

# Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

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12 Month Report  
2023/24



**“No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances so effective sharing of information between practitioners, local organisations and agencies is essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision to keep children safe.”**

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023



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# INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the 12 monthly report of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership. The report sets out the key areas of work undertaken from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, and identifies areas of priority to further improve the effectiveness of the Partnership.

The SSCP is led by the CEO of Somerset Council, the CEO of the Somerset Integrated Care Board and the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary. They each delegate a member of their organisation to be part of the SSCP Executive, with a commitment to shared and equitable leadership of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

This year, we said thank you and goodbye to SSCP Executive member Dickon Turner and welcome to Lisa Simpson. We also welcomed Natalie Hanna onto our Executive as an Education representative.



## Our Lead Members:

Sarah Crew - **Chief Constable, Avon and Somerset Constabulary**

Jonathan Higman - **Chief Executive Officer, Somerset ICB**

Duncan Sharkey - **Chief Executive Officer, Somerset Council**

## Our Executive:

Natalie Hanna - **Headteacher, The Mendip School**

Shelagh Meldrum - **Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Operations, Somerset ICB**

Lisa Simpson - **Superintendent, Avon and Somerset Constabulary**

Claire Winter - **Executive Director, Children and Families,**

# SOMERSET CONTEXT

**120,500**  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
0-19 YRS IN SOMERSET  
*(ONS NOMIS 2021)*

**313**  
28.6 per 10,000  
CHILDREN ON CHILD  
PROTECTION PLAN  
*(March 2024)*

**590**  
53.9 per 10,000  
CHILDREN WHO ARE  
LOOKED AFTER  
*(March 2024)*

**12,139**  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE WITH SEN  
SUPPORT  
*(as at July 2024)*

**5,716**  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE WITH EHCP  
*(as at July 2024)*

**89.87%**  
PUPIL ATTENDANCE IN  
SECONDARY SCHOOL  
*(July 2024)*

**94.08%**  
PUPIL ATTENDANCE  
IN PRIMARY SCHOOL  
*(July 2024)*

**1,201**  
NUMBER OF MISSING  
CHILDREN REPORTS  
(R12M)  
*(ASC March 2024)*

**1,622**  
NUMBER OF CHILD  
PROTECTION CRIMES  
EXCLUDING DOMESTIC ABUSE  
(R12M)  
*(ASC March 2024)*

**436**  
NUMBER OF CHILD SEXUAL  
EXPLOITATION CRIMES  
(R12M)  
*(ASC March 2024)*

**148.7**  
per 10,000  
HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS  
INJURIES (15-24 YRS)  
*(Public Health 2022-23)*

**611.8**  
per 100,000  
SELF-HARM HOSPITAL  
ADMISSIONS (10-24 YRS)  
*(Public Health 2022-23)*

**1,169**  
106.8 per 10,000  
CHILDREN CHILD IN NEED  
*(March 2024)*



## RAPID REVIEWS AND LOCAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS (LCSPR)

This year, the Partnership have completed three Rapid Reviews and no Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

**Rapid Review 1** – non-accidental injuries to a baby

**Rapid Review 2** – death of an adolescent due to ingesting drugs

**Rapid Review 3** – death of a baby due to non-accidental injuries

Year	Number of Rapid Reviews
2020 - 2021	2
2021 - 2022	6
2022 - 2023	7
2023 - 2024	3

The Partnership notes that there has been a decrease in Rapid Reviews completed, after two years of increased numbers. We recognise that this number is influenced by a range of factors, including socio-economic contexts. After feedback received from the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, the Partnership completed learning and reflection about serious incidents, and how we interpret the threshold. This is likely to have also influenced the reduction in Rapid Reviews this year, as the SSCP more consistently apply the statutory thresholds for serious incidents. Reduction in the number of Rapid Reviews relating to non-accidental injuries to babies could also indicate impact of actions arising from reviews.

When there is a serious incident which does not meet the criteria for a Rapid Review or Child Safeguarding Practice Review, the Partnership

may also undertake non-statutory learning activity to identify learning and create change across the system. This year, the Partnership completed three non-statutory learning reviews.

**Learning Review 1** – a thematic review of a cohort of children involved in Serious Youth Violence incidents

**Learning Review 2** – exploration of missed opportunities to explore a family with multiple complex risk factors

**Learning Review 3** – non accidental injuries to a baby

**Identified learning from Rapid Reviews and Learning Reviews the Partnership have completed included the following themes:**

- Multi-agency communication
- Working with fathers and male carers
- Professional curiosity and taking a whole-family approach
- Emotional health and wellbeing support for children
- Including people with relevant expertise in Strategy discussions where there are concerns a child has experienced sexual abuse
- Safeguarding children out of education
- Recognising vulnerability and children as victims
- Dynamic risk assessment

**Learning from reviews was disseminated in a range of ways, including:**

Videos, e-learning, training, bite size briefings, events and presentations, Learning Bulletin and single agency newsletters, updates to SSCP tools and guidance and podcasts.

The Partnership completes a range of activity to evaluate the impact of actions arising from learning reviews. Work to measure impact of actions from reviews include audit, practitioner focus groups, and surveys, and is overseen by our Action Plan Evaluation group.

### Examples of impact from Partnership activity relating to learning reviews:

- Agencies gave examples of how they have improved multi-agency communication in the Section 11 audit, including developing of protocols, co-locating staff, providing a point of contact for queries, ensuring attendance at multi-agency meetings, and training.
- A Resolving Professional Differences survey indicated that in most cases, using the process results in a positive outcome for children.
- Public Health Nursing evidenced improvements in engaging fathers and male carers through a single agency audit.
- A multi-agency practitioner survey identified that using the Family Strengths and Needs toolkit results in improved identification of the signs of neglect, and improved planning to support it.
- A multi-agency audit on Serious Youth Violence demonstrated more consistent use of recording of Trigger Plans for children.
- A survey about the Pre-Birth Workbook told us that it is not widely used, so work has commenced to review this tool and ensure it is having the desired impact.
- An audit commissioned after the publication of Safeguarding children with disabilities in residential settings gave assurance around children with disabilities being safe and cared for to a good standard.
- Data and audit work demonstrated improvements in Independent Reviewing Officers being involved in Team around the Child meetings and updated about significant incidents.



## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Partnership learning and development offer includes face to face and online training, online webinars and e-learning. The Partnership also use a range of methods to share learning including our Learning Bulletin, Bitesize Briefings, videos and podcasts.

The Partnership Learning and Improvement subgroup commissions and quality assures our training offer.

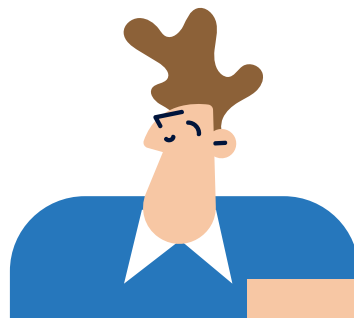
### Core safeguarding training:

Course	2021-22 Number Trained	2022-23 Number Trained	2023-24 Number Trained
Advanced Child Protection 2 day	307	592	615
Advanced Child Protection Update	411	634	745

These increases show positive increased engagement from education providers and Children's Social Care. The Partnership would still like to increase the numbers of Police and Health professionals attending training, and will action this in 2024-5.

### This year, alongside our core safeguarding courses, we offered funded courses on the following topics:

- Understanding Neglect
- Early Help
- Low Level Concerns LADO workshop
- Child Exploitation
- Brook Traffic Light Tool



- Motivational Interviewing
- Safeguarding Unborn Babies

Alongside this, we held two themed weeks of webinars for practitioners on Neglect (100 attendees) and Getting to know the agencies in Somerset (413 attendees and video views). The Partnership also commissioned Serious Youth Violence training for senior leaders across our area, which was attended by over 40 managers from a range of agencies.

We understand the impact of our training through both qualitative and quantitative methods. Each attendee is asked to rate themselves on a range of questions before and after the course, to measure learning gain.

### The learning gain for our core safeguarding courses are as follows:

Course	Learning Gain (overall)
Introduction to Child Protection	16.4%
Advanced Child Protection 2 day	17%
Advanced Child Protection Update	11%



We continue to receive consistent positive feedback from attendees to our training and webinars, including:

“Much better awareness of the best approach in completing a form. When to start an assessment. How to collaborate with the family in completing an assessment.”

“Made me feel better equipped to ask the right questions at the right time”

“The importance of looking further than the young person’s behaviour / medical condition and associated management and treatment of same- what is the underlying cause? what else is going on for the child?”

“I am now confident about the documentation that can be used to support children and families”

“This enabled me to be confident in completing referrals”

“I feel very well informed about the ways to support families I am working with”

“When there’s multi-agency individuals on training it is a great benefit because it brings more insight and something new to the table”

“The training provided me with a better understanding of the processes needed to support families”

“This course has empowered me to carry out my job effectively using my knowledge and best practice”

“Better understanding of some specialist services in Somerset who we can refer young people and their families on to, should they need extra support”



# INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

In Somerset, we have an Independent Scrutineer to challenge our Partnership functioning and arrangements.

The Partnership will be completing work in 2024-2025 to consider our areas of priority and develop clear pathways for our Scrutineer to hear the voices and experiences of frontline practitioners.

## Feedback from our Independent Scrutineer, Mark Peel:

This review reveals the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership to be professionally collegiate and committed to learning how to better protect our children.

### Training and CPD:

The quality and range of training opportunities for safeguarding in Somerset is especially high. This is largely due to our excellent trainers, but also reflects the findings and recommendations of Rapid Reviews (as well as other types of review) in a dynamic way; such that there is a clear and up to date link between the training on offer and emerging safeguarding themes. As a result, we have a strong learning culture, and an open-minded commitment to embrace change where that is necessary and in the best interests of children.

### Building a more resilient Partnership:

The new version of Working Together requires us to move to an equitable funding formula for the Partnership. A difficult ask at a time where resources are so stretched. I am delighted that the SSCP has found an incremental way to move to equitable funding as soon

as possible; without compromising the quality of services offered by the Business Unit, and in a way that will offer 'catch up' training places to Health and Police Partners, so as to better balance our capabilities at the 'chalk face' of safeguarding. This is indicative of a mature, professional and pragmatic Partnership.

### Joint Targeted Area Inspection - Serious Youth Violence:

The findings of the recent JTAI inspection into serious Youth Violence for Somerset make for some difficult reading. The issue, as with all challenges, is for us to respond to constructive criticism as an opportunity to improve, and not shy away from asking some quite basic and difficult questions.

The process of change and improvement is already in hand, with an action plan formulated in response to the inspection. I have no doubt that the improvements required are achievable, and that there is appropriate leadership, will and pragmatism to 'make it so'.

Indeed, there is evident truth in the proposition that adversity can draw people together with a common shared purpose, and that has been evident to me in the overwhelmingly positive manner in which statutory partners from health and police as well as across

the local authority, have 'owned' the problem and responded both professionally and in accord.

Many of you will have heard me say in the past that I do not interpret my brief as being essentially inspectoral. What inspection of the three agencies constituent to the Partnership does not do in any meaningful way is come to a general evaluation of the Partnership overall. It can be inferred in part by looking at the evidence from each inspection and 'following the bread crumbs'.

As a result I have submitted a clear plan to the SSCP Executive, dividing the next eighteen months up into three six-month sections. I will more equitably combine high support with high challenge, and if this feels a little uncomfortable and quasi-inspectoral, then the JTAI has been a needed 'wake up call' and presents an opportunity to improve that I am happy to embrace.

## Dr Mark A. Peel



## Other activity in 2023-2024 which helped us to understand how effective the Partnership is:

- Feedback from the Somerset Youth Forum and other participation groups on a range of topics
- Multi-Agency Audit on Serious Youth Violence
- Surveys on a range of topics completed by frontline practitioners
- Multi-agency focus groups on the effectiveness of the Early Help Assessment
- Single agency audits and inspections
- Feedback from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on Rapid Reviews we submitted
- Themes across Resolving Professional Differences forms submitted
- Scrutiny of impact of actions from previous learning reviews by our Action Plan Evaluation group
- Feedback from attendees at training and events
- Section 11 audit
- Scrutiny of data and arising themes through our Quality Assurance group
- Feedback from our Community Member, Kev O'Donnell

## Some key learning identified from this input included:

- Ongoing areas for development around monitoring compliance with training
- Increased safeguarding risk to children as a result of low school attendance or not having a full time table
- The importance of taking trauma informed approaches to children and families

# MULTI-AGENCY AUDIT

The Partnership complete a wide range of quality assurance work, including: audit, focus groups, surveys and assurance reports submitted by agencies. Different types of multi-agency audit includes Section 11 audits, JTAI style audit, Section 157 and 175.

## Project One: Section 11 Audit

This was a multi-agency self-assessment conducted across the Avon and Somerset footprint. The audit sought assurance about how agencies are meeting their Section 11 duties to safeguard children.

### Key learning identified from the audit included:

Overall, there was positive feedback around agencies meeting their Section 11 duties, and some agencies identified action plans to develop practice and policy.

Regional feedback included the request to focus on online abuse and exploitation.

### Action taken as a result of learning included:

- The Partnership will be monitoring the progress of the S11 Audit actions plans in 2024-25.
- A safeguarding VCFSE forum has been established to improve communications, shared insight, and training opportunities.
- The Department for Education grant recieved to strengthen multi-agency working has been allocated to improve accessibility to the multi-agency training programme for all agencies.
- SSCP Forum Week in 2024-25 will focus on awareness and support pathways for online abuse and exploitation.

## Project Two: Serious Youth Violence

A multi-agency audit on a cohort of children who had either been involved in or were deemed at risk of Serious Youth Violence.

### Key learning identified from the audit included:

Areas for development were highlighted around recognising the increasing risk connected with low school attendance, sharing Youth Justice involvement with the multi-agency network and trauma informed approaches.

### Action taken as a result of learning included:

- A good practice example was also identified where positive outcomes were achieved for a child through a range of measures, including a timetable of learning skills, creating opportunity for positive family time and disrupting networks. [Serious Youth Violence Good Practice Case Review](#)
- This good practice example was disseminated across the Partnership to share learning. However, it was more difficult to action some of the other learning identified in the review, and there was limited progress as a result.

## Project Three: Early Help Assessment

A project including surveys, practitioner focus groups and service interviews to understand the use and impact of the Somerset Early

### Key learning identified from the project included:

This identified positive practice around recognising risk and identifying appropriate services to support, but also highlighted areas for improvement around practitioner confidence, information sharing and consent.

### Action taken as a result of learning included:

The recommendations are being implemented during 2024-2025.

### Forward Focus:

In light of learning from this year, we are reviewing our multi-agency Quality Assurance Framework and scrutiny arrangements to ensure that learning identified has impact across the system.

This year, the Partnership can report the following results from inspections of our services in 2023-24:

- **Somerset NHS Foundation Trust- Care Quality Commission (CQC) regarding the maternity services:**
  - [Musgrove Park Hospital](#)
  - [Yeovil District Hospital](#)
  - [Bridgwater Community Hospital](#)
- **HMICFRS inspection of police child protection services in Avon and Somerset Constabulary:**
  - [Avon and Somerset – National child protection inspection](#)



## FUNCTIONING OF THE PARTNERSHIP

### AGENCY ATTENDANCE AT MULTI-AGENCY SUBGROUPS:

Name of Agency	% Attendance across SSCP multi-agency subgroups (15 meetings)
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	93%
Children's Social Care (Somerset Council)	93%
Education Services (Somerset Council)	67%
Integrated Care Board	93%
Public Health Nursing	80%
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust	100%



Attendance by Education colleagues has improved from 2022-2023, and we hope to continue to build on this in 2024-2025.

Partner agencies also contribute to the functioning and structure of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a variety of means, including contributions to delivering training and learning activity, sharing audit findings, cascading learning from reviews, and providing 'in kind' resources such as meeting rooms.

The overall budget for our Safeguarding Partnership is **£195,500**, which was funded by partners as follows:

Agency	Contribution
Somerset Council	74%
Somerset Integrated Care Board	15%
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	10%
Probation	1%

The Executive have agreed alternative funding arrangements for 2024-2025 to reflect more equitable contributions across partners.

In 2023/24, the Partnership also received a grant of **£47,300** from the Department for Education to implement the changes from Working Together 2023 and strengthen multi-agency working.

This grant has been invested as follows:

- Supporting our training programme and accessibility for all agencies
- Independent Scrutiny arrangements
- Contribution towards the robust review and redesign of the South West Child Protection Procedures
- Investing in software and Learning Management system to support sharing learning from reviews and training

How the budget is spent:

Output	Expenditure
Salaries	82%
Independent Scrutiny	5%
Licenses, subscriptions (including South West Child Protection Procedures) and other associated costs	13%



## ALLEGATIONS MANAGEMENT

Somerset's Local Authority Designated Officers service (LADO) is involved in the management and oversight of allegations of harm against people who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity.

The service managed 742 notifications of allegations during 2023-4 (a slight decrease from 747 notifications in 2022-3). Of these, 59% were assessed as not meeting the LADO criteria, indicating the ongoing need to support agencies to better understand the managing allegations procedure and application of criteria.

In response to this need, the LADO service have provided the following:

- Allegations Management covered within Partnership core training
- Delivering 'Low Level Concerns' workshops for partner agencies
- Training sessions
- Information Sheets and guidance document available on the SSCP website
- Video presentation available on the SSCP website

[You can find the Allegations Management annual report here.](#)

## CHILD DEATH OVERVIEW PANEL

Somerset and Dorset have a joint Child Death Overview Panel to share learning. Between 01 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, there were a total of 30 child deaths (Child Death Notifications) amongst residents living within Somerset, and 5 CDOP reviews were completed. After two years of reduced numbers of deaths (2021-2 and 2022-3), the number of Child Death Notifications increased in 2023-4.

### Somerset Child Death data 2023/24:

- There were **30** child deaths
- The number of deaths of under 1s was **15**
- The number of deaths of 15-17 year olds was **5**

[You can find the Child Death Overview Panel annual report here.](#)





## RESOLVING PROFESSIONAL DIFFERENCES

Resolving Professional Differences (RPD) is the name for our local escalation protocol.

There has been an increase in numbers of Step 3 RPDs submitted to the Partnership this year. Numbers have returned to 'Pre-Covid' levels:

Year	Number of RPDs
2019 - 2020	23
2020 - 2021	13
2021 - 2022	6
2022 - 2023	7
2023 - 2024	21

This year, the Partnership have worked to improve practitioner awareness of the process through communication and training. The impact of this is evidenced in Health agencies, VCSE agencies and Police significantly increasing their use of the protocol this year.

The most common theme across RPDs is lack of communication or support in relation to the safeguarding arrangements for a child.

The Partnership completed a survey with practitioners who have used the Protocol to understand the impact on outcomes for children and families.

### Action as a result of this learning:

The Partnership will continue to promote the Protocol in 2024-25.

## Survey Feedback

“It resulted in improved care planning for the child.”

“Resolving Professional Differences Protocol is brilliant in giving opportunities for agencies to share concerns in an open, transparent manner. This leads to better relationships and better outcomes for children”

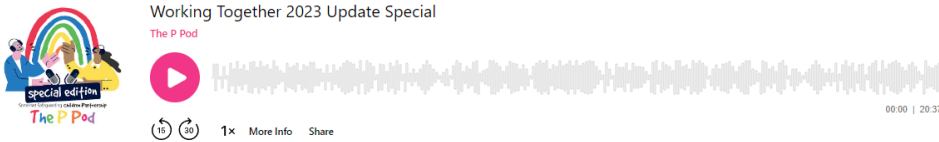
“Allowed appropriate escalation, open challenge and shared outcomes.”

“It improved communication between Health and Children’s Social Care and helped put together a comprehensive, robust plan with a set time frame. It also put together a contingency plan that if things deteriorated within the time frame, there was a plan for next steps.”

# WORKING TOGETHER 2023

The Partnership have considered the 2023 updates to Working Together to Safeguard Children and any local change required as a result.

We also disseminated knowledge with the workforce through our training and a podcast:



## Lead Practitioner:

Working Together 2023 also outlines that a Lead Practitioner can support a family through the Child in Need process, however in Somerset the Lead Practitioner will continue to be a qualified Social Worker.

## Education:

Working Together 2023 also highlighted the importance of involving Education in safeguarding at operational and strategic levels.

Education providers are represented at all Partnership multi-agency subgroups.

There is also a designated Education Safeguarding subgroup, which uses a range of voices across the Education system to consult on Partnership work and make key decisions.

This year, Natalie Hanna joined the Executive to ensure that Education is represented at the highest level of decision making.

Our Executive and the Education Safeguarding subgroup have engaged in work across the system after it was identified within a learning review that there are low levels of attendance at multi-agency safeguarding meetings during the school holidays.

Additional challenge and support has been offered to schools, and all schools/multi-academy trusts have been required to give assurance that they have arrangements for contacting for urgent safeguarding matters during the holidays.

The Partnership will continue to monitor engagement with urgent meetings during the school summer holidays to ensure that all involved agencies can attend and bring their agency perspective, as per Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.



# COMMUNICATION

It is important for the Partnership to have clear communication across the workforce to share learning and best practice, as well as signpost to useful resources and training opportunities.

## How useful are the different communications channels for disseminating learning?

### SSCP Website:

Feedback from practitioners tells us that our website is easy to navigate and contains useful information and local resources.

### South West Child Protection Procedures (SWCPP):

In the 3 months after we re-launched the SWCPP with a new format, we had 589 visitors to the Somerset chapters, where practitioners find information about statutory guidance and regional protocols.

### Learning Bulletin:

Our monthly newsletter has had 511 new subscribers this year, similar to the year before. Data analysis tells us that in 2023-24, the percentage of recipients reading the Learning Bulletin and clicking on the links was also similar to 2022-23.



### Podcast:

Since launching in September, we have had over 1700 downloads of our podcast, which covers a range of safeguarding topics and local agencies. Our most popular episodes were Updates to Working Together 2023 and Child Exploitation.

### Social Media:

This year, we have reached 11,500 people, had 493 link clicks, 1,500 page visits and 106 new followers for our Facebook page. This has been an increase in reach (34.1%) and engagement (96%).

Next year, we would like to continue to explore different communication channels to meet differing needs, preferences and learning styles for how practitioners receive updates.

We also want to ensure regular communications and continue to raise awareness amongst the Somerset workforce about national campaigns and resources.



## VOICE OF THE CHILD & YOUNG PERSON

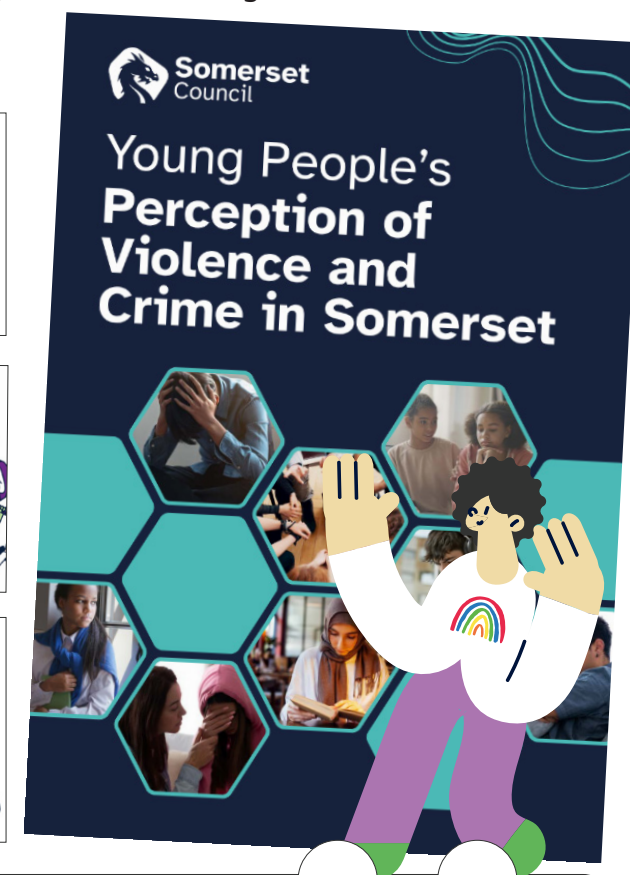
A range of partners have participation groups to direct inform their work and influence service provision, including: the Parent Carer Forum, Unstoppables, SiCC, SLCC, Youth Forum, CAMHS, Young Parents group, Young Carers group, and Police.

Using the voice of lived experience is important in influencing and directing the work of the Partnership.

**This year, we have engaged with the voices of children and young people in a range of ways, including:**

- Used themes from feedback provided by children and parents in work to update our Neglect Strategy
- Included **Somerset Youth Forum** projects in our monthly Learning Bulletin to share their perspectives widely with a range of multi-agency frontline practitioners to influence practice. Including:
  - [Grow Up! What's tough about growing up in Somerset?](#)
  - [Why are Somerset young people self-harming? And do they have the right support?](#)

- [Are things getting better for children and young people in Somerset?](#)
  - [Promoting positive communities](#)
  - [Are schools and colleges doing enough to make you feel safe?](#)
  - [VRP Young People's Perception of Violence and Crime in Somerset.](#)
- Worked with a group of Members of **Youth Parliament, Youth Forum, Somerset Leaving Care Council** and **Somerset in Care Council** to create learning resources relating to Somerset Trauma Informed approaches.



## SAFE START TO LIFE



**Why this priority was chosen:** Somerset completed 6 Rapid Reviews in 2021-22 and 4 Rapid Reviews in 2022-23 relating to Non-Accidental injuries to young children.

### Aims of Partnership:

- Practitioners provide robust support for families at the earliest possible stage, including involving fathers.
- Understanding of neglect amongst professionals across Somerset is enhanced.

### Partnership activity 2023-2024:

- A Pilot to provide Health Coach appointments to new fathers. This had initially very low take up, and learning was implemented to change how this was offered to fathers. Those who took it up gave

positive feedback and had unmet needs identified. This will be rolled out across Somerset.

- A Police Triage Post was piloted in the Front Door, to improve analysis around domestic abuse incidents. This resulted in a significant improvement in Police conversion rates in the Front Door, and better understanding of risk and need around children experiencing domestic abuse.
- ICON (program to support parents to manage infant crying) e-learning was created to support better understanding across the workforce. Unfortunately, this has had low take up to date, and more work will be undertaken in 2024-5 to improve engagement with this training.
- Reviews of the Pre-birth protocol and Pre-birth workbook in Somerset, as well as creation of bitesize guidance for practitioners around hidden children and welfare checks.
- Held a focus group with practitioners to evaluate the impact of the Family Strengths and Needs toolkit.

### Forward Focus:

The Partnership are developing Bruising to non-mobile babies and Child Protection medical guidance.

Learning reviews relating to non-accidental injuries have highlighted areas for development around information sharing. The Partnership have set up an Information Sharing Task and Finish group to consider new national guidance and change local guidance and processes to ensure that practitioners have a clear understanding of consent and the basis for sharing information between agencies.

## SAFE IN THE COMMUNITY



### Why this priority was chosen:

- Data both locally and nationally indicated an increase in children deemed to be at risk of exploitation.
- 7% National increase in the number of 10- to 14-year-olds entering the youth justice system for the first time in 2022/23 compared with the previous year.
- 24.5% of Missing episodes are for children with a CE Banner (6.2 average missing episodes per child with CE banner compared to 2.2 with NO CE banner)
- 1 in 4 Secondary school pupils did not feel safe at school (Somerset

Health & Wellbeing Survey 2023)

- Data tells us that the Avon and Somerset area has significant concerns relating to County Lines.

### Aims of Partnership:

- To improve practitioner confidence in identifying and responding to risk of child exploitation, and provide a tool to support this work.

### Partnership activity 2023-2024:

- Delivery of multi-agency Child Exploitation training for 89 practitioners and Serious Youth Violence training for 40 managers. Positive feedback was received from attendees of the courses, including: 'The course has provided me with the information to be aware and alert in a number of different settings, from online platforms to local groups, clubs and gangs such as county lines'
- Development of the Risks Outside the Home Pathway to support children where the primary identified risk to them is from the community.
- Development of a Children Missing from Home or Care protocol.
- Work to review the Child Exploitation Screening tool.

### Forward Focus:

- Continue with training offer and create an All Age Exploitation Strategy.
- Implement learning from Joint Targetted Area Inspection - Serious Youth Violence.

# POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING



## Positive Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

priority three

### Why this priority was chosen:

- Local data highlights a higher than average prevalence of self-harm amongst children and young people.
- 93 per 100,000 Hospital admissions due to substance misuse(15-24) compared to England 58.3 per 100,000
- 122 per 100,000 Hospital admissions for mental health conditions (0-18) compared to England 80.8 per 100,000
- 611.8 per 100,000 Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (10-24) compared to England 319.0 per 100,000
- 27.5% of year 10 pupils said they don't have someone to talk to

about feelings or worries (Data: Somerset Health & Wellbeing Survey 2023)

### Aims of Partnership:

- Children in Somerset are able to access the right support at the right time, and access support earlier.
- Practitioners supporting children from a range of agencies understand the services available to young people and can signpost for identified needs.

### Partnership activity 2023-2024:

- Creation of the Somerset Trauma Informed Network
- Use of a Healthwatch project on children's views on support for mental health
- Delivered Motivational Interviewing training for 82 practitioners

There has been less evidence of progress against this priority, despite a wide range of activity across health, education, VCFSE and participation groups. Some projects are complex, and it is not expected to see impact until 2024-2025. This is a fast-moving area of risk which is affected by a range of social factors.

### Forward Focus:

- Analysis of self-harm work and data
- Improved links for reporting progress to the Partnership

# PLAN ON A PAGE 2024-25

## Priorities:

### 1: SAFE START TO LIFE

Babies and young children will have the best start to life, and their families will have the right support to keep them safe. Practitioners provide robust support for families at the earliest possible stage, including involving fathers.

### 2: SAFE IN THE COMMUNITY

Children feel confident and safe with inclusive education and the risks of exploitation are reduced.

### 3: POSITIVE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Positive emotional wellbeing and mental health. More children in Somerset will be resilient, have good mental health and positive transitions to adult services.

## Working in Partnership with:

All agencies in Somerset who work with children and families, Somerset Safeguarding Adult Board, Safer Somerset Partnership, Somerset Corporate Parenting Board, Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board and more.

## Subgroups to support progressing this work:

Quality and Performance, Learning and Improvement, Child Exploitation, Education, Health.

## How we will:

### Understand challenges in the system:

Conduct learning reviews when there are serious incidents, listening to the voices of children in subgroups, practitioner focus groups and surveys, audit, examining data and themes from Resolving Professional Difference processes, work with agencies from frontline practitioners to senior leaders to support a good understanding of challenges and strengths within the system.

### Support positive change in the system:

Deliver training on specified topics, as well as webinars and other learning opportunities, develop strategies and practitioner tools to support better outcomes for children and families, drive forward actions agreed from learning reviews, share learning through a range of communication methods such as social media, learning bulletin and podcast.

### Improve partnership working:

Facilitate the Resolving Professional Differences process to support agencies effectively communicating and challenging each other, deliver multi-agency training and learning opportunities where practitioners can understand more about how other agencies work, bring together a range of agencies in subgroups to make collective strategic decisions.





This publication has been produced by the  
Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

[www.somersetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk](http://www.somersetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk)

Published: September 2024