



Blackpool Safeguarding Children
Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

Annual Report

April 2023 – March 2024

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Foreword by Chair of MASA Vicky Gent

As Chair of the Blackpool Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) it is my privilege to introduce this year's Annual Report which reflects a period of both significant progress and continued challenge.

This has been a year of transition as we have moved from a Pan Lancashire to a Blackpool based approach. The transition has allowed Blackpool partnership to tailor our work more closely to the unique needs of our children, families and communities. It has also required adjustment in how and where individual organisations and the partnership focus our efforts and allocate resource. Ensuring that all partners remain fully engaged with competing demand on their time is essential to achieving our aims.

One of our key successes this year has been the strengthening of our early help initiative. Early help and prevention remains a fundamental and critical part of our multi-agency approach and through strong collaboration we are continuing to make a real difference. Launch of our Early Help hubs has been a key success. It is both exciting and humbling to read the impactful words of our children and families who have worked alongside our skilled workforce throughout this report.

Domestic abuse continues to be a significant concern in our town with long lasting impacts on victims and children who witness the abuse. Our scrutiny work has enabled us to sharpen our focus on how we address this as a partnership. By learning from the ongoing review of MARAC, Operations Provide and Encompass, the IRIS programme, and the delivery of multi-agency training focussed on the needs of Blackpool families through the Three Me's approach, we will continue to work closely together to address this.

Another ongoing challenge we face is the assessment of neglect in children, a complex issue that requires sensitive and thorough evaluation. Ensuring that our whole workforce are equipped with the right skills, knowledge and tools to assess children's needs remains a key priority.

The importance of meaningful qualitative and quantitative data to help us measure the impact of our work cannot be underestimated and is a complex task. By listening to the voices of our children and families, learning from local and national reviews and understanding what works to improve our services is essential and an area we are working hard to develop our systems and processes.

In conclusion I would like to sincerely express my gratitude to all our partners and especially every individual in our workforce for your hard work during this period of transition which is so evident throughout this report. Despite the challenges we face, the transition to a place based approach brings exciting opportunities for more targeted, effective safeguarding partnership work. By working together, listening, and collaborating and by working innovatively, we can continue to protect and support Blackpool's children and their families and help them to lead and enjoy happy, safe and fulfilling lives.

Vicky Gent

Director of Childrens Services, Blackpool Council

Chair of Blackpool Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

A Summary of Key Learning from this Report

Partners have identified the following opportunities for further development during this reporting period which has been one of transition. Each of these opportunities for change will be monitored through Strategic Delivery Groups and an update on progress will be provided in the 2024 – 2025 annual report.

Domestic Abuse Domestic Abuse is an issue that significantly impacts the lives of children and families living in Blackpool. Collectively, one of the biggest challenges is measuring the impact of our approach to Domestic Abuse. Case studies and family stories illustrate progress for individual children and families, but agencies find it can be challenging to consistently articulate what success looks like or scale individual stories up to understand the impact on the community as a whole.

Operation Encompass includes children and young people of school and college age but does not currently include pre-school children and babies or those young people over the age of 18 who continue to require additional support. Discussions are ongoing to identify solutions and next steps.

Neglect Assessment Tool a dip sample audit of services is currently being undertaken to evidence how neglect is being assessed across all areas. This will inform decision making with partners as to the future of the GCP2 Neglect Assessment tool, its current status and whether a new resource would be beneficial. The main challenge will be to align all services to use the same assessment to ensure the identification and assessment of neglect is aligned and included within all training packages across Blackpool Services. Ensuring that a mandatory tool is part of the training will be a priority of the Workforce Development group. Feedback from one organisation suggests that there are challenges around how to identify and describe neglect when discussing issues such as children not being taken to medical appointments or having poor dental health.

Early Help the Early Help strategy 2021 – 2023 has supported a greater focus on supporting families earlier in the life of a problem and, as intended, it driven the development of support for Lead Professionals and Team Around the Family members, which is well received. The development of family hubs, the parenting and the reducing parental conflict offer add to the range of services to support families across all levels of need, again these are well received by families, and they are key in the development of early help plans with families to address their family needs. There has been some progress with the wider partnership taking the lead professional role, in that a number of schools, early year's settings, the Carers Service, community health colleagues are now leading on early help assessments however there is more to do to support wider use of the early help assessment and planning process. It should also be noted that until the Early Help Central Record is rolled out we won't have a full picture of what co-ordinated early help work is happening. Blackpool currently benefits from two key funding streams for Early Help, the Supporting Families Grant and Family Hub and Start for life Funding, at this time both funding streams are due to end in March 2025, coinciding with the ending of some of the services delivered through lottery funded Better Start Programme.

Data collection, analysis and the ability to effectively share data has been a challenge for the partnership and has been recognised across all Strategic Delivery Groups. Addressing this challenge will ultimately improve the quality of joined up partnership work following requests for support and thus ensure that children and families receive a more effective service.

Resource Management the partnership face a number of challenges that can impact on effectiveness and overall impact, such the complexities and difficulties of shared service delivery and consistent attendance at meetings. Most recently, as the partnerships work has increased, so has the demand for participation in meetings and most partners cite difficulties of allocating resource to meetings. For some organisations this is compounded by internal transitions, staffing issues and recruitment.

The new Blackpool MASA – a timeline

At the time of writing this annual report, Blackpool's new MASA is less than 12 months old as the arrangements transferred from the previous PAN Lancashire Children Safeguarding Arrangements Partnership (CSAP). In Autumn 2022 Pan Lancashire statutory safeguarding partners initiated a review of the safeguarding arrangements for Children and Adults. The aim of the review was to identify ways of enhancing governance and front-line practice through local arrangements. As a result, the Pan Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) Executive Board agreed to implement a place-based model with an increased emphasis on accountability and local decision making.

In September 2023 the safeguarding partners began the process of establishing the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements which would better meet the needs of Blackpool's community.

Whilst the timeframe of this Annual Report focusses on a period of transition from Pan Lancashire to place based arrangements, the partnership acknowledges and has highlighted throughout, examples of the multitude of multi-agency work that continued to be prioritised by Blackpool organisations during this time.

In January 2024 Blackpool's Partnership Business Unit was in place and continued the support implementing the new MASA arrangements. It is acknowledged by the partnership and through our scrutiny process that next year's Annual Report will have more evidence of the impact of our MASA actions on the daily lived experienced of Blackpool's children, young people, families and carers

How we co-produced our MASA

Blackpool is committed to coproduction. During 2023, in preparation for establishing the new arrangements, a Development Day was held with over 75 partnership agency leaders, to identify and agree the partnership's strategic priorities and inform Blackpool's new local based governance arrangements.

Parents whose families have experienced Social Care involvement in their lives, and children who have experienced being in our care attended the Development Day and provided their insight to inform strategic leaders discussions. A video developed by children and young people who are currently, or have recently been in our care, set out what they wanted agencies to do to support families, so children could remain living safely within their families, wherever possible, in the future.

Additionally, the following sources of information were used to inform the new Blackpool Children's Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and identify our priorities

- Local, National data sources - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment¹ (JSNA), partnership agency data and performance intelligence related to National and Statistical Neighbours data trends
- Learning from Local and National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Independent Scrutiny and multi-agency audit learning, undertaken via the previous Pan Lancashire Child Safeguarding Assurance Partnership arrangements

¹ <https://www.blackpooljsna.org.uk/Home.aspx>

- National Guidance and the revised Statutory Guidance consultation – subsequently published as Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023².
- Inspection reports e.g. Ofsted and other area’s Joint Targeted Area Inspection Reports

Who makes up our MASA Board and partnership funding?

The following organisations are members of Blackpool’s MASA

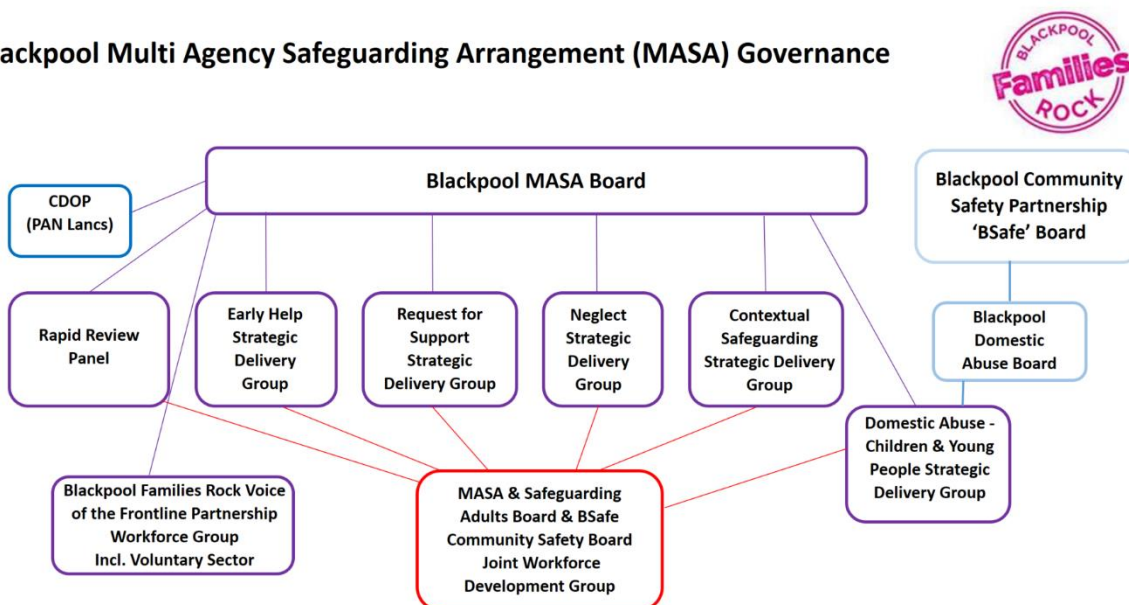
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Blackpool Council - representatives of Children Services and Public Health
- Education Settings
- Blackpool Council Elected Members
- Blackpool Teaching Hospital
- Lancashire & South Cumbria Foundation Trust Contributions
- National Probation Service
- Blackpool Coastal Housing
- Delphi Medical

MASA Financial Contributions

Description	Contribution in £
Blackpool Local Authority	185,190
Lancashire Constabulary	57,510
LSC ICB	92,852
Total	335,552

The following diagram illustrates Blackpool MASA governance and the interconnectivity between groups

Blackpool Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement (MASA) Governance



² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

The MASA has close working relationships and with a range of organisations and networks including the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and the Blackpool Community Safety Partnership (BSafe). The boards work collectively to focus on safeguarding the children, young people, families, adults and communities in our town with the aim of making Blackpool a safe place for everyone. In Blackpool there are also interdependencies between, but not limited to the Child, Young People and Families Partnership Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Education Improvement Board, Channel Panel, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), MARAC, the Domestic Abuse Board, and Lancashire Violence Reduction Unit.

Working Together 2023³ introduced for the first time, the role of Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP), to ensure strong, joined-up leadership and clear accountability for the effectiveness and outcomes of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. In Blackpool, each LSP has appointed Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) as below

The Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP's), Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP's), and Partnership Chair

The Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP's) are:

- Neil Jack - Chief Executive Blackpool Council
- Sacha Hatchett - Chief Constable of Lancashire Constabulary
- Kevin Lavery - Chief Executive Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP's) are:

- Vicky Gent - Director of Children's Services (DCS) Blackpool Council
- Mike Gladwin - Temp. Chief Superintendent Divisional Commander Lancashire Constabulary
- Sarah O'Brien – Chief Nursing Officer ICB

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners chair the MASA on a 12 monthly rotational arrangement. Meetings held during this reporting period were chaired by Ann Dunne, Director of Safeguarding at NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board. The MASA Chair for 2024 – 2025 will be the Director of Children's Services Victoria Gent.

A Bi- Annual Pan Lancashire meeting involving DSP's, LSP's and Independent Scrutineers will take place to discuss issues such as consistency in strategic direction and priorities, sign-off partnership arrangements, oversight on impact from learning and resource allocation.

In addition, a Blackpool Safeguarding Executive Board meet's on a quarterly basis to oversee the arrangements the MASA, Blackpool Safeguarding Adult Board and BSafe Community Safety Board. The following organisations are members of Blackpool's Executive Board

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

The Executive Group members in bold are the Lead Safeguarding partner for the Local Authority and the Designated Safeguarding Partners for the three statutory partners

- **Blackpool Council Chief Executive Officer (LSP)**
- **Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB Chief Nursing Officer (DSP)**
- **Divisional Commander (DSP)**
- **Director of Children Services Blackpool Council (DSP)**
- Councillors with Cabinet Member responsibilities for Children Social Care, Adult Social Care, Community Safety, Street Scene and Neighbourhoods
- MASA Independent Scrutineer
- Blackpool Safeguarding Adult Board (BSAB) Independent Chair
- Director of Adult Social Care & Health Blackpool Council
- Blackpool's Community Safety Partnership (BSafe) Chair - Director of Community and Environmental Services Blackpool Council.

The three partnerships are supported by a Partnership Business Unit who act as a dedicated resource to support and assist the Boards in achieving their strategic aims. The MASA team is overseen by a Head of Service and consists of a Business Manager, a Workforce and Audit Coordinator, a Business Support Officer and a Digital Media Apprentice.

Growing up in Blackpool, what it's like for Children and Young People

According to 2022 data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)⁴, approximately 141,600 people live in Blackpool. This makes Blackpool the third most densely populated local authority in the North West, with 4,060 people per square kilometre, compared to 4,920 in Manchester, 4,442 in Liverpool, 501 in neighbouring Fylde, and 407 in Wyre).

By monitoring data and information, safeguarding partners can develop an understanding of current and emerging needs, making sure that the right help is provided to Blackpool residents at the earliest possible opportunity. The following data is taken from the Children, Young People & Families Partnership Plan 2024–2029 and reflects the lives and experiences of children growing up in Blackpool

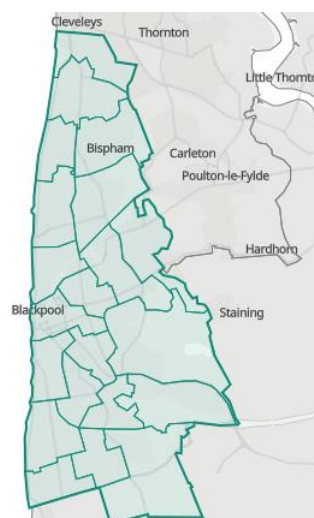
- Blackpool is currently ranked as the second most deprived Local Authority in the domain 'Income Deprivation affecting Children'
- 33% of 5 year olds have obvious visual dental decay
- 43% of children leaving Primary School are classed as being overweight or obese
- Blackpool has the 4th highest proportion 13% of 15 year olds who smoke in the county
- 25% of 15 years old regularly use e-cigarettes
- 21% of children aged 8-15 are recorded in our School Annual Pupil Survey as having a high self-esteem
- 27% of children would report that they would talk to someone if feeling stressed or worried about a problem
- Blackpool has a rate of 679.8 per 100,000 (2021-22) young people aged 10-24 years being admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm, which is significantly higher than the England average of (427.3 per 100,000)
- 10% of 12 to 15 year olds report to have used an illicit drug in the last month. Blackpool has the 7th highest rate in the country of hospitals admissions due to substance misuse by young people.

⁴ <https://explore-local-statistics.beta.ons.gov.uk/areas/E06000009-blackpool>

The first 1001 Critical days of a child's life from pregnancy to age two are when the building blocks of a child's cognitive, emotional and physical development are laid down⁵.

What does the first 1001 days for a child in Blackpool look like?

- 19.4% of women report that they have smoked during pregnancy, compared to a national average of 8.8%
- 54.5% of women initiate breastfeeding compared to 71.1% nationally
- 25% of babies continue to be breastfed by 6-8 weeks compared to 49% in England as a whole
- The take up rate for funded childcare of eligible 2 year olds in January 2023 was 78.4%, compared to 73.9% nationally, the take up rate for 3 and 4 year olds was 91.1%, compared to 93.7% nationally
- 63.9% of children reached a good level of development at the end of Reception, compared to 67.2% nationally (2023)



Blackpool Children - Academic Achievement

- Children attend Primary School an average of 94% of the time, compared to 96% nationally
- Children & young people attend Secondary School on an average 88%, which is less than 4.5 days per week, compared to 94.5% nationally
- 56% of children leave Primary School achieving expected levels of attainment, compared to 59% England average
- Progress 8 – Blackpool score for 2022/23 was -0.85 compared to 0.03 nationally. In Blackpool 30% of the cohort had a positive progress score and only 10.5% of the cohort had a progress score of 1 or above
- Year 11 English grade 5+ is currently 41.3%, compared to 57.3% nationally average
- Year 11 Maths grade 5+ is currently 31.4%, compared to 47.8% nationally average
- Year 11 English & Maths grade 5+ is currently 26.5%, compared to 45% nationally average
- 93.4% of young people aged 16 and 17 are currently engaged in education, training & employment 50% of Blackpool's Secondary Schools are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted compared to a national figure of 80%
- 41% of children supported via an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) are attending mainstream school, compared with National figure of 40%
- Blackpool has a Fixed Period Exclusion Rate in Secondary schools of 44.67% compared to a national average of 4.48%

Children in Blackpool who are supported by our partnership

- 30% of children who have been brought into care over the last 5 years have been newborn babies
- 109 per 10,000 children were supported via a Child Protection Plan

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/605c5e61d3bf7f2f0d94183a/The_best_start_for_life_a_vision_for_the_1_001_critical_days.pdf

- 28% of children are being supported by a Child Protection Plan, having previously been supported by a Child Protection Plan
- 41 children and young people were being supported by our AWAKEN multi-agency team in respect of sexual, criminal exploitation and trafficking
- 332 per 100,000 of young people enter the Youth Justice System for the first time, compared to 172 per 100,000 England average
- 187 children per 10,000 are currently in our care, which is one of the highest rates in the country

Scrutiny Arrangements

MASA's Independent Scrutineer Stephen Chapman

After a challenging selection process, I was so pleased to have been offered the role of Blackpool MASA Independent Scrutineer in the early part of 2024. Blackpool has a strong reputation for partnership working and innovation to protect the most vulnerable people across the town and I was very keen to be a part of Blackpool's ongoing journey to outstanding.



I have been a Police Officer for over thirty years, concluding my career in 2022. At this time I was working in South Yorkshire Police as the Rotherham District Commander. For most of my career leading up to this period I was a senior detective, leading serious crime investigations, homicides and kidnapping.

Throughout my career safeguarding and partnership working has been a priority for me and the people I have worked with. I have worked with some amazing people, particularly my final five years in Rotherham where as a partnership we achieved many successes, including an Ofsted rating across children's services of 'Good' in 2022 and in the same year an independent inspection of child sexual exploitation (CSE) which confirmed the partnership response to CSE was 'good' with areas of practice that should be shared more widely across the country.

Running in parallel with my current role as independent scrutineer, I am the Independent Chair for several safeguarding adult boards (SABs) which includes Blackpool. I believe my previous experience, along with my current roles in the Blackpool Children and Adult Partnerships, will enhance and accelerate the ongoing improvement journey across the town.

My role as the Blackpool MASA Independent Scrutineer is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multiagency arrangements (as set out within 'Working Together 2023') to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children across Blackpool, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This scrutiny must be objective, act as a constructive critical friend and promote reflection to drive continuous improvement.

I will also consider how effective these arrangements are working for children and families, and practitioners and how effectively the safeguarding partners are providing leadership. Also the extent to which the lead representative from each of the three safeguarding partners plays an active role and the degree to which they have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.

This report sets out significant improvement over the previous twelve months, and the Blackpool MASA acknowledge there remains work to do particularly around domestic abuse, neglect and children with complex needs. Since my appointment, I have built relationships across the partnership which enable me to access information across these areas, providing assurance where appropriate and equally important highlighting where and how improvements can be made going forward. This work will continue over the coming months and I look forward to working with Blackpool's Safeguarding Children's MASA to deliver their Vision, Principles and Priorities.

Our Vision, Principles and Priorities

All members of Blackpool's Safeguarding Children MASA recognise that children, young people and their families are Blackpool's future. We want to ensure they experience a great education and are supported by our partnership at the earliest opportunity, so children can remain living within stable and loving families wherever possible. We want Blackpool to be a place where children and their families thrive, feel healthy, happy, and safe and have opportunities to be ambitious about their future.

Our Principles

In Blackpool we are committed to co-production. Blackpool Families Rock creates a clear reference point for 'the way we do things', which includes co-production, listening, and empathy and putting families' needs first.

- To work together as a partnership and support Blackpool's families, our strategic and professional partners, voluntary & third sector organisations, children's families and communities
- To continue to implement a Trauma Informed approach in all that we do to support Blackpool's families
- To continue Blackpool's commitment to co-production developments with the children, young people and families that we serve, as well as with our partnership frontline workforce practitioners and managers
- To promote continuous improvement via a transparent learning, constructive professional curiosity, challenge and restorative practice culture
- To always ask 'so what?' – focusing on what difference we have made to Blackpool's children, young people and families daily lived experiences and have we supported them to experience improved outcomes in the future?

Our Priorities

- Safeguarding children living in households experiencing domestic abuse
- Safeguarding children from experiencing neglect
- Safeguarding children and young people from contextual harm outside of the family home
- Ensuring our children and families receive support at the earliest possible stage
- Blackpool's Request for Support Hub ensures children and their families are receiving the right support, at the right time, their needs are being supported and children are safeguarded from experiencing significant harm
- Ensuring our partnership workforce receive good quality multi-agency training, are supported to learn from audits and reviews, develop an understanding of each other's roles, build partnership relationships & develop an effective partnership system to support our families.
- Listening to the experiences of our partnership frontline workforce

Our Strategic Delivery Groups

Our priorities are delivered through the following seven Strategic Delivery Groups (SDG's).

Domestic Abuse

Co-Chaired by Detective Chief Inspector and Head of Service – RfSH, AST & Awaken

The role of MASA Domestic Abuse Strategic Delivery Group is to ensure a robust, consistent and co-ordinated approach to unborn babies, children and young people who experience domestic abuse within their families or households in Blackpool. This purpose highlights the philosophy of agencies working alongside one another, with a common purpose to focus on the whole family and ensuring that the needs of the individuals are met in order to reduce risk and prevent repeat victimisation and offending.

The MASA Domestic Abuse Strategic Delivery Group forms part of the broader strategic partnership response to domestic abuse in Blackpool working alongside Blackpool's BSafe Community Safety Partnership Board and Domestic Abuse Board who address the needs of both the perpetrator and victim, as 2 of the 3 Me's. The Strategic Delivery Group will influence the wider Blackpool Domestic Abuse Strategy, to ensure that it meets the needs of children and has developed an action plan to deliver the elements of the Domestic Abuse Strategy which relate to children and young people.

Lancashire Constabulary recorded 37,720 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes in the year ending March 2023⁶. 65% of these were recorded as crimes, representing 18% of all crimes recorded. This is equivalent to 23 incidents and crimes for every 1,000 of the population in Lancashire and higher than England and Wales as a whole. While there is no corresponding data for the number of children affected by these incidents, we do know that 4,100 children were in households discussed by MARAC in the year ended March 2023⁷.

The priorities of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Delivery Group are

- Learn from the internal review of MARAC
- Implement the recommendations from the Pan Lancashire Domestic Abuse Independent Scrutiny Report
- Understand and implement learning from Operation Provide review
- Develop & deliver a multi-agency Domestic Abuse training offer

What we have achieved together so far

Scrutiny Report

In July 2023 the Pan Lancashire CSAP published a Scrutiny Report which summarised the outcome of the independent evaluation of the Pan-Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership's work, in relation to its business priority on Domestic Abuse. The purpose of this work was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Partnership arrangements, in improving outcomes for children that are victims and

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesdatatool>

⁷ <https://safelives.org.uk/research-policy/practitioner-datasets/marac-data/>

parents that are either survivors or perpetrators of domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviours. As part of this work a multi-agency audit considered outcomes for the child, survivor and perpetrator - the '3 Me's'.

There was evidence of good practice from the Blackpool audits which included:

- Strong chronologies
- Some evidence of good attendance at multi-agency meetings
- A range of resources children and survivors; including male IDVAs
- Some good supervision
- Risk was recognised in 85% of returns
- The threshold document was being referenced and procedures generally being followed
- Orders being used to restrict abuse by perpetrators
- Evidence of use of DASH
- Survivors usually seen alone
- Evidence of direct work with children in 56% percent of returns
- Strength of Operation Provide
- Use of Family & Friends Meetings (FGC methodology)
- Plans being translated into different languages and use of an advocate

Outcomes from this audit are being addressed in the Domestic Abuse (DA) and Workforce Development Strategic Delivery Groups' and inform further scrutiny work to be undertaken by the Blackpool Independent Scrutineer later in 2024. Details of work undertaken to address the issue of the lack of multi-agency training on Domestic Abuse is discussed further in the workforce development section below.

Childrens Services

The Blackpool Family Safeguarding Model is due to be launched in June 2024. This model looks at supporting families in a different way via using multi-agency teams. There will be dedicated domestic abuse victim and perpetrator workers embedded within the Social Work teams working with children and families supported via Child in Need/Child Protection Plans. In addition, relationships with Community Safety colleagues have also been further deepened. This ensures there is a greater degree of joining up to the benefit of children and families.

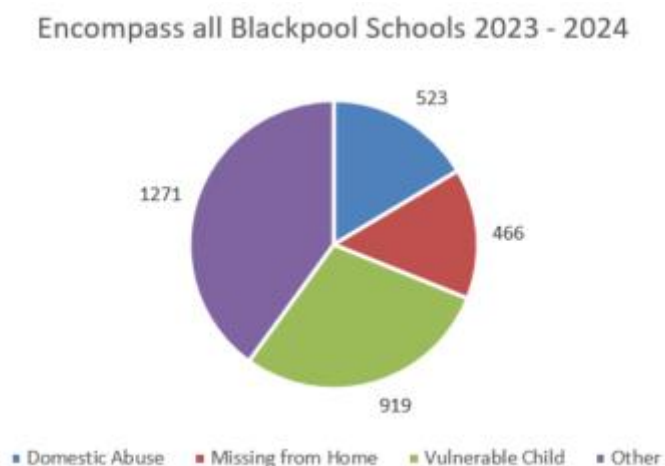
In terms of measures of success we have reduced the number of children entering care and who are being supported on a Child Protection Plan due to emotional abuse category There has also been a reduction in the number of strategy discussions and Section 47 enquires we undertake.

Lancashire Constabulary

Safeguarding teams work with partners to ensure all high-risk Domestic Abuse is managed through the revised MARRAC process. Ongoing governance through the Strategic Board supports the positive impact of immediate risk assessment and subsequent support provided. Crime recording is quality assured through the Force Crime Registrar and the Quality Assurance Thematic Testing (QATT) process to facilitate children recorded as victims of DA in their own right when present in households experiencing DA. Monthly reports evidence improved quality of DA investigations. Introduction of the Target Operating Model (TOM) in June 2023 saw specialist teams created for vulnerable adults and the continuing resourcing and demand to those resources will be evaluated

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme has seen increased applications and disclosures protecting victims and their children who may be at risk of harm from DA. The scheme is utilised as part of a wider safeguarding strategy and reviewed by officers to ensure ongoing safety planning is in place.

Operation Encompass is an initiative which allows the Police to share information in respect of a child with whom they have had contact with a school's trained 'Key Adult' prior to the start of the next school day. This was initially in respect of DA incidents but now covers all vulnerable person notifications. This enables appropriate support to be given to the child, dependent upon their needs and wishes. Lancashire Constabulary continues to provide resourcing to support Op Provide. The table below shows the number of Encompass responses over the 2023 – 2024 academic year.



Impact The Force utilises an automated system for recording children experiencing DA in their households via Op Encompass, sharing information with schools and colleges immediately after attendance. Training with Designated Safeguarding Leads in school evidence the positive impact this information sharing has to support the children and young people. The most recent evaluation was undertaken and published Sept 23 evidencing *“joint working between immediate response (IR) officers and IDVAs significantly increased levels of engagement with domestic abuse (DA) victims in terms of safeguarding support and cooperation with investigative processes”*.

ICB

The commitment to support reduction and prevention of domestic abuse is recognised by the ICB Forward Plan and the ICB engages fully with its acute/community health providers and partners to fulfil statutory requirements. The ICB have a focussed approach to their health response to domestic abuse that includes;

- Ensuring appropriate representation at partnership meetings that supports the DA and Serious Violence agenda.
- The formation of an L&SC ICB health DA group with a forward plan to extend representation across health system.
- The placement of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) in health care settings.
- Promotion of a trauma informed approach to health interventions recognising the impact of DA on victims and children in the context of providing health support.

- Ensuring lessons learned/recommendations from Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) are shared, used to inform future training provision and changes required to strengthen practice, systems or processes.
- Learning from safeguarding reviews where domestic abuse is a theme is supported and reflected in safeguarding supervision for frontline professionals in the 0-19 workforce.
- Provision of guidance across the health system regarding recording, coding of domestic abuse and safety of access to online records. DA indicator prompts in Primary care electronic records has been implemented across all GP practices to improve safe and routine enquiry of domestic abuse.
- All cases where children are subject to high-risk DA (MARAC) are flagged as an alert on children and victims GP records so that this is seen when the record is opened, enabling the practitioner to assess and understand any risk to the child.
- Working with partners to implement the revised MARRAC model to strengthen our response to victims, perpetrators and children.

IRIS

The ICB Safeguarding Team were successful in obtaining Ministry of Justice funding for implementation of IRIS, a 3-year specialist intervention programme specific to GP Primary care that includes accredited training, referral, response and an advocate educator support programme.

Health Visiting, School Nursing and Early Parenthood Service (EPS)

Routine DA screening for all universal contacts and transfers into service for those families receiving Health Visitor service is offered. If DA is identified the team follow local policy which may include referrals to Fylde Coast Women's Aid, and/or MARAC if relevant. The service will also refer into Family Hubs, Early Help, The DEN and CSC as required.

If domestic abuse is identified, use of 3rd party premises such as GP, Family Hubs, Baby Weighing Clinics can be utilised. There is a case study available completed by 0 to 19 Duty Team demonstrating some partnership working and effective outcomes.

All Police Safeguarding Referral Forms (PSRFs) where domestic abuse has been identified are screened by the service and shared with the named Health Visitor / School Nurse to follow up any actions as required and/or offer relevant support.

Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

BCH has developed positive working relationships with Early Help Family Support Service & Children Social Care. This partnership working assists in addressing some of the tenancy issues that put families at risk of losing their tenancy with Early Help being a positive mediator between the family and housing when enforcement actions are being considered. This partnership working reduces pressures on the family with regards to the tenancy. Joint visits arranged with partners such as Neighbourhood Police and Women's Aid.

Impact - No families experiencing domestic abuse have been evicted from their property.

Emergency Housing provide support to families placed in our family hostels, working with CSC, EH in supporting families, they are actively involved in Case Conferences, feeding back on agreed actions All families have a full needs assessment completed by dedicated support worker. Emergency Housing have a Domestic Abuse Champion who has attended extensive training

Lancashire South Cumbria Foundation Trust (LSCFT)

All children referred to LSCFT are asked about their home life and relationships to allow space for disclosure/support. All disclosures of domestic abuse are offered DASH risk assessments to be considered for MARAC and for referrals to Victim Support and Family Action (for young people). All referrals have completed risk assessments and safeguarding forms completed, this allows for oversight of cases to ensure the correct interventions are actioned. Information is always shared with local authority regardless of threshold requirement. Where disclosures take place, we offer the child the opportunity to report this to police.

A Lundy Model of Participation task and finish group has been established to support embedded into all clinical practice, a supporting 7 minute briefing ⁸has been shared.

Dialog + has been introduced as a psychometric scale to evaluate care and treatment has been introduced across the organisation, this includes consideration of safety and supports having conversations around domestic abuse.

Probation

Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse checks are mandatory for all Probation cases, a member of probation staff sits in the MASH team to assist with this. This dedicated resource also respond to PSRF and MARAC information. Mandatory domestic abuse and safeguarding checks are made for court hearings to ensure safer sentencing.

DRIVE

The Drive Partnership⁹ is a partnership between Respect, SafeLives and Social Finance which brings together partnership organisations across Lancashire to change the way statutory and voluntary agencies respond to high-harm, high-risk perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse.

National evaluation of DRIVE has shown a

- Reduction in abuse
- Reduction of risk
- Reduction in repeat and serial perpetrator cases heard at MARAC
- Reduction in police involvement

In Blackpool, a probation representative is consulted on all DRIVE cases and also provides perspective on interventions.

Impact These measures have increased the volume and quality of referrals from Probation.

Education Settings – ‘Unstoppable’ & ‘Stay on Side’

These projects started in January 2024 and are delivered to children over one term. The projects, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) deliver information on Domestic Abuse and Contextual Safeguarding for children in years 6, 7 and 8. ‘Unstoppable’ focusses on violence against women and girls and anti-social behaviour. It forms part of the universal offer in Blackpool schools, to lay foundations of

⁸ <https://www.safeguardingpartnership.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/The-Lundy-Model.pdf>

⁹ <https://drivepartnership.org.uk/about-us/the-drive-partnership/>

acceptable behaviours, good relationships, being respectful and caring and the impact of choices. Children are given a workbook to complete over the course of 6 weeks. Blackpool Football Community Trust present the lessons and support children to complete activities to enhance learning. Topics include who is a friend or foe, friends in disguise, sibling rivalry, pressure in sports, knife crime etc. The project is funded until July 2025. Stay on Side address the same themes but for primary school children in Year 6.

Neglect

Co-chaired by Head of Service Family Safeguarding and Consultant in Public Health

Neglect is the most common reason that children and young people in Blackpool need support from Blackpool partnership agencies. Nationally, over half of Rapid Reviews (53%) noted that the child had experienced neglect prior to the incident¹⁰.

Fundamentally, addressing neglect across the town requires a public health approach and economic regeneration. Money received from Homes England for housing clearance is likely to have the biggest positive impact on neglect issues within the town. It is recognised that this is a long term commitment and that the impact of that will take a number of years to be felt.

The Strategic Delivery Group, is responsible for providing assurance to the MASA and Independent Scrutineer that all agencies are ensuring children, young people and their families are provided the right support at the earliest stage, preventing children from experiencing neglectful significant harm, ensuring children attending school and supporting children to remain living with their families in loving and stable homes wherever possible.

The priorities of the Neglect Strategic Delivery Group are

- Education and Training – Build a skilled, competent workforce focussing on neglect
- Support Services – understand the service and support landscape in Blackpool for neglect
- Ensuring accessible and effective interventions

What we have achieved together so far

Multi-Agency Workshops

Two workshops were held with partners over the year. In the first workshop, a SWOT undertaken to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of addressing neglect in our community. This exercise helped the group understand the current landscape and set the stage for informed action planning. The second workshop focused on refining and solidifying the Neglect action plan. Participants discussed the complexities of neglect, exploring multifaceted solutions and reinforcing the need for a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach.

Childrens Services

At an agency level the incoming Blackpool Family Safeguarding model is one of the key drivers to addressing neglect in terms of the statutory response. Neglect is linked to substance misuse and

¹⁰

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65bce1df7042820013752116/Child_Safeguarding_Review_Panel_annual_report_2022_to_2023.pdf

domestic abuse. Having specific workers who can support families around these issues is a positive means of addressing neglect.

We have continued to invest in the All Age Team which is a team of former residential staff who by using a Social Pedagogical model, work with a small number of families where neglect is an issue.

Again as highlighted above in relation to domestic abuse we have reduced the number of children entering care and who are being supported on a Child Protection Plan. There has also been a reduction in the number of strategy discussions and Section 47's enquires we undertake.

Since the Neglect Strategy launch in 2022, Practice Development Leader (PDL) Team has delivered a Neglect Learning Circle to the Children's Services workforce as a mandatory element of the training offer. All new staff attend this training within their first 3 months in post as part of their induction. To date, a total of 442 practitioners and from Early Help, Social Care, Safeguarding Quality Review, Adolescence, SEND and Education Services have attended this training

The Neglect Learning Circle uses creative methods and Jan Horwath's¹¹ research, to support practitioners to reflect on the six forms of neglect and the impact of these experiences on children throughout different stages of their childhood: pre-birth, pre-school, primary school and adolescence. The Learning Circle supports practitioners to discuss how to explain the forms and impact of neglect on both children's daily lived experience and future outcomes for parents and families, using our Blackpool Families Rock (BFR) language, values and culture.

Lancashire Constabulary

Continued specialist training to Officers dedicated to Child Protection Teams, the Specialist Child Abuse Investigation Development Programme (SCADIP), ensures a professional workforce is available to support victims of neglect. Ongoing training to new recruits from the development manager in the Public Protection Unit delivered additional Child Safeguarding Training to all new recruits during 2023. Staff in the Force are suitably equipped to identify and manage neglect crimes.

Officers utilise their Police Protection Powers (PPP) under the Children Act 1989 to remove children where they believe significant harm is likely to occur. All incidents of PPP are reviewed to ensure they are utilised in accordance with the law and appropriate safeguarding planning is in place for the future. Capturing and recording the voice of the child, to ensure a child-centred approach, is prioritised.

Blackpool Coastal Housing

When poor property condition is identified as an indication of neglect, housing discuss with the family and get permission to make referrals to Early Help for additional support. The housing officers attend multi-agency meetings and carry out any agreed actions. Housing carry out tenancy visits and report on progress or concerns as part of the multi-agency approach. Housing work with neighbourhood policing team, share intelligence as appropriate.

Our Young People accommodation team have all attended training in Self-Neglect, they work multi-agency to support our young people. Each young person has a support plan that focuses on positives and challenges which includes building their Independence skills

¹¹ <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/socstudies/people/emeritus-professors/jan-horwath>

Education Settings

Blackpool received funding for approximately 1200 children per day during half-term and school holidays to receive one meal at holiday clubs (HAFs). Children who are eligible for free meals or may be at serious risk during the holidays are entitled to spaces. Education settings still offer breakfast clubs and some do partial free after school clubs with activities. However only limited spaces are available. Schools provide families with food parcels, uniforms and nurturing groups. Schools would approach families regarding Early Help if they found repeated incidence of families needing support.

Contextual Safeguarding

Co-chaired by Head of Service and Service Manager RfSH, AST & Awaken Services and Detective Inspector

The role of this Strategic Delivery Group is to ensure a robust, consistent and co-ordinated approach to safeguard children and young people from experiencing child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE) and modern day slavery (MDS), and those who go missing from home or care (MFH). The primary focus of the work of the group is children, however, in accordance with the pan-Lancashire strategy, the aspiration is to extend service provision to young adults over the age of 18. The group is responsible for the development and delivery of an action plan that reflects national and pan-Lancashire strategies and business plans.

The Contextual Strategic Delivery Group has identified the following as priorities:

- Re-launch revised Missing from Home Procedure, Guidance & Training
- Deliver the Child Criminal Exploitation / Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Raising and Training Programme
- Deliver early prevention and intervention with young people in their Education Settings

A partnership Development Day is planned for April 2024 to further develop an action plan for this group.

What we have achieved together so far

Awaken Team

The last year has seen the use of a range of policing tactics to disrupt exploitation activity within the Blackpool area. With regards to CSE there have been two key prosecutions, both examples of cases where adult males have been successfully prosecuted for sexual offences against children in the Blackpool area.

The following feedback was provided by a child and their parents after working with the Awaken Team. Their comments reflect the impact and effectiveness of the teams work

Best Bits:

- "Working with J&J and going out with them"
- "Getting support with The Platform"
- "Support with food and getting food"
- "They are nice normal people who are understanding and listen to you"

Worst bits:

“It makes me feel strange being visited every week because I know they are coming to see me for a reason. There is an overwhelming amount of professional’s involved at once”

What has got better for you since we got involved?

- “I feel better in myself – someone has understood and listened to me”
- “I have a better mind set and want to work instead of drug dealing”

If you did like it – what made us different?

- “It was good because I got to go out and do things and they helped me with The Platform as much as they could”
- “If I asked a question, they would call me back straight away with answers. The support was always fast and there was no messing about”

Feedback from parents

“To all the Awaken Team,

Thank you so much for your persistence with our son, I know he was very rude to you all sometimes but I’m sure deep down, he is very grateful for all of your help through this very difficult time. I am sure you won’t miss his colourful language. Me and his Dad are eternally grateful for all your help through the toughest time of our life and keeping us fighting to keep our son safe”.

Operation Piccadilly

This Operation continues to be employed to identify County Lines groups that are targeting children in the local area, by using phone and vehicle data to identify OCG activity. This has led to the identification and disruption of groups that either were otherwise unknown. The last 12 months has seen us working with the Regional Organised Crime Unit, to target groups using young people and one case is currently at court awaiting sentence for a male connected to a number of young people.

Operation Warrior

The Exploitation team continue to work within the Serious Organised Crime structure for the group mapping and disrupting the groups targeting children, utilising Operation Warrior.

ICB and Blackpool Teaching Hospital

BTH Safeguarding Nurses are based within the Awaken Child Exploitation Team and the Youth Justice Service attend multi-agency meetings and provide health assessments for all children who are open to Awaken Child Exploitation Team and the Youth Justice Service. This team work closely with the 0 to 19 service.

BTH provide ED (Emergency Department) Navigators to support anyone aged 8 to 25 years who attend with any violence related or contextual risk. Service purpose founded around seeing and supporting children and young people early as they present in ED who may be experiencing contextual harm outside of the home, providing intervention and signposting to services.

Every child open to youth justice team and child exploitation services across Blackpool is allocated a health practitioner nurse on the same day they are referred to the service – children’s voices are listened to.

The enhanced Children in Care team supports children with contextual risks and who need one to one support including children who live out of area. This service is usually provided by the 0-19 service.

The Early Help service, working with Awaken colleagues, have developed a toolkit to support early help practitioners and lead professionals to identify and work with children and families where there are emerging issues around contextual harm outside of the family home. To support implementation and roll out of the toolkit a learning circle has been developed which will be rolled out across the partnership later in 2024. To date 2 sessions have been held with 18 practitioners attending from the Formal Early Help Team.

Impact Those attending reported ‘*a better understanding of the issues and felt more confident to address as part of their direct work.*’

In the Adolescent Service a culture of continuous learning has been fostered, which is demonstrable via Lancashire Violence Reduction Network delivering training on trauma and brain development, collaborations with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) Criminal Justice, partnership, research with the Youth Endowment Fund on preventing serious youth violence, and work with the Connected Futures Foundation on systems change for adolescent education, training, and employment

Impact of this multi-agency approach is to ensure our practitioners are better placed to support the young people we serve.

Lancashire Constabulary

Continued support for the multi-agency specialist teams under the implementation of TOM has seen a revised crime allocation policy and a Standard Operating Protocol drafted to ensure those most complex cases are supported by specialist investigators. A Vulnerability Assessment Tool has been introduced to aid risk assessment for children and young people at risk of or being exploited. Initial findings by staff support the use of the tool in identifying and responding to risk.

A joint operation between Merseyside and Lancashire Police Officers targeting County Lines activity and drug dealing in the Blackpool area. 30 officers were deployed in the 3 day operation in plain clothes and the Road Policing Unit.

Impact over 40 people were arrested for intent to supply offences / money laundering and drug driving. A number of vulnerable people were identified, and partner agencies were contacted to assist in supporting them.

Operation Makesafe

Officers from the Awaken Exploitation team have delivered training and been involved in the launch of Operation Makesafe¹². Operation Makesafe is the national initiative to raise awareness of child exploitation within the night -time economy for example hotels/ taxis / licensed premises. The training and toolkit support help staff working within those industries to identify children who are at risk of

¹² <https://www.lancashire.police.uk/operation-makesafe/>

exploitation and give them advice on how to spot the signs and report their concerns. The operation is flagged via keywords to monitor its use.

Blackpool Coastal Housing

Housing work with partner agencies to address youth issues within our estates, when this work identifies young people experiencing contextual harm they work with partner agencies to address issues. Often Housing are the “eyes and ears” on the estates and gather Intel from the local community.

Staff are trained on County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. BCH have access to ipool training, front line housing and support services staff are required to complete mandatory safeguarding training.

Young People Supported Accommodation work with partner agencies and invited the Adolescent service to speak to all our young people in regards to substance misuse and harm reduction. We have weekly drop in visits from Outreach Awaken Team, regular visits by the local PC/PCSO's in our semi-independent provision, multi-agency working with Awaken, A Cup of Tea and consent video is shared with our young people

LSCFT

As an organisation the LSCFT contextual team maintain monthly contact with agencies across Lancashire and South Cumbria. The team attend monthly meetings this provides an opportunity to discuss and agree hot spots of activity, cross overs of young people and any county lines intelligence. Again working with the wider multi-agency partners the team have developed lunch and learn which covers Neurodiversity and Contextual safeguarding and trauma informed approach to safeguarding

Early Help

Co-chaired by Assistant Director of Childrens Services, Public Health Specialist, and Head of Service Early Help, Blackpool Council

Early Help is the total support that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. The Early Help System in Blackpool is not a single service. It is a network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity. The overall purpose of the Early Help Strategic Delivery Group is to drive forward the development of an effective early help system for Blackpool, using the Early Help System Guide (EHS¹³), developed through the Supporting Families Programme.

The Early Help Strategic Delivery Group, chaired by Blackpool's Assistant Director of Childrens Social Care has identified the following as priorities

- Implement and embed the Blackpool Family Hubs model
- Embed 'Born into Care' co-produced guidance into practice
- Revise and re-launch the Early Help Partnership Strategy based on the updated Blackpool Working Well with Children and Families in Blackpool (Part 3)

¹³ <https://democracy.blackpool.gov.uk/documents/s73305/Appendix%206b%20-%20Early%20Help%20System%20Guide.pdf>

- Develop and implement a data dashboard for Early Help

What we have achieved together so far

The focus of early help developments in 2023/ 2024 has been focus on progressing ongoing and or outstanding actions from the 2021/23 Early Help Strategy these being:

- Develop Blackpool's Family Hub offer
- Build a stronger parenting support offer by growing the delivery of evidence based group-based parenting programmes alongside support that works with individual families
- Develop our relationship support offer that helps couples and co- parent's address their relationships issues and reduce conflict, working with the national Reducing Parental Conflict programme
- Develop a system for collecting all early help assessments and plans in one place:
- Develop a process to review the quality and impact of early help work to support a continuous learning and improvement approach to the early help process:

Blackpool Family Hubs were formally launched in July 2023. Since the launch then, almost 7,000 people (adults and children) have registered with family hubs. Blackpool's offer is well regarded by the Family Hub and Start for life national team and we have supported visits, events and webinars to share our progress and practice.

Each Hub has the Start for Life Offer in place, parenting and Infant Feeding Support, support with Parent infant Relationships and mental health, Home Learning Environment and parent Carer Panels and are on track to meet all the minimum expectations of family hub delivery by March 2025.



The Early Help Family Support Service and Youth Justice and Adolescent services are co-located in our hubs, DWP officers and the Early Parenthood Service deliver services in our hubs. Midwifery and Health Visiting teams routinely their services from hubs with midwifery seeking to increase their delivery of ante natal provision in hubs in 24/25.

A Family Hub [webpage](#) is in place, with links to other key information sites, especially to our [Local Offer](#). A number of digital offers to support parents are now in place – Anya app to support parenting, particularly infant feeding, on line access to parenting programmes and relationship support.

Feedback from families

- ★ *I have been using the family hubs for the past 6 months and I can openly and honestly say they have been a lifeline during the postpartum period. Even when I was in the trenches of postnatal depression and anxiety. I went to groups and the support, guidance care and love each member of staff has is impeccable.*
- ★ *I have learnt so much from other mums which wouldn't have been possible without the hubs brining us together. When you're pregnant everyone warns you about losing friends and being lonely but I feel like South Hub has prevented all of this.'*

- ★ *I left feeling like a weight had been lifted and empowered and supported to continue with our breast feeding journey. It's given me the confidence to do what I think is right by myself and my baby. I now look forward to going to sip and share and now know where to go if I need further help and advice.'*

Evidence Based Parenting Programmes

Blackpool now benefits from an evidence based parenting offer that reaches right across the spectrum of need – universal, targeted and specialist, programmes delivered in groups and for individual families across the 0-19 up to 25 (for SEND) age range.

The Triple P offer is operational (group, teen and baby). We also have an online offer across these programmes for families who would prefer to learn at home or at a time that suits their family life.

A Parenting Link Worker role has been implemented to support staff, practitioners and parents to navigate the range of programmes. In addition a multiagency triage panel' attended by the range of partners delivering parenting support across Blackpool has been established to review requests, from /for families share data and understanding about family's needs to seek to assign the right provision, this may be a combination of services and can include the offer of a parenting programme or group. The process was co-produced with families.

As a result

- 20 staff are trained to deliver Triple P group and Teen group programmes
- 84 parents have attended Triple P group and 38 have attended triple P Teen, both these programmes began in April 2023.
- 25 staff are trained to deliver Triple P for baby
- 8 parents have attended this programme which began delivery in January 2024

Family Feedback about Triple P programmes

- *I think the programme has helped me be more persistent'*
- *Been very insightful. It made things easier'*
- *I really enjoyed it and learnt a lot about myself as a parent'*
- *I wasn't sure what to expect from the course, however I have really taken a lot from it and enjoyed it. It's even helped me and my husband start to think more similarly about tactics and why our children behave the way they do*

Getting on Better

This programme is Blackpool's approach to reducing parental conflict. This work is driven by a multiagency steering group. This group has driven the rollout of training across the partnership to support front line staff and practitioners to support recognising parental conflict an how it differs to domestic abuse and training a wide range of partners to use the toolkit in their work with families.

To support families we now have the following in place:

- Relationship toolkit : to support practitioners in asking parents about their relationships as part of their day to day interactions, assessments or direct work and provide tips and support to families about improving their relationships

- Structured sessions: a more structured approach to working with parents about their relationship, whether they are together or co-parenting.
- Healthy Relationships programme: delivered through Family Hubs and available to all parents who may want to improve their relationship whether they are together or co-parenting. This programme can also be accessed on line via You Tube

As a result

- 198 practitioners from schools, nurseries, Empowerment, health visiting, Early Parenthood service, midwifery, mental health teams and Childrens Services teams have attended Relationship Toolkit training.
- 12 parents have attended the Healthy Relationships group
- 374 parents have accessed the self-serve on line Healthy Relationships group

Feedback from Families

Put in speech bubbles

- ★ *“Everyone should do this programme”*
- ★ *“It’s changed our lives, don’t know where we would be now if we hadn’t of attended this programme”*
- ★ *“Made me more aware. One situation was dealt with differently - previously I would have walked away, however this time I didn’t”*

Collating Early Help assessments

The development of our Early Help Central Record is in the final stages of testing. Early Help Link workers offer support, advice and guidance to all partners who may have been asked to take the Lead professional role. Collating information captured by Early help link workers following a referral into the RfS hub has helped us see what early help work is being done and by who as well as where there are still barriers to services/ agencies/teams using the early help assessment process.



As a result

- 162 families have been supported through an EH assessment and plan led by a partner agency
- 82 of these families identified through RFSH with the partnership supported to lead
- 79 families have had an EHA initiated by the partnership

Feedback about Link worker support

- *“Without L’s advice and encouragement I would not be able to support our families through the EH process’ – Nursery Provider*
- *Link Worker support has been invaluable. You are always there when we have any questions and are quick to respond. You have been a massive support to us this year and I do not know how we would have managed without you.’ – Nursery Provider*

- 'I have been working with L supporting families for quite a few months now and she has been extremely supportive both to the families, myself and other professionals involved in Level 2 being offered' – Health Visitor
- "...through the link worker support we are able to discuss cases and get advice around appropriate referrals and managing risk, where the past we have just made referrals to CSC" - charitable organisation

Quality Assurance processes

There is a now fully established quality assurance process for early help work held by the Formal Early Help team. This was implemented shortly after the Early Help Strategy was launched. Findings from audits are shared with managers and staff and are used to celebrate good work, shape an influence development sessions and improve practice guidance for the service and for other lead professionals.

In line with the development of the Early Help Central record a quality assurance tool has been developed to offer the same oversight and insight for other lead professionals. Link workers are currently offering some of this as part of their support to lead professionals it is on a more informal basis. As the EHCR is implemented so will a Quality Assurance process.

Early Help for Adolescents

Blackpool's Adolescent Service is a bespoke service focused on services for vulnerable and complex young people under 25, bringing together: Youth Justice, Drug, Alcohol and Sexual Health, and Leaving Care services with our support for young people aged 16 and 17 who are not in Education, Training or Employment

Over the past 12 months we have held quarterly scrutiny panels, specifically focusing on those children who became first-time entrants (FTE) in Blackpool. The findings from multiagency FTE scrutiny panels have consistently evidenced:

- Children experienced multiple ACE's and trauma during early childhood.
- Most children were known to Childrens Service (including Early Help) in some capacity (some for extensive periods and some during pre-birth).
- Domestic Abuse within the home environment was prevalent.
- Children did not have any prior diversionary outcome via the Youth Justice Service.
- Whilst access to holistic support was available to families, there were missed opportunities for children to access support, specifically focused on presenting behaviours.

Next steps: The Scrutiny Panels have further evidenced Blackpool's need for a specific prevention offer that is multi-agency and focused on collaboration between agencies to ensure children have access to the right service at the right time. The exit planning post Turnaround mirrors the findings from our panels and evaluation so far, specifically that any prevention offer needs to be available to families across the continuum. The next 12 months will see the development of Blackpool's prevention offer, with a single point of access and referral pathway to a range of services.

Health Visiting and the Early Parenthood Service

A co-production methodology was used in the development of the Early Parenthood Service (EPS) following the decommissioning of the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP). From the outset families with lived experience were included to provide input the development of the service. The team considered the

recommendation of research, independent reviews, child safeguarding practice reviews, local information and data to design a bespoke service integrated into the Start for life offer. EPS is closely linked with the Born into Care, lived experience and co-production work streams.

Impact

The Early Parenthood Service (EPS) is having a significant positive impact on all the families including those whose babies are at risk of or have been born into care. Families consistently report to feeling supported, learning a lot, not feeling judged, increasing self – efficacy and valuing the service. The Development of EPS was a catalyst to the development of the Family Hub triage – ensuring the right service is offered to the right family at the right time. There is interest in the EPS service on a national level, working with the Office for Health improvement and Disparities, providing consultation to other area of the country who are looking to do something similar and being nominated in six categories across 2 national awards.

The Health Visiting service, alongside EPS, are part of the Family Hub Triage Panel which aids good discussions around the right support for the family at the right time. Health Visitors commence contact antenatal or needs would be assessed at a transfer in contact resulting in concerns being addressed, referrals into services made including Family Hub Triage at the earliest opportunity. If health needs are identified additional packages of support can be offered on a targeted or specialist basis.

The team has a specialist Health Visitor who provides universal and targeted support in hotel accommodation provided for migrant families, ensuring they get the appropriate support as soon as possible. Challenges have been identified such as none engagement, mental health problems preventing parents from accepting and engaging with services. Long waiting times for some services such as mental health support, access to Blenheim child development centre and speech and language which can impact on child behaviour and family tensions.

Lancashire Constabulary

The Force has published a Prevention Strategy aligned to their Plan on a Page, aiming at prioritising early identification of risk and harm. This will allow Safer Neighbourhood teams to provide early help and support in those communities where it is needed the most.

A Victim's Code of Practice training has been rolled out Force wide to improve our service to victims. Staff ensure the principles of the Code are applied throughout the course of an investigation, so victims are supported throughout the criminal justice journey.

Blackpool Coastal Housing

BCH ensure the "Right Care Right Person" principles are utilised correctly and understood by all partners. Our Young People Supported accommodation team offer family mediation at the earliest opportunity, this is a key priority within our support plan. All our young people have family support workers assigned from Adolescent services, working in partnership.

We are working closely with Early Help when signing new tenants to properties to encouraging families to be involved in Early Help provision.

As a Housing provider we carry out annual checks on all properties and often get access into properties that other agencies don't. Our contractors who attend properties report through our Early Warning procedure any property or safeguarding concerns, this can provide us with early identification of issues. When our contractors inform us of concern's a Housing Officer will arrange a home visit.

Emergency Housing complete a full support plan within 15 working days. Contact is made with CSC within two days a families arriving in the hostels. Staff work closely with families and support them to access Family Hubs.

Request for Support

Co-Chaired by Assistant Director of Childrens Services and Head of Service RfSH, AST & Awaken Blackpool Council

The overall purpose of the Request for Support Hub Strategic Delivery Group is to ensure that all partnership agencies are effectively working together, to consistently implement the Blackpool 'Working Well with Children and Families' threshold guidance. This guidance is required to ensure unborn babies, children, young people and their families are being supported at the earliest stage, that all agencies are safeguarding children from experience significant harm and committed to support children remaining living within their families wherever possible.

The Strategic Delivery Group is responsible for providing evidence and assurance to the MASA Board and Independent Scrutineer that Blackpool's 'Working Well with Families' Threshold of Needs and MASA Board priorities are being implemented by the partnership agencies and that this is having a positive impact on the practice undertaken with children, young people and families.

The Request for Support Hub Strategic Delivery Group, chaired by Blackpool's Assistant Director of Childrens Social Care has identified the following as priorities

- Revise and re-launch of Working Well with Children and Families
- Ensure RFS Hub has effective multi-agency resource
- Review effectiveness of Level 3 & Level 4 process (Step up step down)
- Undertake a Multi-agency Quality Audit re consistent thresholds, quality of 'Contacts' & ensuring partnership agencies have offered families Early Help support.
- Review Blackpool Safeguarding Children MASA Issue Resolution Process (previously referred to as CSAP Resolving Professional Disagreements Process)

What we have achieved together so far

Review and Relaunch of Working Well with Children and Families and thresholds

Work has begun on the update of this multi-agency Pan Lancashire guidance to ensure it accurately reflects the context of Blackpool and the Blackpool Families Rock approach. Thresholds and a clear understanding of the threshold is vital to effectively supporting Blackpool children and families at the right level.

Learning from undertaking a Multi-Agency Audit

A multiagency audit was undertaken during March 2024 to review Early Help, the 'Working Well with Children & Families' threshold decision making tool and how these are applied across the partnership and within the Request for Support Hub. The aim was to reflect on whether we are supporting our families at the earliest point, with the right support at the right time to ensure children can remain with their families wherever possible.

The audit data was analysed and discussed at a reflective session with all partners agreeing the following recommendations and an action plan was developed.

- **Consistency and quality of request for support and understanding of thresholds** relates to the workforces understanding of a quality referral to be incorporated within the current training.
- **Co-ordination & Partnership Working at Level 2** Training will be included within the Workforce Development Offer across the partnership regarding quality Early Help assessments and development of plans with families.
- **Support & Capacity** Continue to offer support a7 Training to lead professionals for impactful and quality Early Help Support. Updating of the Working Well document to reflect the Level 2 support.
- **Outcomes & Information Sharing** Ongoing development of a central system to store all Early Help Assessments, informing specific themes for future practice.
- **Consent & Evidence** A visual process map to be developed for families to help understand the support offered and the reasoning around consent as a whole. The leadership team of the RfSH are leading a piece of work looking at this issue to ensure that families understand consent and more importantly it doesn't become a barrier to supporting families that we can see would require support.

Comments from the RfS Hub Chair

The interface with between the RfSH direct delivery group and the Early Help Delivery group is a really important one. We were keen as a partnership to ensure that we were getting that element of work correct. The audit process itself was a point of learning. However, the act of auditing together, and the commitment to spend half a day together to discuss the findings was very powerful, in terms of bringing a greater shared understanding of roles and responsibilities across the partnership. This can only benefit children and families as the partnership will work together more effectively. Finally whilst we recognised there were opportunities to improve the process, it provided reassurance about the quality of work done at the RfSH, reassuring us of both the partnership understanding of threshold and the application of those thresholds in the Hub.

Audit outcome and action plan review sessions have been planned 6 monthly to track the implementation and impact of the recommendations.

Lancashire Constabulary

A review of the Public Protection Unit (PPU) has been undertaken and the Vulnerability Governance Unit (VGU) implemented to replace it in March 2024. The VGU incorporates a Detective Inspector lead for the RfS Hub with a dedicated Detective Sergeant in Blackpool. Governance terms of reference for the VGU include scrutiny and assurance of the Force relating to its Vulnerability Strategy.

The 'Right Care Right Person'¹⁴ approach continues to provide a victim centred approach and staff have avenues to challenge and escalate professional decisions across all vulnerability related areas.

Blackpool Coastal Housing & More Positive Together

We are currently developing a protocol between Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) & Blackpool Childrens Social Care, when this is developed quarterly meetings will be held to discuss children and families who may need extra support to move forward and in partnership how issues can be resolved in order to safeguard families.

Joint working in the delivery of services particularly Early Help with officers building up good working relationships to support families within communities. An example of this is the More Positive Together (MPT) service who are currently working on the Levelling Up project in Revoe. MPT work from the Family Hub and take referrals direct from Early Help and the Primary School. MPT also do referrals into Early Help.

One family who have received this support now have a positive outlook on life and are looking forward to getting the repairs done on the property and living in a warm, safe home. Their health issues have improved with the help of the services involved.

Here's what they said

- ★ *'Thank you so much, T is so happy with his chair. He's had a really good rest on it'*
- ★ *'If it wasn't for you, none of this would be happening. Thank you so much!'*
- ★ *'This help has changed our daily lives and we will be forever grateful'*

Workforce Development

Chaired by Head of Service, Safeguarding, Quality and Review, Blackpool Council

The role of this Strategic Delivery Group spans across the all-age workforce working across Blackpool Children's Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA); Blackpool Safeguarding Adult Board (BSAB); and BSafe Community Safety Partnership.

The Workforce Development Strategic Delivery Group, chaired by the Head of Service for Safeguarding Children and the Strategic Partnership has identified the following as priorities:

- Develop Joint Workforce Development Offer across the 3 Boards
- Develop a Multi-Agency Training Pool – and deliver and measure the impact of online & face to face training
- Effectively cascade lessons learned from local and national reviews and quality audits
- Work with colleagues across PAN Lancs to update TRIX Procedures
- Design a new Safeguarding Blackpool Partnership Website, in collaboration with the Safeguarding Adult Board and BSafe Community Safety Partnership Board – Safeguarding Blackpool's children, adults & communities.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-partnership-agreement-right-care-right-person/national-partnership-agreement-right-care-right-person-rcrp>

- Deliver a bi-monthly online Safeguarding Blackpool’s Children, Adults & Communities Newsletter, to share learning and developments undertaken by the MASA

Since the transition from the PAN Lancashire arrangements, all training courses are being reviewed and updated. Blackpool’s partnership is committed to further developing our multi-agency Training Pool. This will ensure that there is consistency in training content, equitable sharing of learning from reviews, and the impact of learning and development can be measured across the whole partnership workforce.

A Training Needs Analysis will be undertaken in the autumn term to fully understand the multi-agency all age training need and identify existing learning and gaps across the Blackpool workforce.

What we have achieved together so far

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Blackpool Conference

250 front line workers from across Blackpool’s children and adults workforce have been invited to a conference in September 2024 to formally launch Blackpool’s Safeguarding Children , Adult and Communities partnership arrangements.

Speakers who have lived experience have been invited along to share their experiences of experiencing domestic abuse, the impact of trauma and what it’s like for a child, young person or vulnerable adults working alongside professionals. Workshops will be held covering aspects of adult and child safeguarding such as Serious Violence Duty, Learning from Reviews, Professional Curiosity and the importance of language and co-production.

Domestic Abuse Training Task and Finish Group

The Domestic Abuse training multi-agency training package highlighted as a priority in the June 2022 Scrutiny Report has been a priority of all organisations in the partnership and is reflected in commitment of membership and attendance. The dedicated multi-agency task and finish group is developing a layered approach to Domestic Abuse training from an all age perspective, the training offer will include:

- Basic Awareness e-learning
- Face-to-face DASH Training (Level 2/3)
- Face-to-face DA Training based around the “Three Me’s” model (Level 3/4)
- Two day specialist DA training for CSC and Early Help Staff (Level 4)
- Domestic Abuse Champions/White Ribbon Training
- Development of a suite of resources such as 7MBs, videos, presentations etc.

Neglect At the time of writing Neglect training is delivered on a single agency basis. Multi-Agency Neglect training will be delivered as part of the MASA Workforce Development Plan.

Contextual Harm outside the Family Home training is currently delivered on a single agencies basis across the partnership. The Business Unit and partners will deliver a multi-agency training package from September 2024.

Lancashire Constabulary

DA Matters training from SafeLives has been commissioned for all frontline officers. End of training evaluations are provided in a report format from SafeLives evidencing positive evaluation and the

objectives of the training met in the majority of cases. The training will continue for the remainder of 2024.

The PPU Development Manager has delivered Graded Care profile 2 training with partners to raise awareness of identifying and assessing neglect. Specialist investigators are suitably qualified to respond to neglect incidents and crimes.

The Review Officers in the VGU support multi-agency case reviews and work with the specialists in Force to best identify areas for improvement and work closely with the Learning and development department to embed learning into training. Training objectives and resources are influenced by Pan-Lancashire specific related issues.

Project ADDER

Project ADDER is a national initiative focussed on diverting and supporting those with a drug dependency away from drugs and crime. Continued referrals are supporting young people away from harm. A Continuous Professional Development (CPD) event was held for the Force at a hotel in Blackpool.

Private Fostering was identified in the 2022 Inspection of Blackpool local authority children's services. The report stated that although children who live in private fostering arrangements have their day-to-day needs well met and that social workers visit children regularly and ascertain their wishes and feelings, statutory checks were not always completed in a timely way. Leaders have strengthened systems and training was further developed during quarter four to expand the offer to the multi-agency children's workforce.

The half-day training sessions are delivered face-to-face to raise awareness of private fostering and help practitioners to identify when children are being privately fostered and know how to respond appropriately. By the end of the training participants will understand:

- What Private Fostering is
- Why children might be privately fostered
- The responsibilities of the local authority and other partner agencies; and
- How to identify when a child is privately fostered and what action should be taken.

Training is being delivered on a quarterly basis from June 2024 onwards.

Early Help Link workers have continued to roll out an Early Help Workshop. 30 people have attended to date this year.

LSCFT

There is a safeguarding Learning lessons Portfolio group that supports the identification of learning themes from not just LSCFT incidents but local and national reviews. The organisation has a dedicated learning lessons group again identifying themes and undertaking actions and audits to support reducing risks. Lunch and learns have been delivered in conjunction with partner agencies i.e. NWAS

Voice of the Workforce

Chaired by Head of Service, Early Help, Blackpool Council

The purpose of the Blackpool Families Rock Voice of the Workforce Group is to ensure that the MASA Board Governance and the Independent Scrutineer can listen to the insight of Blackpool's frontline partnership workforce of the children, young people, families, carers' needs. The Group will also provide their experiences as frontline practitioners and team managers regarding capacity across their agencies to support families at the earliest stage, so children can remain safely being cared by their families, for children to experience the best education, which enables them to be ready for adulthood and employment.

The Group aims to ensure that Blackpool MASA developed Policies and Protocols, quality audit and Children Safeguarding Assurance Review (CSPR) learning, national legislation, statutory guidance and national case review learning is communicated within their agencies from a frontline practice lens.

The Voice of the Workforce Strategic Delivery Group, chaired by Head of Service for Early Help has identified the following as priorities

- Review and strengthen pathways for listening to lessons learned
- Co-produce training needs, resources, policy and process
- Gain confidence & evidence how learning is effectively reaching our frontline workforce & impacting on operational practice

What we achieved together so far

Lancashire Constabulary

An annual staff survey is undertaken Force wide that captures specific areas of issue. Dissemination of the findings is awaited.

Benchmarking by the PPU Development Managers captured knowledge and thoughts from frontline and specialist staff to support in identifying any gap areas to support the delivery of thematic area action plan activity. Improvements across all areas of public protection are prioritised to safeguard vulnerable victims.

Evaluation of the Targeted Operating Model (TOM) at six months was undertaken and briefings relating to the findings delivered by Senior Managers to ensure staff understood the findings. Staff are suitably informed of the decision making by Chief Officer Team.

A Youth Justice Operational Board, chaired by the Assistant Director of Childrens Services, provides the Executive Board with a comprehensive understanding of the service's progress and challenges. The board's multiagency perspective offers insights into broader issues, emerging themes, and ideas to strengthen the service.

Impact By incorporating this frontline perspective, the Executive Board has gained information to address challenges effectively and support the service's continuous improvement. The Operational Board creates further opportunities for the workforce to contribute their insights and ideas, empowering them, enhancing their sense of ownership, promoting a more effective and sustainable service delivery model.

Blackpool Coastal Housing

BCH feeds into activities of the MASA, sending out surveys, information, activities etc. across BCH for teams to complete and comment. BCH MASA representatives feed into strategic discussions and consults with services across BCH to get an understanding of operational impact to feed into MASA

ICB and Blackpool Teaching Hospital

The corporate safeguarding team do daily walk rounds the hospital which highlights safeguarding awareness across departments. This awareness across the trust has given rise to increased calls to the safeguarding team for advice and there has been an increase in the number of Child Protection medical requests for bruising in children on presentation to ED.

LSCFT

Supervision compliance is monitored, this provides staff with opportunity to share their experiences. Other forums for staff to share their experiences include all senior leaders having an open door policy. There is a designated lead for 'Freedom to Speak Up' and champions within services and online 'Contact Chris' (The Chief Executive Officer, CEO) to raise concerns.

The Role of Education in MASA

Education and childcare settings are included in the safeguarding arrangements via communication with regular Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Forum meetings, attending Workforce Development events undertaken by the Business Unit and partners, and access to a designated Safeguarding and Early Help Officer.

MASA information is communicated via the Blackpool Education Improvement Board (BEIB), the SEND Partnership Board and the Youth Justice Board. Representation at these boards includes Headteachers of secondary and primary schools as well as Chief Executive Officers of Blackpool's Academy schools. Education practitioners are present at Rapid Review Panels and Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review Panels as required and are also represented on the Pan Lancashire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP).

In August 2024, an Education Business Manager will join the MASA Business Unit. This role will facilitate the voice of schools and school children into MASA. Operational school staff such as assistant DSL's, pastoral workers and deputy Headteachers will attend MASA and each strategic delivery group to speak on behalf of Blackpool's schools and school children. Information and decisions will be cascaded back into schools through Headteachers forums and DSL meetings. It is the aim that every early year's setting, primary, secondary, alternative provision such as Blackpool Football Club and Post 16 will be represented through this system.

All schools in Blackpool take part in a calendared audit programme coordinated by Blackpool Council Schools safeguarding officer. Each school will be audited every three years. In addition, annual Section 175 Audits are completed by all education settings. Good practice and opportunities for improvement are shared widely via the DSL network and the MASA online newsletter and website.

Elective Home Education in Blackpool

Elective Home Education (EHE) numbers on the register have steadily increased across the year from 373 at the beginning of the academic Year (2023-2024) to 594 at the end. Through the leaving of Year 11's at the end of June 2024, we start in the new academic year with 466 on the register.

To address this growing number we have increased staffing to include a family support worker who is supporting young people back into mainstream education. In partnership with Right to Succeed we now have an Engagement Coach who works with EHE Year 11's students in their transitional year and supports them through to Year 12 and either college/education, employment or training opportunities open to them.

External Inspection

Blackpool Local Authority was last inspected in December 2022, the report published in February 2023¹⁵. Since the previous inspection in 2018 when Blackpool was judged to be inadequate overall '*strong, capable, and determined leadership has overseen improvements across children's social care*'.

Strengths identified

- Increase in the stability of the workforce
- Accelerated improvements through a relentless focus on recruitment, engagement and by improving the engagement with partners
- Effective quality assurance
- Improved understanding of impact on that services are having on children's experiences
- Engagement of children and families in shaping services
- Children are well supported by social workers
- Children at risk of exploitation and homelessness receive excellent support, children in care have a sense of security, stability and belonging.
- Care leavers are now very well supported.

What needs to improve?

- The multi-agency response to children suffering domestic abuse or long-term neglect, and to those children with complex needs.
- Work with partners to strengthen their contribution to early help and neglect.
- Sufficient placements to meet children's assessed needs.
- The timeliness of meeting children's dental and emotional needs.

ICB and Police involvement in Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI)

During this reporting period the ICB and Lancashire Police have been involved in two Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI)¹⁶. The first being in Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) with regards to the multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk; the second being Lancashire with regards to the multi-agency response to Serious Youth Violence which was published outside of this reporting period and will be reported in the next financial year. Blackburn with Darwen JTAI highlighted both areas of good practice and those for development. A multi-agency action plan has been approved by the regulators and

¹⁵ <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50206631>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-frameworks-for-joint-targeted-area-inspections-jtais>

progress with actions are monitored by the Children’s Safeguarding Partnership in BwD. Learning from these two inspections is informing Blackpool’s planning and development.

MASA Data Dashboard

The Blackpool MASA Performance Dashboard presents headline data to provide safeguarding partners with a line of sight on aspects of frontline practice and the wider safeguarding system, enabling patterns and trends to be inform focus for deeper analysis.

The data dashboard reports on 10 standard measures reported quarterly

Early Help Referrals	LADO referrals
Contact & Referrals	Children in our Care
Repeat Referrals	Contextual Safeguarding
Section 47 Enquiries	Blackpool Teaching Hospital admissions
Child protection plans	MARAC children living with DA

The information will assist the Board in identifying trends in prevalence or demand for services; identifying pressure points in the response to new safeguarding referrals; identifying aspects of practice which may require further investigation; and where appropriate, benchmark Blackpool against national, regional and statistical neighbours data, to evaluate performance in line with national trends. The dashboard will help identify any issues which require further investigation and analysis and where necessary seek assurance against any apparent risks.

Quality and Learning Improvement Framework

The MASA have developed a Quality Assurance and Learning Framework (QALIF), which sets out how multi-agency quality audits will be undertaken, feedback from children, their families and carers is sought and how a range of workforce development activities will be undertaken and offered to the multi-agency workforce.

The three Safeguarding Partnerships are collectively committed to a continuous transparent learning culture and will implement a cyclical approach (Figure 1) to learning and improvement through audit, reflection and review to understand needs and priorities, identify and embed learning, gather feedback from individuals and the workforce that learning has informed changes to practice, and ensure that outcomes are identified and impact of learning is measured effectively as shown in the diagram below (Figure 2)



Figure 1 Learning and Improvement Cycle

We will use various sources of learning to quality assure and analyse practice across the partnerships. The diagram below illustrates the sources of qualitative and quantitative data and the interface with Independent Scrutiny.



Figure 2: Sources of learning and workforce development

Figure 2 Sources of Learning and Workforce Development

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

In June 2023, a CSPR Development Day was held, bringing together multi-agency partners across the Pan Lancashire footprint to discuss:

- The Rapid Review process and terms of reference
- Process for learning from cases that don't meet criteria for a LSCPR
- Management of parallel processes
- Partnership, panel members and business unit roles and responsibilities
- Mapping of CSPR's to achieve completion within a 6 month timeframe
- Workforce Development and Learning from reviews
- Review methodologies

The Business Unit invited an Independent Reviewer to the day to share a Reviewer's perspective on conducting a CSPR. Through their professional lens they discussed the importance of partnership work, the need for effective and timely progress and the potential impact of CSPR's on learning and improvement.

Outcomes from the Development Day included

- An update of the Rapid Review Meeting Terms of Reference to include inviting wider multi-agency partners who worked alongside the child and their family to the rapid reviews with the aim of optimising the opportunity to gather a fuller picture of the child and family and the circumstances surrounding what happened to them.
- An agreement of an updated CSPR guidance policy for the Pan Lancashire footprint. Partners agreed that a single approach to CSPR's should remain in place based arrangements to ensure the consistency and quality of reviews across the footprint.

Moving forward, the Pan Lancashire CSPR group will

- Oversee pan Lancashire review processes and business in the context of the Place Based arrangements and provide a network for discussion.
- Ensure compliance with statutory guidance and that review processes realise and act on all available learning.
- Agree and ensure the consistent application of processes for serious child safeguarding case (SCSC) notifications, Rapid Review meetings (RRM) and local child safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPR).
- Discuss issues, emerging trends, legislative changes, review guidance and processes to maintain Pan-Lancashire consistency.
- The group will focus on shared learning from RRM, ongoing LCSPR's and final local and national CSPR reports to avoid duplication, encourage collaborations and sharing of resources.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Annual Report was published in January 2024¹⁷. The report proposes a series of questions formulated for Safeguarding Partnerships for us to consider how to best embed learning, and to sustain changes and improvements in local safeguarding systems (Appendix 2).

The following table shows Rapid Review Meetings and CSPR's held in respect of Blackpool children during this reporting period

Rapid Review s undertaken	4
Rapid Reviews which met criteria for CSPR	2
Out of Area CSPR's involving Blackpool agencies	1
CSPR's commissioned in this period	2

Blackpool partners have supported a CSPR in another Safeguarding Partnership area to review the child's journey between three Local Authority areas. The review was completed in February 2024 but was not published at the time of writing this annual report.

Feedback from National Panel following submission of Rapid Review reports has been positive. The National Panel agreed with all four decisions made by partners, to either commission a CSPR or not. All Rapid Reviews met the 15 day timeframe set by the DfE. The two commissioned CSPR's are ongoing and will be completed in 2024, one has not met the 6 month timescale as has been impacted upon by the requirement of national expert evidence within Criminal Proceedings.

Areas of Early Learning from Rapid Reviews and CSPR's include

- Supporting children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) to ensure tailored and joined up Education and Social Care

¹⁷

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65bce1df7042820013752116/Child_Safeguarding_Review_Panel_annual_report_2022_to_2023.pdf

- The importance of cohesive multi-agency communication at an Early Help stage in supporting families living in more complex circumstances
- Identifying child sexual abuse external to the family home and the management of serious sexual offenders in the community
- Identification and assessment of child neglect
- Identification and assessment of physical abuse
- The importance of professional curiosity and accurate record keeping
- The importance of identifying and supporting families who move across geographical boundaries.
- Review and strengthening of supervision orders including improvements to monitoring and implementation of procedures

Blackpool Teaching Hospital enacted immediate learning within the Health Visiting service by adding a mandatory field onto the electronic health record to ask about current and historical children’s social care involvement. All staff for Midwifery and Childrens Community Services were reminded to ask about and record all relevant family members at contacts.

Bruising in non-mobile children In September 2022, the Child Safeguarding Review Panel published a panel briefing with regard to bruising in non-mobile infants¹⁸. A multi-agency Task and Finish group has been developed to review the Bruising in non-mobile children pathways and a 7 minute briefing in regard to bruising in babies has been developed and rolled out across the Trust. The new pathways will be launched in April 2024 through multi-agency online sessions delivered by

The ICB have recommended and encouraged as best practice that all household members register with same GP practice. This was a recommendation from a CSPR in Blackpool.

Workforce Development & Audit Co-ordinator will be present at the Panel 3 meetings and the Practitioner Learning Event to establish and plan early learning from the reviews. This could be delivered in the form of a learning circle or face to face training depending on the level of learning required, who the training is aimed at and the intended outcomes and impact. A Learning Impact survey and report will be produced at 6 and 12 months after the learning has been delivered to determine impact.

Blackpool Coastal Housing Lessons learned from local and national reviews are shared across the organisation via the staff intranet, individual discussions are held with Heads of Service to understand lessons learned and review if actions are required

Awaab’s Law Awaab Ishak died on 21st December 2020, with the coroner finding his death was due to a respiratory condition caused by exposure to mould in his home. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act received royal assent in July 2023¹⁹. After the coroner's report was published, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced in February 2023 that new measures on damp and mould would be included in the bill. This will be known as ‘Awaab’s Law’.

There have been a number of housing actions taken to identify damp and mould across BCH social housing stock. Actions taken include mandatory staff training to all frontline staff in the identification of

¹⁸

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/632d9724d3bf7f56794d4467/14.155_DFE_Child_safeguarding_Bruising_PB1_v3_Final_PDFa.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/36/contents>

damp and mould, specialist training for repairs operatives, system changes for managing reported issues, improved communication available to customers

Probation have a regional team who collate and share all learning from reviews.

Actions have included

- The need for mandatory safeguarding and domestic abuse checks in all cases is now in place.
- Improved decision making in relation to enforcement –an electronic tool has been developed nationally to aid and record decision making.
- No curfews to be proposed without Police intelligence and safeguarding checks being received. This is now mandated.

PAN Lancashire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Independent Chair Mike Leaf

Between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool & Lancashire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) received 104 notifications, 14 of these were for Blackpool children

Death notifications by LAA and year

LAA name	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Blackburn with Darwen	20	13	13	19	16
Blackpool	7	11	7	19	9
Lancashire	81	58	83	98	79
Total	108	82	103	136	104

- 86% (12) of deaths reviewed took over twelve months to complete the review
- 86% (12) of deaths were of White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British ethnicity
- 50% (7) of deaths were female
- 78% (11) of deaths reviewed were unexpected
- 50% (7) of deaths reviewed where children aged under 1
- 36% (5) of deaths reviewed were recorded as Category 8, Perinatal or Neonatal event
- 71% (10) of deaths reviewed had modifiable factors

The most common modifiable factors identified between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 were

- Smoking
- Drug use
- Service provision i.e. not sharing information, not accessing health care, delay initiating treatment

Pan Lancashire CDOP has undertaken an audit on deaths by suicide. A multi-agency task and finish group led by Public Health will analyse and share the learning for Blackpool when the report is published.

Partners contribute additional resource through their attendance at MASA, Strategic Delivery Groups, Task and Finish groups, updating of policies and procedures and attendance and contribution of panel members and admin support to CSPR's and delivery of expert specific multi agency training.

Learning and Development

Since returning to place-based safeguarding arrangements, the all-age multi-agency workforce development offer is being redeveloped and will continue to evolve to ensure local practice and policy is reflective of local and national learning. Ensuring all training packages align has been a challenge across services is a priority for the task & finish group. Operational and organisational changes within partner organisations have also created a particular challenge to the updating of specific areas of training.

Blackpool MASA continues to offer e-learning through the MeLearning platform which is hosted by Blackburn with Darwen Council and is available to practitioners across the Blackpool. This includes Level 1 and Level 2 Safeguarding Children training courses in respect of each MASA priority area and other specific areas of safeguarding practice such as FGM, Prevent, Bullying and Cyberbullying, Safeguarding Children in Sport and Safeguarding Children with disabilities.



This offer enables staff in statutory, voluntary and community settings to easily access free resources which provides them with high quality training and learning opportunities to ensure they maintain good knowledge and awareness of national and local standards and approaches regarding a broad spectrum of safeguarding practice.

Training Courses

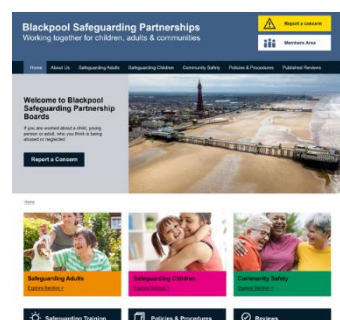
At this point in the development of the MASA, the Workforce Development offer is at an early stage of development will continually evolve and change over 2024 – 2025 in response to local and national guidance and learning. The following courses are currently being developed or updated to ensure content is reflective of policy and practice

- Domestic Abuse: various training packages inc. basic awareness, Impact on Children, DASH, DA Champions
- What is Neglect?
- Contextual Harm outside the Family Home
- Understanding & Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in the Home Environment
- Impact of parents using substances
- Modern Day Slavery
- Online Safety
- Gambling Harm prevention
- Safeguarding children with additional needs
- Professional Curiosity

Communication and Engagement

Safeguarding Blackpool Website

The Business Unit is in the process of commissioning a dedicated joint website for the Blackpool partnerships. Partners have coproduced a wish list for the site which includes dedicated accessible areas for children and young people, adults, communities and professionals. The comprehensive platform is designed to streamline and simplify access to resources and information. The website will bring together organisational structures and links to service directories making it easy for individuals to navigate the service offer in Blackpool. There will be articles and guides on various subjects such as parenting, staying safe, keeping healthy and help with finances and budgeting. A campaigns and community calendar promoting local community events and support groups with details on how to participate and volunteer, and an area to help Blackpool residents share their experiences and have their voices heard. An FAQ, news and updates section will ensure communities and professionals have accurate and up to date information.



For professionals a resources section will link to MeLearning, Tri X Policy and Procedures and local and national guidance, training materials, published reviews and learning briefs, webinars, video tutorials, virtual workshops and learning circles and will be fully functional with mobile friendly navigation to enhance opportunities for learning. The website will have a dedicated booking system, fully integrated to allow our workforce to manage their professional development, access, book and feedback on training courses and maintain a training records.

Safeguarding Blackpool Newsletter

A MASA, SAB and BSafe joint partnership newsletter is produced and published quarterly. Written using SWAY, the newsletter is shared widely across the workforce. Colleagues will be encouraged to contribute items to the newsletter to foster an accessible, collaborative approach to communicating information and engaging with multi-agency colleagues. It will feature updates on safeguarding policies, information on public health and safeguarding campaigns such as Safer Sleep, Child Safety, and ICON, links to tools and resources, new research and publications, offer practical help and tips to assessing and identifying abuse and being professionally curious.

Signatures

Appendix 1 Glossary of Terms

ACEs Adverse Childhood Experiences

BCH Blackpool Coastal Housing

BSAB Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board

BTH Blackpool Teaching Hospital

CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

CCE Child Criminal Exploitation

CDOP Child Death Overview Panel – statutory process to review all child deaths

CIN Child in need

CME Children missing education: Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving

County Lines a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018). It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.

COVID-19 Coronavirus disease 2019

CP Child protection

CPS Crown Prosecution Service

CSA Child sexual abuse

CSE Child sexual exploitation

CSPR Child Safeguarding Practice Review

DfE Department for Education

DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

ED (Emergency Department) Navigators

EHE Elective home education

EPS Early Parenthood Service

FGC Family Group Conference

HMICFRS His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

ICB Integrated Care Board

ICON a programme of intervention based around coping with crying to help in the prevention of abusive head trauma in babies.

IS Independent Scrutineer

JTAI Joint Targeted Area Inspection

LCSPR Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review

LSCFT Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust

MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference) is a meeting where information is shared on victims at the highest risk of serious harm or murder as a result of domestic abuse

MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

MASA Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

MASH Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

MOD Ministry of Defence

NEET Not in education, employment or training

NQSW Newly qualified social worker

NTS National Transfer Scheme

Operation Encompass supports information sharing with a focus on ensuring schools are aware when a child has been a victim of domestic abuse or has been involved in an incident which puts them at risk of vulnerability

Operation Makesafe is the national initiative to raise awareness of child exploitation within the night - time economy for example hotels/ taxis / licensed premises

Operation Provide is a multi-agency programme and joint collaboration developed to improve the response to victims of domestic abuse.

Operation Warrior is the Constabulary's response to the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan priority of disrupting and dismantling organised crime.

OWD Organisational Workforce Development

PSRF Police Safeguarding Referral Form

RAPID REVIEW - a meeting held to identify, collate, and reflect on the facts of a serious incident as quickly as possible in order to establish whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure a child's safety and the potential for practice learning

RfS HUB Front door Multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk.

SECTION 11 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the provision for Local Children Safeguarding Partnerships to undertake a self-assessment

SECTION 175/157 of the Education Act 2002 requires governing bodies to carry out an annual review of school policies and procedures and to provide information to the local authority about how the duties set out in the guidance have been discharged.

The Force - Lancashire Constabulary (The Police)

TOM Targeted Operating Model

UASC Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child

VGU Vulnerability Governance Unit

VRU Violence Reduction Unit

Appendix 2 Child Safeguarding Review Panel Annual Report Questions for Reflection

The following questions have been formulated to help safeguarding partnerships consider how best to embed learning, and to sustain changes and improvements in their local safeguarding system.

Culture

- Is there an understanding across multi-agency leadership of the different contexts, responsibilities, and operating challenges across partners?
- How do you role model behaviours that create an inclusive culture where diversity is understood, and multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is celebrated?
- How do you role model a culture of professional challenge, including questioning one another's assumptions, and be seen to resolve difference of opinion in a restorative and respectful way?

Clear partnership intent

- Has a clear and balanced partnership intent developed from assessment of local need and threat, in addition to shared understanding of each other's contexts, responsibilities and challenges?
- Is there clear evidence that responsibilities are shared and equal?
- Is there the right support, challenge, and accountability across agencies so that everyone can be more ambitious in achieving the goal of seeing families thrive, and understand the impact of their services?

Strategy to delivery

- Does the strategy get informed by and contribute to front line practice?
- Is there evidence of a data strategy and investment in joint analysis and audit, which supports delivery of the strategy to be effectively reviewed, issues and good practice to be escalated and monitoring for new threats?

Assessing effectiveness

- How do you know what you are doing is effective?
- How are independent scrutiny, audit, local and national practice reviews, and inspections being used to assess impact of the arrangements to the benefit of children and families, as well as the strength of local leadership?
- How is the voice of children and families experiencing the multi-agency systems utilised in the design and delivery of local arrangements? This should include information sharing and decision making, organising referral pathways, delivering services and support.

Getting upstream

- How do you use learning to focus efforts on prevention and early intervention, providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge?
- How does this feed into wider analytical assessments to inform service commissioning?
- How do you use horizon scanning as a partnership and respond based on this?
- This can include consideration of thresholds documents, design of referral pathways and services.

Workforce

- How do you work together across agency on shared issues related to the workforce?
- How is multi-agency training commissioned, delivered and monitored for impact?
- How does learning from reviews/audits/inspections feed into training priorities?
- How do you undertake any multi-agency and interagency audits?
- Do you have a recruitment and retention strategy?
- How do you develop strategic leads and ensure leadership maturity?
- How do you support recruitment using safe working practices?
- How do you ensure capacity for workforce to engage in peer-learning and knowledge-exchange, peer-audit, group/individual supervision, and observation and promote staff welfare?