



Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2020-21

OFFICIAL

Contents

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership	1
Annual Report 2020-21	1
Foreword from the Partnership Chair	3
Summary	3
Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership	3
The Partnership	3
Independent scrutiny	4
Our Vision for the Children and Young People of Cheshire East	4
Children and Young People in Cheshire East - Our Child Population	5
The Child’s Journey in Cheshire East	5
Cheshire East Consultation Service	5
Early Help	6
Children in Need and Child Protection	7
Assessment timescales	7
Children in Need	7
Child Protection	7
Cared for Children	8
Care Leavers	8
Listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people	8
Review of Priorities for 2020-21	9
Improvements against the Priorities	10
Improving engagement with frontline staff - e-bulletins	10
Neglect	10
Continuing to drive developments around Child Exploitation	11
Emotional Health and Wellbeing of our vulnerable children	12
Developing our Early Help Strategy	13
Learning and Improvement	13
Strengthening Partnerships	13
Quality Assurance Sub-group - Performance Monitoring	14
Multi-Agency Audit	14
Contextual Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adolescents	15
Serious Case Reviews (SCR)	16
Rapid reviews, Notifications to the National Panel and Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews	16
Section 175	16
Joint Frontline Visits	18
COVID-19	19
Training and Development	19
Summary of the training year	20
Attendance rates	21
Impact on practice	21
Bespoke events, new courses, and development activity	22
Key Priorities for 2021-22	22

Foreword from the Partnership Chair

This is the second annual report of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership, it covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. We want to first recognise that through this period the global pandemic COVID-19 affected everyone in the Cheshire East community.

This report recognises the progress the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has made throughout this most challenging of years and those challenges that remain that we will continue to address in 2021/22.

If you have any questions about the report or the information contained in it, please contact me at CESCP@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Paula Wedd, Chair, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Summary

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has continued to lead the safeguarding work of the borough. Much of this year has been spent building upon the culture that supports the collaborative working arrangements needed to safeguard Cheshire East's vulnerable children and adults to ensure that despite the challenges of the COVID pandemic that safeguarding of children remained a priority for all services.

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has engaged multi-agency partners in the assurance process associated with delivery of the agreed work programme, encompassing core business and priorities relating to neglect, contextual safeguarding and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children. This has included partnership scrutiny, and constructive check and challenge. Evidence of actions arising from audits and case reviews have been scrutinised and signed off by the Quality

Assurance sub-group. Opportunities for learning and adopting good practice from peers has been reflected in the work programme.

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

The statutory guidance [Working Together 2018 \(WT18\)](#) requires each area to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in their local area. This report sets out what we have done over the past year and what we plan to do next year to make Cheshire East a safer place for children and young people.

This report is aimed at everyone involved in safeguarding children, including members of the local community, professionals and volunteers who work with children, young people, and families.

A copy of this report will be sent to senior leaders and stakeholders in our area, including the Chief Executive of the Council, the Leader of the Council, and the Executive Director of Children's Services. The report will also be sent to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Young People's Trust Board, Community Safety Partnership, and the Council's Children and Families Committee. Individual agencies will also be encouraged to present this report through their internal Boards and scrutiny arrangements.

The Partnership

Senior representatives from the statutory partners: Cheshire East Council, Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group, and Cheshire Police, are the [Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#). Also represented are the Youth Justice Service, National Probation Service, Cheshire and Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company, Public Health, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and East Cheshire Trust

NHS. These Executive members work together to keep children and young people safe from harm.

The partnership was responsible for scrutinising the work of its partners to ensure that services provided to children and young people make a positive difference.

The main role is to co-ordinate and to ensure the effectiveness of work undertaken by each agency on the board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Cheshire East.

The chair of the partnership was held by Cheshire East Council's Executive Director of People for quarters 1-3 of 2020/21. When the Director of People left the authority the opportunity to rotate the chair to the Clinical Commissioning Group was taken in line with the partnership chairing plan.

Independent Scrutiny

Due to the ongoing challenges of managing services during the COVID crisis the intention to conduct a peer challenge exercise with another Safeguarding Children's Partnership in the region were not realised. It is anticipated that an exercise like this will be conducted in the future.

The partnership commits to active involvement in Cheshire East Council's scrutiny arrangements, including the Chief Executive's quarterly safeguarding review meeting.

The partnership has commissioned two local safeguarding practice reviews led by independent chairs during 2020/21. One of those has concluded its enquiries and the other will do so during 2021/22.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission revisited the area of Cheshire East in May 2021 to evaluate whether sufficient progress has been made in addressing the two areas of significant weakness for children and

young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) detailed in the written statement of action in 2018. They concluded that sufficient progress has been made in addressing all the issues identified at the initial inspection in 2018.

Our Vision for the Children and Young People of Cheshire East

It is the right of every child and young person in Cheshire East to enjoy a healthy and happy childhood, grow up feeling safe from abuse or neglect and thrive in an environment that enables them to fulfil their potential.

We aim to do this through our collective commitment to:

- strategic Leadership across the partnership – to make the safety of children and young people a priority
- challenge – through focused inquiries or investigations into practice or issues based on evidence, practitioner experience and the views of children and young people, for us to improve together
- learning – to achieve the highest standards of development and to ensure all practitioners have the skills and knowledge to be effective.

This will include listening to the voice of children and young people and using what we hear to inform best practice.

The shared values are at the heart of all we do and are actively demonstrated through our behaviours and promoted throughout our respective organisations:

We will:

- ❖ Actively involve children and young people and their families, as what they say will shape the way that we work.
- ❖ Listen to frontline practitioners and their managers and take their views into account.
- ❖ Act in an open and transparent way and foster a culture of challenge, scrutiny, and support across the partnership.

- ❖ Ensure that our staff have the skills, support, and supervision to keep children and young people safe.
- ❖ Share information and intelligence that will enable us to keep our children and young people safe.
- ❖ Celebrate strengths and positive achievement. We are committed to continuously improve.
- ❖ Embed the principles of Signs of Safety across our partnership.
- ❖ Work with other strategic partnerships in Cheshire East to ensure that our plans are aligned to maximise the opportunities for children and young people.
- ❖ Hold multi-agency professional events to update the settings on the work of the partnership but also include them in delivering the key safeguarding objectives.

Children and Young People in Cheshire East - Our Child Population

Cheshire East is a relatively affluent area, and we know that most of our children and families experience good outcomes. However, there are areas where child poverty and associated deprivation is endemic and intergenerational.

Cheshire East has 18 areas which are within the top 20% of the most deprived areas in England, affecting 31,600 people or 8.5% of Cheshire East's population. Thirteen of these areas are in Crewe, with two in Macclesfield, one in Wilmslow, one in Alsager, and one in Congleton. Overall, relative deprivation has increased since 2010, as only sixteen areas were previously within the top 20% of most deprived areas.

There are approximately 75,400 children and young people under the age of 18 in Cheshire East, 51% are male and 49% are female. Children and young people make up approximately 20% of the total population.

8.8% of primary pupils are entitled to free school meals (an indicator of deprivation) compared to 14.2% nationally. 8.4% of secondary pupils are entitled to free school meals compared to 13.3% nationally.

Overall, 92% of individuals are of British ethnicity. The biggest minority groups in Cheshire East are 'white other' (2.5%), Asian/ Asian British (2%), and mixed/ multiple ethnicities (2.6%).

The majority of pupils' ethnic backgrounds are reported to be White British (87% of primary pupils and 89% of secondary pupils), albeit the ratio has reduced slightly from last year

There are just under 100 different first languages recorded for primary and secondary pupils, although only 6.9% of primary pupils and 4.7% of secondary pupils have a first language other than English, compared to national figures of 21.2% and 16.6%, respectively, so although increased from last year it is at a lesser rate than the increase nationally.

The Child's Journey in Cheshire East

Cheshire East Consultation Service

The Cheshire East Consultation Service is the 'front door' to access services, support and advice for children, young people, and their families; from early help and support through to safeguarding and child protection. Co-located within the front door are the police, multi-agency Missing from Home Service, Child Exploitation Service and Domestic Abuse Hub.

	Consultation activity	No. converted to referral
2016/17	10,432	3,438 (33%)
2017/18	9,536	2,976 (31%)
2018/19	9,418	2,558 (27%)
2019/20	9,824	2,543 (26%)
2020/21	8,373	2,273 (27%)

Number of consultations over the past four years that resulted in a referral to Children's Social Care

There has been a 15% reduction in consultations activity since last year. Conversion to referral has increased by 1% to 27%.

Early Help

We are increasingly trying to intervene earlier through the partnership work driven forward by the Early Help Together Board and our emerging locality working model. However, we continue to see the issues that families are facing becoming increasingly complex; this was exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdown and the ability of partners to deliver home-based and school-based work in the first part of 2020/21. The Early Help Brokerage Service is a service with a dedicated team whose aim is the allocation of early help cases. This will provide timely referrals to early help, and identification of the best service to meet the needs of the child or young person and their family.

We have refreshed our Early Help action plan to focus on tackling neglect and understand the mental health challenges that have emerged through lockdown; we intend to skill up our frontline practitioners to better respond to the needs of children and parents particularly those who will struggle to get back to school and college.

The local authority remains committed to continuous improvement and an effective range of services are in place across the continuum to meet need. This includes:

- ❖ High quality advice and information through the Family Information Service, support to our partners to engage with and deliver Signs of Wellbeing early help services, and supported access to more targeted services through our Locality Support Officers and the Early Help Brokerage Service.
- ❖ The Early Start Service deliver services in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and support families to achieve social mobility and early childhood health, ensuring localised intervention strategies between Children Centres and across our 480 private sector providers and maintained childcare settings with a focus on speech and language and readiness for school and learning.
- ❖ Early Start Hubs (clusters of Children's Centres and community venues) embed the Parenting Journey consistently across all centres and we have continued to deliver this as online support throughout the lockdown period.
- ❖ Family Support is offered across the continuum of need, and resources are aligned to need across level 2 targeted and level 3 complex caseloads – although we are making positive strides to enable other agencies to lead early help assessments and plans.
- ❖ Family Support Services lead the council provision for parenting interventions.
- ❖ Supporting young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to access provision post 16 years.

Children in Need and Child Protection

Assessments Completed in 45 days

Local authority	2016-17	2018-19	2019-20	20-21
England	83%	83%	84%	N/A
North West	81%	84%	81%	N/A
Cheshire East	88%	81%	86%	74%
Statistical neighbour	82%	86%	84%	N/A

Assessment timescales

The total number of assessments completed in the year was 3,040 compared to (3,129) last year. 74% of these were completed within 45 days.

Children in Need

A Child in Need is defined as; a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired without provision of services from the local authority, or he/she has a disability.

As at the end of the year there were 2,082 children with open episodes – this equates to 269.4 per 10,000 compared to 272.5 last year (our statistical neighbours ranged from 196.7 to 347.2).

Child Protection

When the local authority receives a referral and information has been gathered during an assessment during which a concern arises that a child maybe suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, the local authority is required by Section 47 (S47) of the Children Act 1989 to make enquiries.

The number of S47 enquiries initiated within the year was 940. The number of Initial Child Protection Conferences undertaken in the year was 319.

The percentage of S47 enquiries with an outcome of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) was 44%. The number of child protection plans (CPP) started in the year was 284.

Child Protection Numbers 2017-21

Key Indicators	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
CPPs lasting 2 years or more	1.1%	0.3%	0.3%	3.2%
CPP for a second or subsequent time	18%	26%	22%	28%
CP cases reviewed within required timescales	95%	98%	90%	93%
ICPC within 15 days	84%	81%	78%	79%

The data measures in the table above reflects that this year there has been a reduction in achieving the statutory timescales for multi-agency responses for children most at risk. For most children (79%) their needs and risk are considered in a timely way (15 days). We are aware of all the children where this falls outside the statutory timescales and the reasons for this are reported on a weekly basis. The impact for the child is minimised as an immediate temporary safety plan is agreed, and for those subject to a review a plan is already in place. We are not outliers in the national performance framework but would want improvement so that children at risk have the right interventions in a timely way.

The measure for children on second child protection plans is a priority indicator for the partnership as there has been an increase in 2020/21 and this is higher than we want it to be. The impact for children this suggests is that we are not ensuring they remain safe when we remove them from a plan. We know that for most of these children, their risk

relates to neglect. This is a task and finish priority for the partnership this year with the Neglect Strategy being updated.

The figure for child protection plans lasting more than two years has increased. The impact for children is that there are not significant delays for them in the progress of their plan to keep them safe.

Cared for Children

Cared for children are those that are looked after by the local authority either voluntarily or through a statutory order. On the 31 March 2021, 518 children and young people were being cared for by the local authority:

- ❖ 20.7 % live outside the local authority area and over 20 miles from home
- ❖ 8% live in residential children's homes
- ❖ 1% lived in residential specialist schools
- ❖ 67% were in foster placements (including friends and family approved foster placements).

On the 31 March 2021, 14 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were in the care of Cheshire East.

The figures show a number of young people live out of the area; many of these live nearby but across Cheshire East's border. Extensive work is underway to ensure there are sufficient local foster carers in Cheshire East to ensure where possible local placements are made.

In the last 12 months a total of 148 children have ceased to be cared for by the local authority. Of these, 26 children have been adopted; 13 children became subject of special guardianship orders; and 60 individuals have left care due to turning 18.

Care Leavers

On the 31 March 2021 there were 208 care leavers aged 17-21 who we were in touch with and supporting.

Listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people

CAN-DO Conference (Creative Act Now – Directly Online Conference)

Due to COVID restrictions it was not possible to hold the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Act Now Conference which for the previous 5 years had showcased the talent and knowledge of Cheshire East's children. In its stead, the Safeguarding Children in Education Service worked with several schools to develop and successfully deliver a **CAN-DO Conference (Creative Act Now – Directly Online Conference)**.

This provided the opportunity to feedback to children on actions taken in response to what they had said they were worried about at Act Now 2019 and what they thought we could do better:

- ❖ The development of a self-harm pathway that enables schools to be more aware and work with hospitals to offer support and help a young person who has self-harmed to understand what is happening to support them.
- ❖ You wanted to know what Children's social Care does:
 - we explained that we use the Signs of Safety approach and what that means including how we use a variety of approaches to communicate with you. This means that that other people know about and understand your problems and families are strengthened and work together meaning they stay together.

Several schools utilised virtual tools to develop presentations on cyber bullying, a real life journey through child sexual exploitation, self-harm,

trauma - how to help us, autism awareness, and a song celebrating how a school keeps its pupils safe. [These can be found here.](#)

November Children's Rights Month

November Children's Rights Month is an annual celebration of children's rights across the borough, developed by young people for adults to experience life in their shoes based on the 6 outcomes of the Children and Young People's Plan. Within Cheshire East we worked with Cheshire East Youth Council to make it a celebration of the positive participation of children and young people for services within Cheshire East.

Key events included:

- ❖ Loneliness and isolation opportunity - connect with others
- ❖ Staying safe online – switch off
- ❖ Recognising individual success – positive moments
- ❖ Body image and self-esteem – stretch and relax
- ❖ Exam stress and transitions – personal achievement
- ❖ Being kind and celebrating differences – thinking of others.

Review of Priorities for 2020-21

The following three partnership objectives underpin the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership business plan:

- ❖ Frontline Practice is consistently good, effective and outcome focused
- ❖ Listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people
- ❖ The partnership effectively protects and ensures good outcomes for all children and young people in Cheshire East.

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership agreed the following priorities to deliver these objectives in 2020/21:

We will improve frontline multi-agency practice through:

- ❖ Improving partnership engagement directly with frontline staff

- ❖ Continuing to drive developments around key safeguarding areas including children at risk of contextual safeguarding
- ❖ Embedding strengthening families
- ❖ Implementing our Neglect Strategy
- ❖ Implementing changes around the integrated front door
- ❖ Improving safeguarding arrangements for disabled children
- ❖ Improving identification and response around children and young people with mental health issues, including self-harming.

We will continue to improve the participation of young people in Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership business through:

- ❖ Ensuring that the voice of children and young people is central to Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership business.
- ❖ Engaging children and young people in co-producing information and support relevant to them.
- ❖ Ensuring that the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership celebrates children's rights and participation and the contribution of children and young people to safeguarding.
- ❖ Ensuring the voice of children and young people is central to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership training programme.

We will strengthen the partnerships through:

- ❖ Engaging the community through links with the voluntary and faith sector.
- ❖ Improving Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership role and traction in relation to developing early help.

Improvements against the Priorities

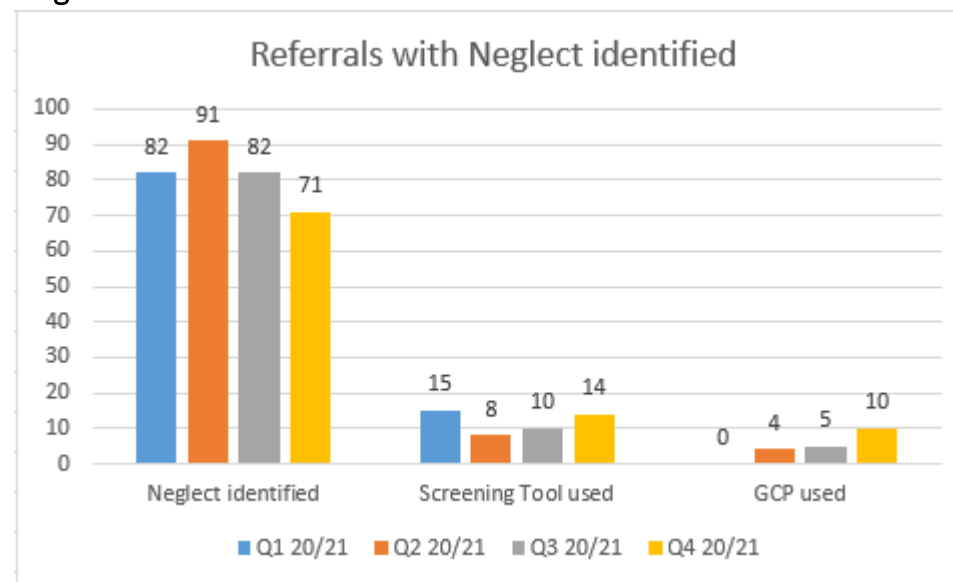
Improving engagement with frontline staff - e-bulletins

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has continued to publish its newflash and frontline bulletins. The frequency of these was increased due to the need to convey information to practitioners during the challenges of working during the pandemic. They have covered a variety of topics including:

- ❖ Child protection conferences and cared for reviews during these challenging times
- ❖ Assurance from the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre they are open usual apart from face to face.
- ❖ Domestic abuse risks and needs tool
- ❖ Foster Care Fortnight
- ❖ Safeguarding infants during the coronavirus pandemic: the ICON programme
- ❖ COVID-19: Stepped approach to caring for people who lack mental capacity and MCA: Liberty Protection Safeguards
- ❖ Safer Sleep
- ❖ Key Worker Parent/Carer Information
- ❖ Early Help Support
- ❖ Training
- ❖ Digital safety during COVID-19
- ❖ Summer Programme
- ❖ Preventative services sessions over the summer holidays to support families with transitioning back into school
- ❖ International White Ribbon Day
- ❖ COVID-19 safeguarding offer
- ❖ Mental Health Service Directory
- ❖ Local Safeguarding Adults Board Adult Safeguarding Bulletin
- ❖ Food and energy vouchers to support vulnerable children and families over winter
- ❖ Missing from Home and Care
- ❖ Coronavirus and Bereavement
- ❖ Trauma

Feedback from executive members and those participating in the COVID-19 response group has been that this method of communication is effective in supporting them in promoting the partnership and in disseminating safeguarding information within their services.

Neglect



During 2020/21 the Neglect Task and Finish Group developed the Neglect Strategy.

To inform this Strategy we have:

- ❖ researched the current partnership awareness and understanding of neglect using a survey
- ❖ used this information to develop 3 workstreams to support the development of the strategy as well as the training offer and performance measures

- ❖ Neglect is a priority for the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.

To respond we will:

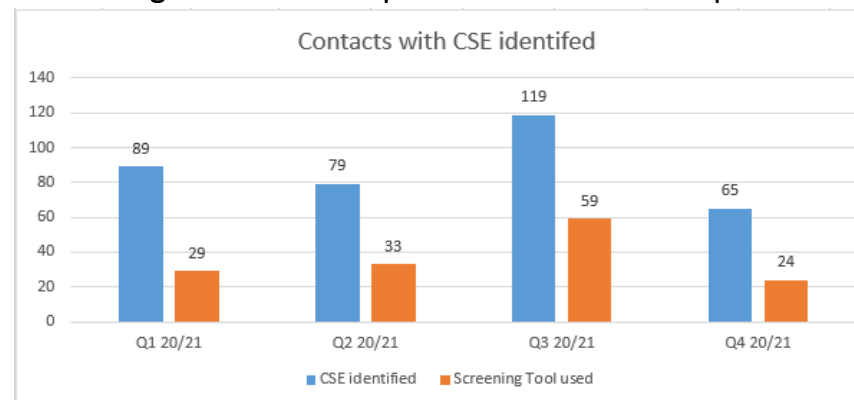
- ❖ develop practice guidance for all practitioners working with children and families who experience neglect at all levels of need
- ❖ review and launch the Early Help offer across all agencies
- ❖ each partner will take ownership and responsibility for promoting the Neglect Strategy within their organisation and embedding the practice
- ❖ further develop a partnership data set for neglect to continuously tell us what our picture is in Cheshire East
- ❖ develop a Neglect Strategic Board to analyse the data in Cheshire East including national comparators and research
- ❖ report findings of the board to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Quality Assurance Sub-group.

Measures for success – Activity that will tell us of the impact:

- ❖ multi-agency auditing regarding all aspects of neglect and the practice delivered to children and families to address neglectful parenting
- ❖ regular consultation with children and families regarding the impact of any level of intervention
- ❖ regular consultation with frontline practitioners to understand their confidence in practice and their view of their impact.

The [Neglect Strategy](#) along with practice guidance for working with children and families who experience neglect was launched in quarter 1 2021/22 and the training offered is being refreshed.

Continuing to drive developments around Child Exploitation



In 2020-21 there were 352 contacts to the front door where child exploitation was a factor affecting either the individual or a family member. This related to 304 separate children. 145 of these (41%) were accompanied by a screening tool. 173 of the contacts resulted in a referral to social care.

In 2020/21 the Child Exploitation Operational Group was established to share information monthly within a multi-agency arena to safeguard and protect children from potential sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, female genital mutilation, radicalisation and honour-based violence. The meeting provides an arena to share intelligence and knowledge on young people, persons of interest and places/premises where there could be links to such exploitation and/or significant harm beyond a young person home.

In Cheshire East child exploitation is a key priority for action for the next year.

Emotional health and wellbeing of our vulnerable children

Action	Indicator of Success	Progress 20/21	Plan 21/22
Examine the arrangements for, and effectiveness of work to improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of vulnerable children, those on the edge of care and cared for children.	Development of a multi-agency approach to support children living with mental health issues from vulnerable backgrounds and where safeguarding concerns have been identified. To build on existing and emerging mental health pathways to ensure a comprehensive and responsive offer of support is available for children across the continuum of need framework and ensure that services are better aligned to the range of children and young people's needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directory of mental health services produced, including both adult and children's mental health. • Details of referrals and criteria for referral are included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor number of referrals received to mental health services. • Develop a scorecard to highlight any areas of concern.
Work with partners to understand the mental health needs of children who are out of school/on part-time timetables.	Key partners will understand the needs of these children, specifically those with unmet needs, and the board will have an agreed multi-agency action plan to address these needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task and finish group established to review current pathways which includes mental health commissioners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency information sharing pathway will be implemented for children who are out of school or on part-time timetables.
Review the present pathway for sharing information between health and education regarding incidents of children and young people self-harming.	Development of a pathway that ensures there is timely and proportionate sharing between school and health following an incident of self-harm by a child or young person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-harm notification pathway implemented across Cheshire. • School staff trained in Cheshire East by the Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) team on 'what to do when they receive a notification.' • Development and pilot of a leaflet for children on attendance at hospital on the assessment process by CAMHS, reason for information sharing and who will receive information in school. • Letter sent by all Cheshire East schools advising parents of self-harm notifications being received by schools to support children. • Initial quantitative and qualitative report from the SCiES team completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit completed in May 2021 which included number of notifications and evaluation of pathway. Report of findings and recommendations to be finalised. • Continue to monitor number of notifications being received by the SCiES team monthly and identify if there are areas where more awareness raising and training is needed. • Further qualitative report to evidence outcomes for children of the pathway. • Finalise information leaflet and review the final copy with children and young people before use.

Developing our Early Help Strategy

The Cheshire East Early Help Strategy sets out how partners who work with children, young people, their families and carers, will deliver services in a way which enables children to maximise their potential, are kept safe and, where appropriate, prevents escalation of needs that require targeted or intensive interventions from statutory agencies. The strategy sets out the ambition of all the partners in Cheshire East to 'get it right' for children, their families and carers, by providing support and early help that enables children to thrive within their family environment and improve their long-term outcome and goals. The strategy has five priorities:

1. The partnership has the right infrastructure to support the development of early help services
2. Children and families get the right service at the right time: all partners understand levels of need and referral pathways
3. Understand the training need required, to ensure that our practitioners are enabled to co-produce high quality assessments and plans
4. We understand the quality of our services and act on this to improve outcomes for children - in order to respond quickly to any areas for improvement within our services we need to have a comprehensive overview of our partnership offer, which we regularly review
5. We understand the needs of children and families in Cheshire East, and we have the right range of services to meet these that can be accessed locally

There is an action plan that sets out the key actions to achieve the priorities.

Learning and Improvement

The Learning and Improvement Sub-group have supported and improved safeguarding practice across agencies and have:

- ❖ received the Annual Training Report from the partnership's Training and Development Manager
- ❖ agreed an approach for delivering safeguarding training in the 'new normal'
- ❖ adapted the training charging policy in response to the COVID pandemic, removed any barriers of cost for all partners
- ❖ overseen the work of the task and finish groups working on
 - children living with mental health issues
 - contextual safeguarding
 - implementing the Local Safeguarding Practice Review recommendations actions
 - neglect.

Strengthening Partnerships

We will strengthen relationships with other key partnerships to improve the reporting, accountability and sharing of good practice

Key updates from Children's Services have been scheduled on the forward plan for the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure they have strategic oversight and scrutiny of the quality of children's services and the key issues for children and young people in Cheshire East.

The Partnership Chairs' Group has continued to meet during the year. It explores cross cutting issues within Business Plans and identifying shared risks.

Performance, Scrutiny and Challenge

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership has a comprehensive quality assurance framework, which can be found on our website. In 2020-21 this has provided the partnership with a range of quantitative and qualitative information in relation to the effectiveness of safeguarding in Cheshire East. The partnership has strategic oversight and scrutiny of the quality of children’s services and the key issues for children and young people in Cheshire East.

<p>Performance A quarterly picture, showing a clear trajectory of progress. Allowing us to set targets and evaluate our performance against our statistical neighbours.</p>	<p>Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers What children, young people and their families want and is important to them, what their experience is of our services.</p>
<p>Qualitative Information Detailed information on what is working well and areas for improvement for specific services, including what the causes of issues are.</p>	<p>Feedback from Staff What staff know would help them to work with families, what is working well, and what could work better.</p>

Quality Assurance Sub-group - Performance Monitoring

A range of quality assurance activity supports performance monitoring. Arrangements for this are robust and support and supplement partnership performance monitoring. This includes the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership multi-agency audit programme.

The scorecard covers a range of measures from all partners and is aligned with the areas of focus for the partnership. It provides oversight of safeguarding practice across the partnership.

The Quality Assurance Sub-group is effectively scrutinising and challenging partnership performance and driving improvements to partnership working. The Quality Assurance Subgroup has:

- ❖ undertaken audits on contextual safeguarding and vulnerable adolescents
- ❖ further developed the audit methodology which is much more comprehensive and inclusive with better practice-based findings and effective multi-agency debate and agreement on findings.
- ❖ scrutinised and monitored the progress of agreed actions from audits and reflective reviews
- ❖ scrutinised S175 submissions.

Multi-Agency Audit

This audit covered a range of ages and levels of need each time. The agencies audit their own involvement using a common tool. They all make judgements on the quality of partnership working. Agencies then came together to analysis the audits and make recommendations for improvements. The agreed improvements are then tracked to completion by the Learning and Improvement Sub-Group.

Contextual Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adolescents

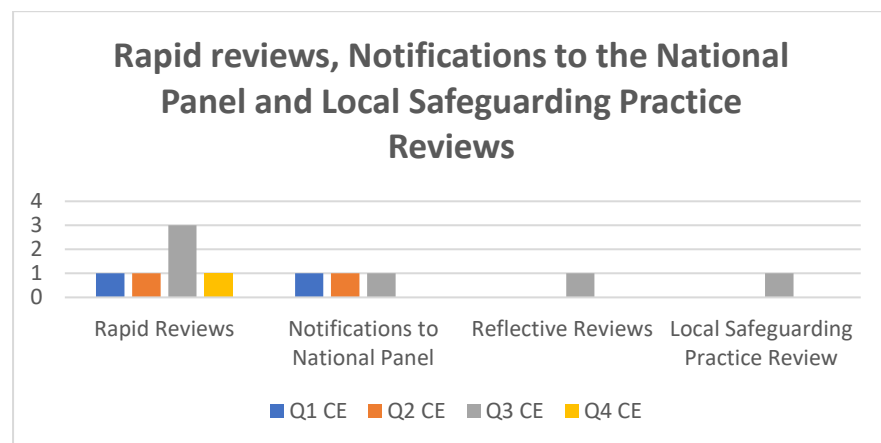
The audit findings are summarised below in terms of strengths and areas for improvement.

What are we worried about?	What's going well?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of professionals involved with each child – Some young people responded well to this, but others didn't. • Not all the information discussed within contextual safeguarding meetings can be recorded on LiquidLogic as it often contains police intelligence although Social Workers do receive the meeting minutes. • There were cases where the escalation process could have been considered. • Neglect features in all cases and there were re-referrals to social care due to a reoccurrence of neglect. • Several of the young people were excluded from school / alternative provisions or were on the verge of being excluded. Understanding on adverse childhood experiences / journey of the child and understanding of the contextual safeguarding issues should inform this process. • Specialist agencies, such as CGL and CAMHS, experiencing non engagement by either children or parents/carers. • Agencies not completing mapping exercises routinely to strengthen information within tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication and information sharing. Good evidence of partnership working. • Use of IOM / complex Youth Police Officers to support plan and young person. • Most agencies have a good understanding of the contextual safeguarding process. • @ct involvement - this acts as an effective disruption tactic in the work that they complete. • Professionals' ability to form good working relationships with young people and families. • Good working relationship with the police. • Evidence of the voice of the child within assessments and plans. • Positive change being evidenced in a lot of the cases audited.
What do we need to do?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be assured by partners that their frontline workers and managers are familiar with the escalation process is and use this when necessary. Assurance is required from CAMHS and CGL on what additional steps to engage are being tried and if consideration of a referral to other services is considered. 	

Serious Case Reviews

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership published a Serious Case Review (SCR) that had been delayed awaiting the conclusion of other processes. This is available on the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership website.

Rapid reviews, Notifications to the National Panel and Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews



The Rapid Review process has reviewed six cases during 2020/21; three of these resulted in notifications to the National Panel. Two of those progressed to Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews, of these one concluded during the year but could not be published due to ongoing criminal matters, the other was started in quarter 4 of 2020/21 and concluded in 2021. Where possible recommendations from all reviews have been progressed for example:

- ❖ dip sampling by health services and joint approach with Children's Social Care implemented for under two year olds known to services

- ❖ shared email to practitioners issued highlighting what should be looked for when visiting and not to focus solely on the parent etc.
- ❖ new-birth face to face visits taking place since June, parents being given a choice depending on their circumstances.

Implementation was scrutinised by the Quality Assurance sub-group.

Section 175

Due to the impact of the Covid Pandemic on the education system a decision was made by the partnership to delay the request to schools to complete their Section 175 returns. This meant that it was conducted in October 2020 instead of July 2020.

The school's submissions were extremely detailed and gave the partnership a very clear outline of schools safeguarding arrangements and what is under development. It provided the required assurance on safeguarding practice in schools. In addition, it also captured many of the ways in which schools have adapted and enhanced their safeguarding procedures during COVID.

In most primary schools, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is identified as the headteacher. All schools indicated that they have at least one named Deputy Safeguarding Lead. All schools indicated that they have a Designated Safeguarding Governor.

The Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) Team undertook analysis of the submissions and a report was scrutinised by the Quality Assurance Sub-group. SCiES are working with those schools who identified areas for improvement.

Type of setting	% completing S175
Independent School	82%
Primary School	93%
Secondary School	80%
Special School	100%
Colleges	67%
Nursery	100%

Joint Frontline Visits

The Joint Frontline visits during 2021 were completed by representatives of both the Local Safeguarding Adults Board and the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership. These visits were undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period and therefore services were operating in a different manner. These visits have all been conducted virtually to comply with Public Health and NHS England guidance relevant at the time the visits took place.

In summary the visits made the following observations on children's multi-agency safeguarding:

What's working well?	What we are worried about?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety well embedded in partners' practice and assists in embedding a Think Family approach and encourages professional curiosity. • Links with schools and statutory agencies have been strengthened since COVID-19. • Identification of young carers via screening tools. • All partners had a good understanding of the work of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board, newsletters, multi-agency communications and awareness raising activity. • Partners are clear regarding when to refer to the Children's Safeguarding Partnership. • Clear evidence of consultation with the child or young person to ensure that their views and wishes are central to safeguarding activity. • Adapting ways of working whilst keeping everyone's safety a priority has been crucial, ensuring appropriate PPE, vaccinations and keeping working/visiting areas as COVID-19 safe as can be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in self-harm highlighted by children's practitioners, closely linked to mental health • Difficult to pick up on Signs of Safety during virtual contact with children and young people. • It has been challenging to identify carers due to a lack of visitors to premises such as hospitals and GP surgeries where this would usually be identified. • Further thought required regarding how children's safeguarding information is to reach some adult services. • Children and young people who use services and/or their carers having to repeat their history multiple times which can cause unnecessary distress, which could easily be avoided.
What needs to happen?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be more appropriate methods of sharing information in a sensitive manner, to ensure that children and young people who use services do not have to repeat their history multiple times, as acknowledged that this can be distressing and lead to a lack of engagement. • Training is needed to raise awareness in respect of complex safeguarding, and to ensure that practitioners are aware of local policy and guidance. • Frontline practitioners welcomed frontline visits and felt that this was a useful process, and it would be beneficial to increase the number of visits that are completed next year. 	

COVID-19

The initial response of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership was to create a COVID response meeting to which both statutory and relevant partners were invited. This initially sought assurance from all partners that safeguarding children was a priority within the COVID lockdown response. This assurance was provided by all partners.

The terms of reference were established as:

- ❖ to ensure that multi-agency working remains effective in safeguarding children at a time when there are challenges to practice and additional vulnerabilities
- ❖ to ensure that there is a common understanding and risk assessment across all partner agencies as to the service that is being delivered and how it is delivered to children and families and that there is early notification across the partnership of any area of work that may be compromised for any agency that may impact on children and young people's safeguarding
- ❖ To ensure during COVID-19 restrictions that there is fluid coordination of multi-agency resources to ensure the most vulnerable children and families are safeguarded.

The safeguarding partners also agreed measures and plans to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading of the virus to children, young people, and their families and within our multi-agency workforce. A document was also created on our offer to safeguard and support children and families during COVID-19 where services shared their offer during COVID and that has been updated as the situation has evolved.

Amongst other outcomes:

- ❖ the partnership created a forum for operational considerations and check/challenge in real time as the COVID situation has evolved
- ❖ analysis and challenge of the increasing use of Police Protection Orders in the early lockdown - each was examined and assured that the police had made the correct decisions when utilising this approach
- ❖ requested and received assurance regarding mental health provision
- ❖ processes have been developed for identifying cohorts of vulnerable children and planning partnership responses
- ❖ Child Protection Conferences have virtual and face to face attendance options for parents
- ❖ using the learning from first lockdown to inform joint working on further periods of restriction
- ❖ Summer 2020 back to school campaign encompassing reduction in anxieties and reluctance to return. Schools identified which children might be at risk of not returning.
- ❖ Cafcass and Children's Social Care worked on court listing to agree priority cases.

This meeting continued to meet weekly and then fortnightly through the remainder of 2020/21.

Training and Development

The training year 2020/21 was unprecedented with the impact of COVID on the workplace and how training could be delivered. The training team and training pool responded to ensure that safeguarding training could continue to be delivered to all partners across the children and families workforce. Initially this was one to one activity via Lync and small bespoke

sessions being delivered to partners on request and a particular focus on new starters. Also, a considerable amount of time was devoted to redeveloping the original face to face offer into a virtual delivery model.

With the deployment of Microsoft Teams, and the learning from the initial use of Lync it was possible to deliver all multi-agency safeguarding training courses via Teams. Support to the training pool at this time was another focus to ensure that the considerable benefit to safeguarding training from local safeguarding expertise was sustained. The multi-agency training pool need to be commended as all remained committed to the quality delivery of the safeguarding training program despite having to learn quickly how to use virtual platforms to deliver training.

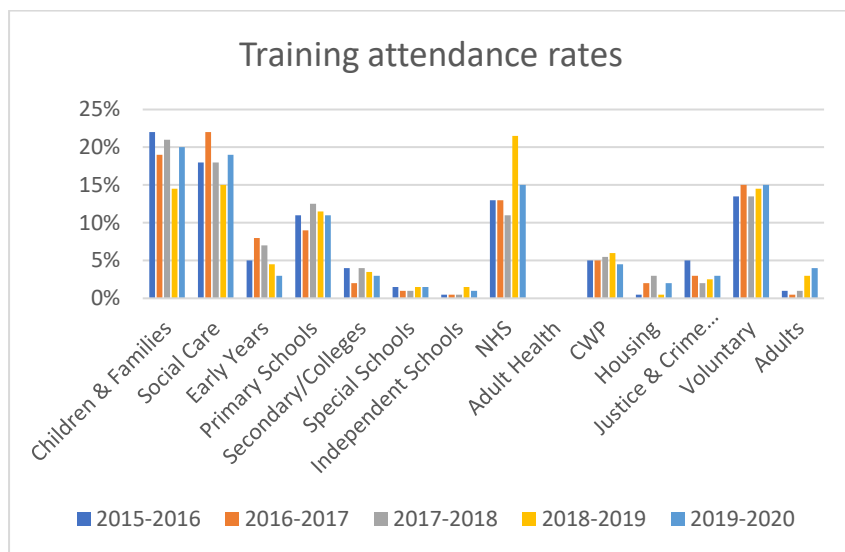
The information received will be useful to pass on to the families I support and during group facilitation. I have already checked that the ICON information is displayed within the Children's Centre and that my colleagues have completed the training too.

An informative and useful training session by trainers with exceptional knowledge bases and experience. Thank you.

Summary of the training year

Worries	Working Well	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT resources including connectivity not being fit for purpose. Short notice on non-attendance because of the pandemic. Support to participants when delivering sensitive and highly emotive training more difficult via virtual training delivery methods Lack of group interactions available as initially IT resources could not facilitate group work easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bespoke safeguarding learning opportunities were quickly developed to support one to one requests for training. New starters were supported through Lync during the first four months of the pandemic specifically on Signs of Safety and Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2). Successful conversion of all courses to a virtual package. Signs of Safety two-day course successfully revised to a virtual modular approach which was easier for participants to access. All members of the training pool have remained available to deliver training Specific work undertaken with the NSPCC to convert GCP2 face to face training to a virtual delivery method with excellent results which have been commended by the NSPCC. Evaluation data has been excellent during the transitional period. Considerable savings made as no printing, venue, or refreshment costs over the training year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further review of training packages required to establish which courses if any need to revert to a face-to-face model of delivery. Risk assessment required to ensure resuming any face-to-face delivery of training in the future is safe for participants, trainers, and other venue users. Review and reintroduction of the charging policy to accommodate non-attendance fees, bespoke design and delivery of single agency courses and support to organisations requesting policy review.

Attendance rates



35 multi-agency courses were delivered in 20/21. 666 participants attended training, whilst this is a decline from last year's activity this can largely be explained by the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of a platform to confidentially deliver training for the first four months of the training year, the work involved in converting all courses and the additional time and support needed for the training pool. This number does not include any one to one, bespoke or small team sessions which were delivered outside of the formal training program. Two courses are on hold for redevelopment and have not been delivered over the past 16 months.

In addition to the existing training programme the suite of e-Learning courses has been revised and 317 users have completed these, which is an increase on the preceding year.

Really difficult to deliver a full day's training virtually so I was very impressed with how engaging and interactive it was.

The graph demonstrates the attendance percentages over the past five years, we are unable to accurately compare this year's data due to the COVID pandemic.

Attendance is from across all areas of the children's workforce, including health, education, social care, children and families and the voluntary sector. Notable exceptions include Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Northwest Ambulance Service, however given the multi-regional footprint of both organisations it is likely training may be accessed from outside Cheshire East. Attendance by adult practitioners is the highest recorded.

Impact on practice

80% of 2020/21 participants returned the in-course evaluation and indicated high levels of satisfaction for both content and delivery. 24% of post-course evaluations were returned and showed most participants found the training useful practically with children and families.

Grade Care Profile 2 evaluation was conducted separately and 94% of attendants said they would use the tool even if they haven't had the opportunity to date in practice. All participants stated that it will be helpful in their work with families where neglect is a feature. Of the participants who have used the tool, 100% said families liked and understood the assessment. This is consistent with previous years.

Bespoke events, new courses, and development activity

The Training Team has delivered or coordinated the following learning and development processes alongside the existing training programme:

- ❖ Development of Grade Care Profile 2 refresher training.
- ❖ Support to three new Signs of Safety training pool members.
- ❖ Support to all training pool members to deliver courses confidently using virtual methods.
- ❖ Contribution to the Neglect Strategy - the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Training Manager has led on the Learning Sub-group for the Strategy.
- ❖ Working closely with Workforce Development to ensure courses are accessed appropriately by council staff.
- ❖ One to one support to new starters, particularly within the council.
- ❖ Support to regional colleagues regarding the harmful sexualised behaviour assessment toolkit.

Key Priorities for 2021-22

The local arrangements for Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership have been agreed by the partnership and published on its website. Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has agreed shared priorities for our partnership and have adopted these as their initial plan for supporting the protection and wellbeing of children and young people in Cheshire East. We will:

Improve frontline multi-agency practice through working on:

- Our approach to contextual safeguarding
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of our approach to neglect
- Emotional health and wellbeing of our vulnerable children

- Embedding the new arrangements.

We aim to do this through our collective commitment to:

- Strategic leadership across the partnership – to make the safety of children and young people a priority.
- Challenge – through focused inquiries or investigations into practice or issues based on evidence, practitioner experience and the views of children and young people, for us to improve together.
- Learning – to achieve the highest standards of development and to ensure all practitioners have the skills and knowledge to be effective. This will include listening to the voice of children and young people and using what we hear to inform best practice.