholders in the City. This animation was shared across the partnership.

“Listen To Us! Young People’s Experiences with Trusted Adults” is an animation using the voices of young people to highlight the importance of the role of trusted adults in their lives. This has been developed by the Humber and North Yorkshire Children and Young People’s Mental Health Programme and has been hosted on the Partnership e-learning platform and shared across the partnership.

How do we know we have made a difference?

Parents are telling us that they feel included in their children’s planning alongside mental health. We are seeing a more flexible approach with our mental health colleagues around who is the best person to complete work.

Case Study

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

“After many years of involvement with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in various ways over many years, I can honestly say that the most recent experience was by far the best. The clinician was absolutely amazing at understanding my daughter and getting her to engage in sessions. Her formulation approach enabled her to open up and understand where her difficulties stem from. This has given her confidence and abilities to deal with her emotions in a positive way. I actually don’t know where she would be now. She is very optimistic about the future, awaiting to start college, has secured a part-time job and has reconnected with friends. I can’t thank you enough.” (An excerpt from a Friends and Family survey completed by a Parent.)

This case example demonstrates:

- Joint working between the clinician and the parent/carer to ensure the best outcome for the young person
- Clinician's engagement with the young person inspired parent's confidence in the support that the young person received for their mental health from CAMHS.

We now include data in our quarterly Partnership data set from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service; the number of children and young people accessing both Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, as well as the number of children on the "waiting list" and the average length of time on the waiting list. This data will be scrutinised by the Learning, Development and Performance Sub-Group on a quarterly basis, and partners from the service will provide analysis and insight. This analysis, along with the data, will be presented to the partnership executive.

What we will do next

Our ambition is to work with our key partners, stakeholders and other boards and partnership to have a city-wide strategic ambition and plan for children and young people's wellbeing and mental health, which can be shared more widely with partners with the aim to enable a whole system response to support needs at the earliest stage. We would support the drive for the development of mapping need and provision against the iThrive model. As part of the partnership Development Day (June 2025), there will be a partnership session on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing which will include the development of a city-wide strategy.

We will continue to support and promote the Trusted Adults campaign which has been developed by the Humber and North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Mental Health Programme in collaboration with the Nothing About Us Without Us young people's advisory group, and the training and resources developed as part of this campaign.

The data provided by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service will be analysed by partners working in the sector and this analysis will be presented to the Partnership Executive in order to provide further insight.

Updates from the Young People's Mental Health Group that was formed as a result of the workshop held by the Voice and Involvement Sub-Group will continue to feed back into the Sub-Group and updates on the work carried out

by the group will be communicated to Young People to demonstrate to them that their voice has been heard and that steps are being taken by key decision makers in the city to improve access to services.

The development of an “About Me” passport by the Voice and Involvement Sub-Group will improve young people’s experience using services in the city. This passport will negate the need for young people to repeat themselves when speaking to professionals. The passport will include relevant information about the child or young person; triggers, medical and family history, diagnoses, etc. This should be especially helpful for children and young people with mental health needs or who are neurodivergent.



Improving Further

There is still further work to be done regarding the development of analysis of our wider partnership data set which will enable patterns and trends to be identified and examined, leading to the partnership developing a clearer understanding about areas of strong multi-agency practice and those areas about which the partnership wants to learn more. The Sub-groups will be able to use this information to better understand performance across partners and to identify any patterns/trends the partnership wishes to seek clarity on or to undertake a partnership deep dive/audit.

Voice and Lived Experience of Child or Young Person

The voice of the child and their family is a golden thread within all our work and this helps us to better understand how as a partnership we worked well together and how we can work even better together in the future to improve outcomes for children and young people.

We have continued to promote our voice pledge and reviewed our voice webpages to support professionals in understanding the voice of children across our partnership.

All thematic, multi-agency and single-agency audits include the voice of the child and their lived experience which is integral to informing all recommendations and actions.

Within multi-agency reviews we have seen good practice examples of where the child/young person's view and their lived experience was excellently articulated. On review of records, it was evident that the Signs of Safety approach is being embedded across Children's Services and language is simple, easily understood and is written directly to the child or young person.

We continue to maintain links with our Corporate Parenting Board partners who provide regular updates to our Voice and Involvement Sub-group. The Corporate Parenting Board continues to involve our care experienced children and young people to get their views around services being offered through City of York Council, education and health. The City of York's local offer to support care leavers has been launched and has had contribution from those children and young people involved in the Children in Care Council.

Care-experienced young people attended our Partnership Development Day in July 2024 and challenged professionals on their use of language including use of professional jargon and how this then translates into children and young people's records. The Partnership took forward an action from the young people and developed a [language pledge](#) which promotes respectful and inclusive communication with children and young people. It emphasizes the importance of language in shaping a child's identity and sense of belonging.

Multi-agency learning masterclasses have been held on the topic of Children's Rights which have been attended by a variety of partners. These workshops introduced partners to the concept of children's rights and the United Nations Conventions on Rights of the Child. Further workshops shared the Children's Rights Toolkit that we have developed locally. This toolkit provides a huge range of resources and uses an Appreciative Inquiry approach that allows partners to work with young people to build understanding of children's rights and take action to improve how they help children realise their rights.

Young Carers Centre work from a person-centred approach and always listen to carers. Young people help to plan their services; decide what trips they run, are involved in their support plans and are led by Young Carers. Both a Young Carer and a Young Adult Carer presented at their Annual General Meeting (AGM). They also run a Carers Action group with representatives from York Parent Carer Forum and their Young Adult Carer Lead. This is led by the voices of carers, where professionals are invited in to hear about the issues carers want to raise. Young Carers and Young Adult Carers voices are actively sought for input into the development of the new Carers Strategy for York. They have supported parent carers and championed their voices through input into the new Healthwatch report.

York and Scarborough Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust have embedded the HEEADSSS (Home, Education & Employment, Activities, Drugs/Drinking, Sex Self-harm, Depression & Suicide, Safety tool) within the emergency department paediatric care and has been successfully rolled out across paediatric areas and in clinics. It is now included in their Level 3 Safeguarding training package for maximum reach. The HEEADSSS tool encompasses all of the partnership's priority areas.

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) now have included a specific space on the patient recording system which documents the child/young person's views and lived experience and colleagues are expected to explore this. TEWV colleagues undertake Outcome measures to elicit

children/young people and parents/carers views of services. Young people are included as part of interview panels and recruitment processes for clinicians employed into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Children's Social Care continue to promote the use of 'Mind of My Own' app and have seen an increase in young people using this. It is a way that young people can share their own feedback about safety and their well-being through a website that is then uploaded onto the electronic system. This means that children and young people don't need to talk directly to social workers if they don't want to and can share it when and where they want to. Their closure letters now offer a QR code in which people can share their views about the involvement they have had with services and this will contribute to planning. When Safety plans are developed they are very clear around involving maternal and paternal sides of the family in their development. Word and Pictures are also used to explain children's situations to them in a child friendly way. This uses the child's voice and is in agreement with family in terms of words and language used.

The voice of the child has been promoted rigorously in policing with training events being undertaken. The voice of the child through our auditing activity provide a clear understanding of our performance in this area.

How do we know we are making a difference?

We know from the recent City of York Children's Services Ofsted Inspection participation and engagement with children and young people is a real strength and has been pivotal in informing decisions and plans for individual children and service-wide development. This has developed and improved considerably since the last inspection. Children have a solid influence in shaping the Local Authority's provision of services through contact with corporate parenting advisers, participation groups, engagement events and attendance at the corporate parenting board. Children and young people told inspectors that they feel listened to and valued.

A number of audits both single and multi-agency have highlighted improvements made in relation to Voice:

- Police now actively consider family relationships and dynamics when completing Public Protection Notices' (PPN) including the Voice of the Adult which is often fathers.

- Young Carers Centre found evidence that the child's voice was clear and detailed within most assessments. Young people are able to talk about what it means to be a young carer and the extra pressures they face. Tools such as 'day in the life' and 'three houses' are used to develop understanding of children's lived experiences.
- The Missing from Education audit highlighted that all the children reviewed in the audit were presented with some form of neurodivergence, and there was good evidence of schools working to understand the voice and lived experience of children.

In addition, it is clearly evident within all recent Rapid Reviews and review of cases that the partners have embedded the child's voice and lived experience within their day-to-day practice.

The 'trusted adults' video and trauma-informed training have been valuable in enhancing Primary Care staff's understanding of young people's perspectives. Initial feedback indicates that this may lead to improved interactions with young patients, emphasising the importance of trauma-informed care and careful language use. This has likely contributed to a more supportive and empathetic healthcare environment for young people.

At the end of each successful intervention, St Giles Trust ask children and young people to provide feedback around the service and how they feel themselves, this has across the board been positive and can be evidenced through our distance travelled tool how the understanding of risk has increased.

The Ivison Trust also shares positive quarterly feedback updates from families who have been affected by exploitation who are working with the service. This feedback is included in the quarterly exploitation data set and shared with the Child Exploitation sub-group.

Case Study

Children's Social Care

Anthony came to our attention after he attended hospital and gave false details. When police found him, we were worried he wasn't in school, wasn't with a parent and wasn't registered with any GP. Anthony was living with someone who had a criminal history around exploitation and trafficking. We went to court and were granted parental responsibility for Anthony whilst we tried to support him and keep him safe – we wanted him to settle in a foster placement but this was really hard. Anthony wanted to stay with a family friend however there were worries about their son and his involvement in crime in the past and this made assessments around the family situation quite tricky to plan safety.

Although there were risks in him living in his preferred place, with a connected carer, we were keen to listen to Anthony's views and try to understand and manage this. It was not a plan that all agencies felt comfortable with and this meant a lot of discussions, meeting and planning between police, youth justice, Together We Can, the virtual school and the social work team in order to find a plan which was realistic, proportionate and manageable alongside Anthony and his network. Well done team! This was all played out in court, too, which generated some very positive feedback.

What we will do next

The Partnership will continue to implement the 2025-28 the Partnership Voice and Involvement strategy and will continue to run learning masterclasses to assist partners in voice work. The Voice and Involvement Group have developed a revised workplan setting out how they will improve voice opportunities for all young people as well as focussing on key priority areas.

The ambition is to develop an annual Voice and Involvement Report that feeds back into the Partnership and with young people that highlights the work of the group as laid out in the Children's Rights and Involvement Strategy.

Implement care experience as a protected characteristic across the partnership which has already been adopted by the City of York Council).

Promote organic self-advocacy from Young People's natural networks.

Learning and Development

The partnership carries out the functions of improving child protection and safeguarding practice as described in Chapter 5 of Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2023) through the Case Review Sub-group.

Chapter 5 Learning from Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents now requires the local authority on behalf of safeguarding children partners to notify the Secretary of State for Education and Ofsted of the death of a care leaver up to and including the age of 24.

During 2024/25 North Yorkshire and City of York agreed a joint process whereby any notification of a child or young person who was a Care Leaver (up to the age of 24) at the time of their death will be reported via Child Death Overview Process.

Data and Themes

During the period of 2024/25:

- Number of notifications regarding children made to the National Panel: 3
- Number of notifications regarding Care Leavers made to the National Panel: 0
- Number of Rapid Reviews undertaken by the partnership: 3
- Number of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews: 0
- Number of Local multi-agency case reviews: 1
- Number of Multi-Agency Audits: 5

Throughout all of our reviews professionals involved ensure that the child or young person's voice and or lived experience is at the forefront of all our conversations. As a partnership we obtain this either through direct communication with family or through practitioners who know or have supported them.

The themes from the multi-agency reviews undertaken during 2024/25 have included:

- Non Accidental Injury to Under One's
- Domestic Abuse

- Managing Allegations Against Professionals/People in Positions of Trust
- Engagement of Father/Partners
- Response to a previous 999 call and attendance at A&E
- Parental Mental Health
- Parental Substance Misuse
- Housing
- Management of Sexual Abuse regardless of Gender
- Neurodiversity
- Transfer between local authority children's services

Learning and actions from reviews undertaken

For each Rapid Review, Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review or multi-agency review detailed action plans outlining learning have been created and actions are progressed. (To note that these actions plans are available but not normally published).

The Case Review Sub-group ensure that following a review of cases, actions are progressed and monitored by the Sub-group. All of the action plans are monitored quarterly by the Case Review Sub-group and regular assurance reporting on progress are provided to the Executive by the Chair of the Sub-group.

Learning from all cases is published via a 7 point briefing or learning on a page and published on the Partnership website. This is also disseminated by the partnership to ensure that front-line professionals are aware of any local practice updates. Members of this Sub-group also support with the dissemination of learning via their agencies.

The Partnership have a Learning and Development webpage which includes information regarding: Legislation, National Learning, Regional Learning, 7 point-briefings, Learning Masterclasses, and Action Plans.

Training

E-Learning

The partnership e-learning platform was launched in May 2022. Initially, it only hosted the Safeguarding Children Awareness E-learning course however, subsequently the following free narrated PowerPoint presentations have also been added:

- Early Help Strategy Launch
- Child Protection Conference
- Trusted Relationships
- Listen To Us: Young People's Experiences with Trusted Adults

This is in addition to the following presentations which have previously been added:

- Private Fostering
- PRESENT Guidance and Tool
- PAMIC Tool

Between 2024/25, 621 learners completed the Safeguarding Children Awareness E-learning course.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training

Number of Multi-Agency Training Sessions delivered and attendees 2024/2025			
Course title	Sessions	Total attendees	Total no-shows
Safeguarding Children: Working Together A 2024/25	7	125	5
Safeguarding Children: Shared Responsibilities and Procedures - Working Together B 2024/25	6	134	8
Developing an Understanding of Harmful Sexual Behaviour	5	35	10
The Child Death Review: Advance Training for professionals	1	29	0
Total	21	337	35

The number of 'no shows' for Safeguarding A and B training has reduced during 2024/2025 as this training now is being delivered face-to-face where previously this was delivered virtually. The number of professionals attending multi-agency training has remained at a consistent level.

Evaluation Data

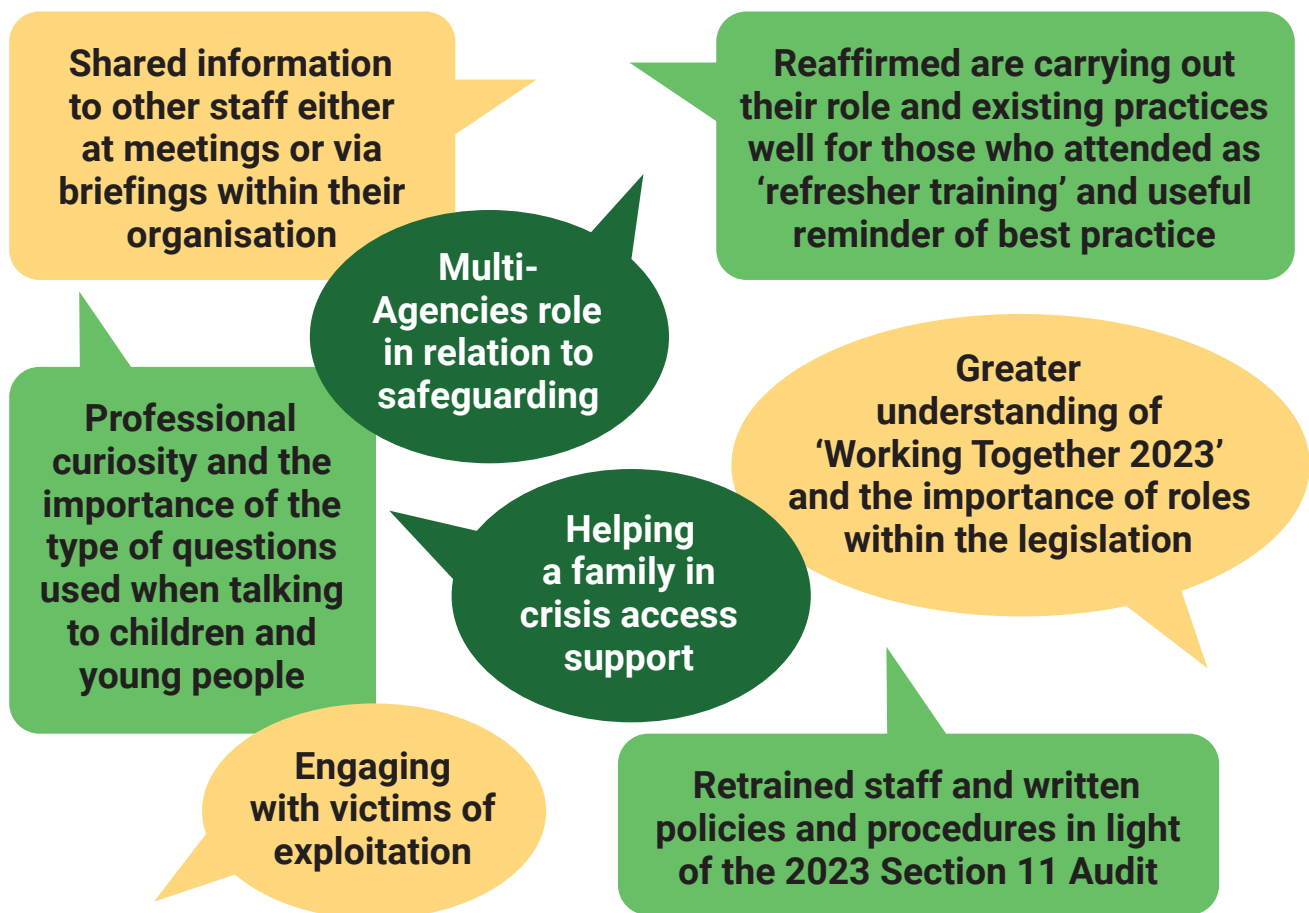
The City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership commissioned training from a training provider who were commissioned to deliver the following two training courses:

- Safeguarding Children: Working Together A - 2023/2024
- Safeguarding Children: Shared Responsibilities and Procedures - Working Together B - 2023/2024

Partners have been observing the Safeguarding A and B training course over the past eighteen months. Several partners fed back that they felt the training could have been delivered over the course of one day (instead of two days) as the training courses often finished earlier than the expected allocated time. In addition, partners attending the Safeguarding A training felt that the content was too basic and were mostly interested in finding out more information covered by the Safeguarding B training. Moreover, the demand to access the Safeguarding A and Safeguarding B courses increased which led to delegates on a waiting list as only 8 sessions for each course ran throughout the year. Following observation of the safeguarding courses, has been agreed to combine both the A and B training courses and deliver more sessions of one day safeguarding course.

A survey monkey questionnaire was undertaken in 2024 for delegates whom had attended Safeguarding Training A and B courses. The trainer commissioned to undertake the training also seeks feedback. Feedback from the training included:





The following examples were given demonstrating how training has resulted in more positive outcomes for children and young people:

"Young person showed signs of self-harm and as a result of the training, I was able to determine who were the right people to contact about this to start, which was school with the consent of the young person, and from working with school, they have put further support in place as they were unaware of the self-harm but aware of declining mental health. We also got mum involved and are helping to support both the young person and mum as they navigate this tricky period in the young person's life"

"We now have a few cases which we are working with the local high school on and I now work within an additional local high school I was not in before"

"Helpful list of other agencies that can support students e.g. we have used Winston's Wish and Snappy since they were mentioned in the course"

In addition to these training courses the following ad-hoc training events by our multi-agency partners were held:



**Signs of Safety –
Building Brighter
Futures Practice
Model Partner Briefing
Session** – 5 sessions
held over the
reporting period
(City of York Council)



**Trusted Adults
supporting young
people in their
community webinar**
(Young Minds)



**Introduction to
adolescent mental
health webinar**
(Young Minds)



**Involving young
people facing
marginalisation
and barriers**
(Young Minds)



**Condom Distribution
Scheme & Training
for Professionals**
(YorSexual Health)



**Neurodiversity
webinars**
(ADHD Foundation)



**Sexual Health
Training Sessions**
(YorSexual Health)



**Multi-agency Prevent
Awareness Training
for the Adults and Children
Workforce**

Session 1 – 21st October –
Radicalisation and Prevent:
identification of risk
(North Yorkshire Police)



**Multi-agency Prevent
Awareness Training
for the Adults and Children
Workforce**

Session 2 – 8th November –
Radicalisation and Prevent:
management of risk
(North Yorkshire Police)



**Keep them safe
– Child Sexual
Exploitation
online course**
(Ivison Trust)



**Child Exploitation
Online Training**
(Ivison Trust)



**#LookCloser,
Programme of
Learning events in
relation to Exploitation**
(The Children's Society)



**Identifying and
supporting carers:
introducing York
Carers Centre**
(York Carers Centre)



**NSPCC & York St
John University: Free
Healthy Relationship
Resources and
Webinar**



**Private Fostering
briefing sessions
– 3 sessions**
(City of York Council)



**Together We Can
drop in briefing
session**
(City of York Council)

The Partnership also launched the following strategies:

- Early Help Strategy Launch Event (4 sessions delivered)
- Contextual Safeguarding Strategy Launch Event

In addition, the following Learning Masterclass briefing sessions were delivered:

- Learning Masterclass: Voice of The Child
- Learning Masterclasses: Children's Rights

During Safeguarding Week 2024, the following Learning Masterclass briefing sessions were delivered:

- Learning from National and Local Reviews
- Children's Social Care National Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- PREVENT - Identifying signs of radicalisation
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Signs of Safety: Scaling Questions
- Exploitation Team: North Yorkshire Police
- Introduction to adolescent mental health
- Private Fostering
- Signs of Safety: Signs of Belonging
- Engaging with Fathers
- County Lines And Serious Youth Violence

Priorities for 2025/26

The Partnership basic awareness e-learning package will be reviewed and rewritten to ensure that it is more up to date and can be easily adapted when national legislation is implemented and local protocols are updated. It is planned to launch the new basic awareness e-learning package in Autumn 2025.

Feedback from delegates will continue to be undertaken in relation to the combined Safeguarding A and B course.

It is planned to explore if it is feasible to establish a Partnership You Tube channel to disseminate training materials, videos and webinars to our frontline professionals.

Safeguarding in Education

The Partnership has adopted a procedure which outlines the School Audit (Section 157 and 175, Education Act 2002) and assurance arrangements to the Partnership Executive around safeguarding practice within the city's schools. The procedure sets out the audit and assurance arrangements function in respect of schools within the City of York.

The City of York Education Service has a Schools Safeguarding Advisor who provides safeguarding advice and supports all schools and colleges in the city. As part of their role, the School Safeguarding Advisor provides annual assurance updates to the Executive regarding safeguarding in schools, which summarises safeguarding activity undertaken in schools and identifies themes and specific safeguarding concerns raised through audit and by colleagues in schools.

During 2024/2025 the Schools Safeguarding Advisor has provided training to designated safeguarding leads, school governors and Early Years and has carried out bespoke training sessions in schools. In addition, the School Safeguarding Advisor has continued to work directly with schools in the city to support strong safeguarding arrangements, by undertaking safeguarding reviews and providing an important link to the assurance function of the partnership.

The School Safeguarding Advisor and colleagues from schools have continued to work in partnership with, and have actively contributed to, a number of multi- agency activities undertaken by the partnership over the period, including:

- Ongoing continuous development of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and contribution to multi-agency audits
- Support prevention of Child Exploitation by attending the Child Exploitation Disruption Meetings and weekly risk assessment meetings with partners
- Ongoing support of partner led Early Help processes
- Multi-agency learning reviews and audits
- Ongoing involvement at the Partnership Sub-group's as an Education representative

- Strengthening the involvement of Education as a partner within the Partnership in response to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

As part of the ongoing work to promote the involvement of Education colleagues in the city, the Partnership held an Education Safeguarding Conference on 19th March 2025. This was a hugely successful event with 120 attendees from schools and multi-agency partners, who provided key input and workshops including County Lines and Knife Crime, Substance Misuse, Vaping, LADO and Prevent. A group of Young Carers also attended the event to present key insights on their lived experience. There was also a key note from Ken Corish on Artificial Intelligence and the role this plays within the Education Sector.



The partnership held a workshop in respect of strengthening the role/responsibility of Education within our partnership safeguarding arrangements following the update of Working Together (2023). The workshop considered the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and how this may look at an operational level, such as through Education Sub-groups and networks, practitioner forums involving designated safeguarding leads.

Therefore, we asked colleagues to consider the following:

- How can we engage and consult better with Education colleagues at both operational and strategic levels within the partnership?
- How do Education colleagues want to contribute to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements? (thinking about two-way communication/dialogue)

- Are you aware of any existing governance arrangements/groups/forums that are already in place? How could safeguarding partnership representatives engage with these existing groups?

The partnership has already recognised the need to ensure education providers have a voice at the strategic decision-making level and this has been reflected within our partnership arrangements to now include both the Assistant Director, Education and Skills at City of York Council and Mark Hassack, Chief Executive of a Multi-Academy Trust to ensure that the voice of education and early years is represented and informs strategic decision making.

In response to this conference the Safeguarding Partnership Executive considered the feedback and agreement was made to consider having a multi-agency education focused Sub-group as part of the wider partnership arrangements and to strengthen our current Sub-groups to ensure that an Education representative is a member of each of these.

In addition, the Partnership Business Unit will work with Education colleagues to review how information is shared and disseminated to schools including how we can encourage schools to sign up to the newsletter and promote two-way communication.



Communication and Engagement

Social Media

The partnership regularly communicates with partners to provide important information such as changes to policies and procedures as well as links to information and resources. It also promotes campaigns, various safeguarding themes and activities of partners and other safeguarding organisations. We use a variety of communication and engagement methods. We also send out regular monthly newsletter to professionals.

Statistics:

X
(formally Twitter)
1,083
followers

E-Newsletter
860
individuals
have now signed up
to receive this

Website
2,892 hits
per month
(this has increased
on the previous year
by approximately
300 hits per month)

Campaigns

During 2024/25, the partnership has also continued to support a number of both local and national campaigns. Some of these included

North Yorkshire and City of York Partnerships 'When you drink, who is in charge?' campaign

North Yorkshire and City of York Partnerships 'Be Bright, Be Seen' road safety campaign

Partnership Connecting with Fathers campaign

Childline 'Behind the Screen' Campaign

National Children's Day

Carers Week

Safeguarding Week 2024

Children's Mental Health Week

Child Safety Week	SANDS Awareness Week
Alcohol Awareness Week	ICON Week
World Breastfeeding Week/ York to become breastfeeding friendly city	North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Dark Nights campaign
NSPCC 'Its not Love' campaign	Anti-Bullying Week
Road Safety Week	National Care Leavers Week
Baby Week	Safer Internet Day
16 Days of Action Against Domestic Violence	Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence Week #itsnotok
'If I Could Tell Myself' Domestic Abuse campaign	'Look after your smile' dental campaign
Child Exploitation Day	National Hate Crime Week
Anti-Bullying Week	Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence WeekPolice
Fire and Crime Commissioner's Just a kiss campaign	Partnership Private Fostering Week campaign

Following some of these campaigns, evaluation reports are shared with the partnership via the Sub-groups. The outcome of these to help inform, future campaigns, if further signposting is required or if further work needs to be undertaken by the partnership to promote specific safeguarding themes.

Child Death Review Panel (CDOP)

One of the most devastating things for a family to experience is the death of a child and it is recognised that this will have a profound and long-lasting impact on everyone involved in that child's life. All deaths of children up to the age of 18 years, excluding stillbirths and planned terminations have been reviewed by the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) since April 2008. The Child Death Review process is undertaken in accordance with national guidance and statutory guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The Child Death Review Statutory and Operational Guidance 2018 builds on the requirements set out in Chapter 6 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

The purpose of the Child Death Review Process is to try to ascertain why children die and put in place interventions to protect other children and prevent future deaths wherever possible. The process intends to:

- Document, analyse and review information in relation to each child that dies in order to confirm the cause of death, determine any contributing factors and to identify learning arising from the process that may prevent future child deaths
- To make recommendations to all relevant organisations where actions have been identified which may prevent future deaths or promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children
- To produce an annual report on local patterns and trends in child death, any lessons learnt and actions taken, and the effectiveness of the wider Child Death Review Process
- To contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to improve learning from Child Death Reviews

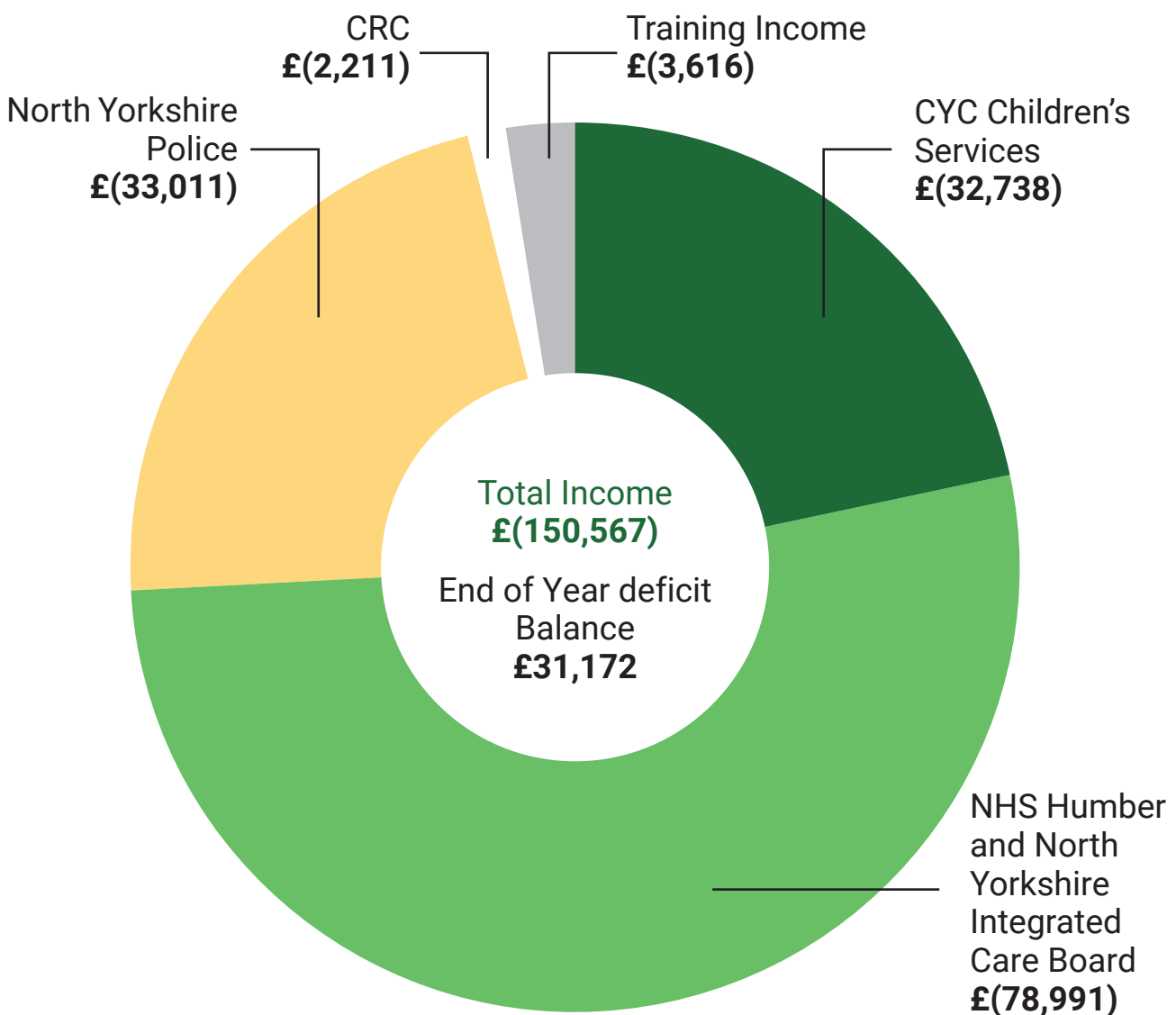
Child Death Review partners; the Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards for North Yorkshire and City of York have a responsibility to undertake the Child Death Review Process as set out in the Children Act 2004, and as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. North Yorkshire and the City of York have a joint Child Death Overview Panel which is a multi-agency panel with differing areas of professional expertise with the child death review process being undertaken locally for all children who are normally resident within North Yorkshire and City of York. The Child Death Review Panel produce an annual report each year which outline their findings and highlight their priorities. A copy of the annual report can be found [here](#). The Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report 2024/25 can be found [here](#).

Partnership Finance 2024/25

The Partnership budget is derived from contributions from the three statutory partners. As well as direct funding the Partnership is also provided with services in kind by a number of agencies.

It has been agreed by the Executive in May 2024 for the three statutory partners to equally fund the partnership (33.3%) from 2025/26 onwards following the update in Working Together (2023) where it states that 'funding contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable and agreed by the Lead Safeguarding Partners'.

In addition, the local authority agreed to pay the deficit of £31,172 so that the partnership can start on a zero balance for 2025/26.





City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership: Independent Scrutiny Annual Report 2024 – 2025

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the key findings from the Independent Chair and Scrutineer for the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP).

This report is for the period 1st March 2024 to 31st March 2025.

The role of the Independent Scrutineer is to carry out the independent scrutiny function as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

Independent Scrutiny should be objective, act as a constructive critical friend and promote reflection to drive continuous improvement.

2. Methodology

The Independent Scrutiny Annual Report 2024 – 2025 is based on an evidenced based methodology, as set out under the 'Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny: Safeguarding Children Arrangements' by Pearce, J (2019); Institute of Applied Social Research; University of Bedfordshire. ***Please see Appendix 1: Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny: Safeguarding children partnership arrangements; Jenny Pearce (2019).***

The Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny: Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements are:

- Step 1: The three core partner leads are actively involved in strategic planning and implementation.
- Step 2: The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children.
- Step 3: Children, young people and families are aware of and involved with plans for safeguarding children - adapted to Voice and Engagement of Children and Young People.
- Step 4: Appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing.
- Step 5: There is a process for identifying and investigating learning from local and national case reviews.



- Step 6: There is an active program of multiagency safeguarding children training.

In drafting this annual report, the Independent Scrutineer (IS) has also referenced the core elements and cross cutting themes from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

The five core elements are:

- A shared Responsibility
- Multi agency Safeguarding Arrangements
- Help, Support and Protection
- Decisive Multi Agency Child Protection
- Learning Culture

The six cross cutting themes are:

- Voice and Influence
- Information sharing and communication.
- Working in Partnership
- Leadership
- Governance
- Impact/Scrutiny

3. Context

National: During 2024 the CYSCP reviewed and implemented all changes as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children (December 2023).

Local: During the reporting period, the City of York Children's Services received a full inspection of the local authority children's services (ILAC). The outcome was 'Outstanding'.

The Independent Scrutineer for the CYSCP has a dual role, Independent Chair and Independent Scrutineer for the Partnership.

The annual report is informed by scrutiny of:

- Facilitation of CYSCP Self-Assessment Health Check 2024
- Scrutiny of anonymized feedback from families, who have shared their feedback, following early help and support (June 2024).
- Scrutiny of strategic documents, including the York Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2027.



- Scrutiny of CYSCP governance arrangements
- Scrutiny of CYSCP strategies, procedures, briefings, training and development.
- Scrutiny of all reports to the CYSCP Executive Meetings, including Subgroup Assurance reports.
- Chairing the CYSCP Executive Meetings.
- Independent Scrutineer's Deep Dive Audit: Re-referrals to Children's Social Care (May 2024).
- Attendance and engagement with colleagues and partners at CYSCP Development Events.
- Scrutiny of the CYSCP Performance Management Information.
- Scrutiny of Serious Incident Notifications and Child Safeguarding Rapid Review Meetings and Outcomes.
- Comparison and scrutiny of best practice across Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements and JTAI (joint target area inspection) outcomes.

3. Key Headline Findings.

Step 1: The three core statutory partner leads are actively involved in strategic planning and implementation.

There is considerable evidence of robust and highly effective governance arrangements for the CYSCP.

The three Delegated Safeguarding Partners who are represented on the CYSCP Executive, coalesce to provide strong and joined up leadership to the safeguarding partnership.

Despite competing priorities, the three statutory partners have continued their commitment during 2024/25 to holding bi-monthly Executive meetings, providing strong strategic oversight of the partnership's priorities:

- Prevention, Early Support and Early Help
- Child Exploitation
- Children Missing from Education
- Engaging with Fathers
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

The minutes of the CYSCP Executive provide evidence of the assurance and oversight that the statutory partners have, over the wide breadth of work and activity taking place, to drive forward the strategic priorities of the Partnership.

The Independent Scrutineer observes a culture that is open, aspirational and one that welcomes respectful challenge, an indicator of a strong and mature partnership.

An example of this, was the DSP for the LA Children's Services respectfully holding Partners to account for attendance in person at Child Protection Case Conferences.



On the 15th of December 2023 the government published the revised statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children (December 2023).

The CYSCP welcomed the revised statutory guidance, with a project plan agreed and quickly put into place, to review and drive forward the new arrangements.

The CYSCP Executive immediately invited the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) to nominate a MAT CEO to be part of the CYSCP Executive, embracing the strengthened role of schools and the education sector within local safeguarding arrangements.

The new arrangements were all successfully implemented within the national timescales, December 2024.

The CYSCP Annual Report 2023/2024 which sets out the strategic priorities for the partnership, was published by September 2024. This aligns with the York Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2027

The CYSCP Multi Agency Arrangements were reviewed and published by December 2024.

A Business Plan is in place, to assist the CYSCP Executive is maintaining oversight of progress for priorities and workstreams, providing assurance of pace and progress.

The City of York and the North Yorkshire Information Sharing Protocol, CYSCP Strategies, Practice Guidance, Resources and Procedures are all available and accessible to the CYSCP member agencies.

Step 2: The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children.

The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are appropriately informed of and engaged with the safeguarding children partnership arrangements.

Wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) actively helped shape the CYSCP Priorities for 2023/24 and the Young People's Plan 2024-2027, actively contributing to and attending all partnership and engagement events, including the CYSCP Development Day, 06/03/2023.

The independent scrutineer has found a high degree of commitment and engagement across the partnership. This is evidenced by a culture of openness to reflective learning.

The CYSCP Safeguarding School Conference, held on the 19/03/2025 was extremely well attended by colleagues across York schools.

The agenda, co-produced with school leaders, gave attention to the national reforms with delegates collaboratively shaping locally, a strengthened role for schools within the local safeguarding arrangements.



The CYSCP Executive are well sighted on strengthening even further, the strategic voice and influence on the CYSCP of the Early Years, Schools and Education sector.

Step 3: Voice and Engagement of Children and Young People

This is an area of significant strength.

There are strong arrangements, with a clear strategic ambition to engage with children and young people, so that their lived experiences shape and influence the work of the partnership. Consequently, there is a strong culture of listening to what children and young people across the city say about what matters to them.

In producing the York Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2027 over 3,000 young people were consulted.

The CYSCP has a dedicated Voice and Involvement Subgroup.

The City of York Council has a dedicated Head of Innovation and Children's Champion, where there is also an active Youth Council and Children in Care Council.

Young people have directly influenced the CYSCP priorities with Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing being a priority area and focus for the CYSCP Voice and Involvement Subgroup.

In the Independent Scrutiny Annual Report 2023 – 2024 the Independent Scrutineer reported that the CYSCP Children's Rights and Involvement Strategy (October 2021) remained relevant but was due for a review.

This has progressed and the Independent Scrutineer is pleased to report that the Children and Young People's Voice and Involvement Strategy 2025-2028 is publicly available as a published document.

The CYSCP Development Day on the 18/07/2024 was attended by care experienced young people who challenged the partnership on their use of language and professional jargon.

In response, the Partnership all signed up to a Language Pledge acknowledging young people's experiences and views, which will receive scrutiny and assurance during the next S11 Challenge Event.

Step 4: Appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing.

There are effective safeguarding procedures and information sharing agreements in place, to share information across the partnership.

Safeguarding information and data are available to the partnership, and well embedded within single agencies.

The CYSCP have developed a streamlined partnership data set, aligned to the partnership's priorities. This is continuing to evolve.



All agencies use and understand their own data, but there are opportunities for the CYSCP to review how it uses the **partnership's data set** to understand areas of strength and improvement, the impact and difference that the CYSCP are making for children and families, as well as identifying new and emerging risks to inform strategic planning.

Arrangements are in place for multi-agency audits. There are further opportunities for the Partnership to triangulate the learning from multi agency audits and reviews, seeking assurance in respect of how this learning has impacted both multi agency practice and, crucially outcomes for children.

Step 5: There is a process for identifying and investigating learning from local and national case reviews.

There are clear processes and procedures in place, for identifying and learning from local and national case reviews.

Local arrangements are fully compliant with Working Together 2024/5 - Chapter 5 Learning from Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents

An area of real strength is the system wide, child centred deep learning that is evidenced in Rapid Review meetings.

Equally, there is strong and shared governance of Serious Incidents, with strong and considered oversight of all incidents by the DSPs.

The CYSCP do not receive a high number of Serious Incident Notifications and for those that were made (3) during 2024/25, all were considered by a multi-agency Rapid Review Meeting.

The Independent Scrutineer is assured that there is not an under reporting. However, given that responding to serious safeguarding incident procedures are not undertaken routinely, the Independent Scrutineer would suggest that there are opportunities to manage the process more efficiently.

Step 6: There is an active program of multiagency safeguarding children training.

An area of real strength is the CYSCP Training Programme, which provides extensive learning and development opportunities on a variety of subject matters related to safeguarding children.

Training can be accessed through training courses, E-learning courses, learning from national and local reviews and briefings, which respond to issues and learning in live time, providing easy and accessible learning.



Outcome of The Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny: Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements are:

Step 1: The three core partner leads are actively involved in strategic planning and implementation. ***This is an area of strength.***

Step 2: The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children. ***This is an area of strength.***

Step 3: Voice and Engagement of Children and Young People. ***This is an area of strength.***

Step 4: Appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing. ***This is an area of strength.***

Step 5: There is a process for identifying and investigating learning from local and national case reviews. ***This is an area of strength.***

Step 6: There is an active program of multiagency safeguarding children training. ***This is an area of strength.***

Recommendations

- Implement and embed plans to strengthen even further, the strategic voice and influence on the CYSCP of the Early Years, Schools and Education sector.
- The CYSCP to consider how it maximises the safeguarding partnership's data set to understand areas of strength and improvement, the impact and difference that the CYSCP are making for children and families, as well as identifying new and emerging risks to inform strategic planning.
- In the Independent Scrutiny Annual Report 2023 – 2024 the Independent Scrutineer recommended that an area that could be strengthened further, was the co-ordination of systematic, outcome focused multi-agency audits/deep dives informed by quantitative data, local knowledge, with clear terms of reference.
The Independent Scrutineer would invite the CYSCP Executive to consider if this has been achieved.
- Triangulate the learning from multi agency audits and reviews, seeking assurance of how this learning has impacted both multi agency practice and, crucially outcomes for children.
- The CYSCP to review the Serious Incident and Rapid Review processes.
- The CYSCP to consider the role of the Independent Scrutineer and how it can provide deeper assurance.

Conclusion

My evaluation and reflection are that there remain strong and highly effective multi agency children's safeguarding arrangements in York, with a prominent level of



commitment from strategic leaders, the wider children's safeguarding workforce and the partnership Subgroups, which drive the work of the partnership.

The CYSCP Self-Assessment Health Check July 2024 concluded that the CYSCP was a mature partnership.

Relational practice is firmly embedded across the partnership.

There is a well embedded culture of openness and reflection, with an ambition to learn and continuously improve. Equally, there is evidence of innovative practice, not least a system and culture which listens to the views and voices of children and families.

The shared commitment and collaborative drive to lead and deliver effective safeguarding arrangements for children in York, was reported upon by Ofsted during their inspection of York Children's Services (2025).

'Safeguarding partnership arrangements in York are embedded and mature, with a positive culture of respectful challenge and shared accountability.'

Links with housing have particularly enabled a significant improvement in outcomes and opportunities for care leavers.

Police and health partners have brought valuable knowledge and resources, including additional resources in attendance at ICPC and timely health assessments for children in care.

There is joint funding for new developments, for example clinical psychology support and access to speech and language therapy, and these collectively strengthen the approach to safeguarding children.

A comprehensive Children and Young Person Plan is owned across the partnership, which has impacted positively on the improvement of practice'.

Ofsted. Inspection of City of York Local Authority Children's Services 24/02/2025 to 07/03/2025.

It is a privilege to be the Independent Chair and Scrutineer for the City of York Safeguarding Children's Partnership and I express my thanks to all the dedicated professionals across the partnership, who work tirelessly together, making sure that children and young people have the building blocks needed to be happy, to be healthy, to be safe and to be ready for the future.

Equally, thanks must go to the CYSCP Business Unit who so professionally coordinate and support the work of the partnership.

York is in a strong position to progress the national reforms of children's services, with steps already in place to co-produce local arrangements with and across the children's partnership.

Mel John-Ross

CYSCP Independent Chair and Scrutineer