

OPEN

Children and Families Committee

10 November 2025

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual report 2024/2025

Report of: Dawn Godfrey, Executive Director Children's Services

Report Reference No: CF/20/25-26

For Scrutiny

Purpose of Report

- 1 The statutory guidance Working Together 2023 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 contributes to the strategic aims and objectives of the corporate plan to protect and support our communities and safeguard children.

Executive Summary

- 2 This report evidences the work undertaken by the partnership throughout the reporting year and evaluates the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It aims to demonstrate the impact the partnership has had on improving outcomes for children, young people, and their families, while transparently sharing the lessons learned. The annual report also provides an opportunity to reflect on areas where the partnership will focus its efforts in the coming year.
- 3 The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership priorities contribute to the Councils Corporate Plan aimed to protect and support our communities and safeguard children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This includes protecting adults at risk and families from abuse and the objective that children receive the right support, by the right people, at the right time, so they are effectively protected from harm, and are supported to stay within their families and communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to

1. Scrutinise the progress by Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership, and the impact for children and young people, recognising the achievements and progress made, and to seek assurance around ongoing areas for further development.

Background

- 4 Over the past year, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has implemented new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements to identify and respond to the needs of children in Cheshire East. These new arrangements have provided a clear line of sight to frontline practice, and through our efforts this year, we are confident in our compliance with Working Together 2023.

Consultation and Engagement

- 5 The annual report is a Partnership document, and various stages of consultation has taken place through the Partnership governance structure. Ultimately, this has also been approved by the partnership, the Delegated Safeguarding Partners, the Lead Safeguarding Partners and the Partnership Independent Scrutineer.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 6 The Partnership has identified a set of strategic priority areas that will guide its work over the coming year. These priorities have been shaped through active contributions from key multiagency forums, in response to both emerging themes and ongoing challenges. Recommendations for the committee to have oversight and scrutiny of the annual report so that it can understand the progress and impact of the Partnership over the last 12 months and the areas of focus for next year.

Other Options Considered

7.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do Nothing	The council will not be compliant in its statutory duty to produce an annual report for the safeguarding children's partnership	Committee will not have oversight of the partnership business

Scrutinise and have oversight of the annual report	In line with Working Together 2023, the partnership will have provided oversight and scrutiny to the children and families committee	If the committee have further questions or comments, this will need to be returned to the partnership board, Delegated Safeguarding Partners and the Lead Safeguarding Partners
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Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

8. The Council is defined by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as a Lead Safeguarding Partner in partnership with the Cheshire ICB, and chief officer of police for Cheshire. This partnership operates within that legal guidance.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

9. The Financial Contributions to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership are set out on page 7 of the report and shows Cheshire East Council as the largest contributor of the three Lead Safeguarding Partners.

Income	24/25
East Cheshire Trust	£ 5,000
PCC	£ 27,825
NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB	£ 44,215
Cheshire & Wirral Partnership	£ 4,093
HMP Styal	£ 2,520
Wirral Community NHS Trust	£ 5,500
Mid Cheshire Hospital NHS Trust	£ 6,772
CEC	£ 169,968
Schools	£ 50,000
Total Income	£ 315,893

10. The CEC 2025/26 budget and forecast contribution has remained at £169,968.
11. The current forecast total expenditure for 2025/26 is £340.4k against a budget of £380.5k an underspend of £40.1k. Income forecast for 2025/26 is on budget at £320k. The forecast shortfall utilises part of the partnership surplus brought forward from 2024/25 of £20.1k, resulting in a carried forward surplus balance of £49.3k into 2026/27.

Human Resources

12. The Council is defined by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as a Lead Safeguarding Partner in partnership with the Cheshire ICB, and chief officer of police for Cheshire. This partnership operates within that legal guidance. There are no direct human resources implications because of this report.

Risk Management

13. There is a risk that if the Safeguarding Children's Partnership is not effective in driving improvements to services that we will not be meeting our statutory requirements under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. This could lead to the work of the partnership to be judged as not being of the required quality during any inspection. We know that when services receive a negative judgement in inspection this impacts on team morale, can result in workforce turnover, and makes it more challenging to recruit. Addressing any significant deficits identified during an inspection can also require investment so there is also a financial risk to a negative inspection. A negative inspection also poses a reputational risk to the council

Impact on other Committees

14. The work of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership aims to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people. It is vital that we provide high quality support to these children and young people as we know that for some, the experiences they have that lead them to require our support can have an impact on their long-term outcomes, health, and wellbeing. There is no direct impact on other committees.

15.

Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 16 There are no equality, diversity and inclusion implications – children and young people's diverse individual needs, experiences, culture and backgrounds are considered as part of our support to them.

Other Implications

- 17 The Council is defined by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as a Lead Safeguarding Partner in partnership with the Cheshire ICB, and chief officer of police for Cheshire. This partnership operates within that legal guidance. There are no other implications because of this report.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy):</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	13/10/25	20/10/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Interim Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)	13/10/25	17/10/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Diane Green	Finance Manager	10/10/25	10/10/25
Angela Bosiacki	Principal Lawyer (Childcare) Legal Services	10/10/25	13/10/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Dawn Godfrey	Executive Director	22/10/25	22/10/25

	Children's Services		
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Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Jen Atkinson Jennifer.atkinson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1- CЕСP Annual report 2024/25
Background Papers:	NA