

Annual report of Local Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people

2022/23



Published 29 September 2023

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Alongside our Children's MARS Local Arrangements and other key documents, all policies, procedures and resources referenced in this document are published on the Children's MARS website.

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to our **Annual report of Local Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people 2022/23**

In North Lincolnshire, our ambition is for children to **thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities** and through our One Family Approach, we aim to create an integrated offer that works for all children, young people and families.

Set in the context of our One Family Approach and the underpinning practice model, our [Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Resilience \(MARS\) Local Arrangements](#) place children, young people, families and communities at the heart of our early help and safeguarding system. There is strong evidence of how the One Family Approach is embedded across our local arrangements and across the partnership, we remain committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and families via the fewest best interventions, leading to whole family turnaround. As safeguarding partners, we are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the positive outcomes achieved and the strength of partnership working.

In recent times, we have lived through unprecedented challenges, developments and opportunities, from both a national and local perspective, though as a result of collaborative working and high support, high challenge at all levels across the early help and safeguarding pathway, we have continued to make progress in developing our local offer for vulnerable children, young people, families and communities. This has placed North Lincolnshire in a strong position to respond and we have continued to listen, learn, review and adapt to maintain and build on our creative, innovative and flexible practices. This has resulted in positive experiences and outcomes and contributes to achieving our ambition for children to **thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities**.

In 2022/23, we have continued to:

- ✓ fulfil all functions across our Local Arrangements
- ✓ respond to the needs of individuals and diverse communities, prioritising the most in need, to help and protect children, young people and families
- ✓ support and develop our workforce
- ✓ build on our outstanding partnerships and practice to ensure that everyone can recognise and fulfil their responsibilities

The Supporting Families Programme, which closely aligns with the ambitions and values of our One Family Approach and our Local Arrangements, has a renewed focus on the importance of bringing services together around families to deliver whole family working and it emphasises the importance of early help in increasing the likelihood of good outcomes for children and families.

We would like to thank our Independent Scrutiny Officers for leading on a range of scrutiny and assurance activity and for their constructive challenge, evaluation and areas for consideration on how to drive continuous improvements, some of which are evidenced within this report.

This report also fulfils our statutory responsibility to publish a report at least once in every 12 month period and sets out what we have done as a result of our Local Arrangements, including child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

In addition, the report also includes:

- evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
- ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision

Looking forward, we continue to be in a strong position to respond positively to new policy directions and guidance, including (but not exhaustive) the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's Child Protection in England report, Stable Homes Built on Love consultation and Working Together 2023 consultation. As we further develop our integrated children and families offer, we remain committed to a culture of listening, learning, reviewing and adapting, which is reinforced through our republished arrangements, our learning and improvement culture that is welcoming of improvements and innovations, and the multi-agency practice developments and transformation that continue to evolve.



Matthew Peach

Chief Superintendent and
South Bank Commander
Humberside Police
(Chair of Children's MARS
Board)



Helen Davis

Place Nurse Director
North Lincolnshire Health
and Care Partnership



Ann-Marie Matson

Director of Children and
Families
North Lincolnshire
Council

Governance and Partnerships

Over the last year, there have been changes at a strategic level across all statutory partner agencies though there has continued to be a collaborative leadership approach and shared commitment to ensuring an equal and robust partnership. In the Independent Scrutiny Officer's review of local arrangements, it was acknowledged that safeguarding partners '*demonstrate a clear, confident grip on the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in the area*'.

The key roles and functions of the board, are detailed in the [Terms of Reference](#) and the responsibilities are detailed in the Local Arrangements and underpinning [Memorandum of Understanding](#). Further information about our partnership structures can be found in the Local Arrangements which have been updated to reflect the changes in our partnership arrangements.

As part of our commitment to listen, learn, review and adapt, we have continued to review and refine our subgroup arrangements. Some examples include:

- The terms of reference of the Early Help Strategic Leads Group (EHSLG) has been reviewed and the membership has been refined. There is now a dedicated early help plan in place to guide, shape and influence the partnership response which is monitored and reported to the group on a regular basis
- The Risk Outside the Home Strategy Group has become the Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group to refocus the group on leading the partnership response to risk outside the home as opposed to having a sole focus on the strategy
- A Child Exploitation Lead Officer's Group (CELOG) has been established under the Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group to strengthen the oversight of children who are vulnerable to exploitation but do not meet the threshold for additional intervention through the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meeting

As part of the 2021/22 independent scrutiny of the local arrangements, the report recommended that:

Given the changes within the three statutory partnerships at strategic level and the pace of change within the Children's MARS Arrangements, they should instigate an annual meeting of the local authority Chief Executive, the Accountable Officer of the Clinical Commissioning Group (equivalent in the Integrated Care System), the Chief Officer of the police and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Safeguarding partners agreed that accountability / delegated arrangements are in place across all three safeguarding partner organisations, and the nominated safeguarding partners are fully aware and committed to fulfilling their responsibilities. In addition, an annual meeting between the local authority Chief Executive and the chair of the Children's MARS Board has been established. There are also opportunities between the Children's MARS Board meetings for virtual communications, engagement and decision making between safeguarding partners. Bespoke and routine development sessions are built in as required.

Overall, the Local Arrangements continue to have a positive impact on outcomes for children and families. Efficient board arrangements with shared chairpersonship, core membership and active, engaged discussions and decision making continues.

Governance and Partnerships

Oversight of Children in Care and Care Leavers

We continue to have oversight of the outcomes for children in care and care leavers, from a safeguarding perspective, through regular reporting to the Children's Help and Protection Pathway Group (CHaPP) and Children's MARS Board, for example:

Children in Care

- In 2022/23, the numbers of children in care have continued to be low compared to national comparators, which reinforces our ambition for children to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities which is at the heart of our practice for children in care
- In 2021/22, we further developed our emotional wellbeing oversight for our children in care. As part of this drive to ensure that all children have support to be emotionally well, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) that are completed each month receive oversight from CAMHS, Barnardo's therapeutic service, the designated child in care Nurse, Educational Psychologist, Service Manager for both Children in Care and Fostering. The group has ensured that children's SDQ scores are reflected upon and needs lead to additional support. The impact of the focus on emotional wellbeing was recognised by Ofsted as part of the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services undertaken in October 2022, where they highlighted that *'leaders ensured, in collaboration with the safeguarding partnership, a focus on the emotional wellbeing of children in care and care leavers their foster carers, families and the whole workforce'*

Care Leavers

- From a care leavers perspective, Ofsted also found that care leavers *'benefit from an extensive array of support for their practical, physical and emotional health and financial needs'* and *'the breadth of the offer to care leavers, is highly creative in meeting the full range of potential needs of these children and young people'*
- A number of children in care have been subject of Practice Learning Line of Sight events, which have demonstrated that the principles of the One Family Approach Practice Model were evident in practice (and further details are referenced on slide 24)

Headlines and Summary of Performance and Populations

Headlines which indicate our system is working and making a difference to children, young people and families include:

- ✓ The vast majority of performance and activity information relating to the early help and protection system continue to show sustained high performance and compliance with local practice standards and statutory timescales which demonstrate the success and effectiveness of our local practice
- ✓ Families benefit from an effective early help offer, delivered by agencies committed to intervening early, supporting the whole family, and preventing escalation of need through the fewest, best interventions
- ✓ Children in North Lincolnshire who are in need of help and protection are receiving timely, appropriate help and support, they make good progress, and are supported to live safely within their family network
- ✓ There are few children in external foster care and residential provision enabling them to remain connected to their local support networks and community

We have maintained and further developed our performance framework which provides assurance and oversight of performance activity, a summary of which is as follows:

- **The number of early help assessments recorded has risen:** This reflects a partnership commitment to meeting need early and preventing escalation. Audit activity and management oversight at the front door also shows evidence of a significant amount of informal early help being provided where professionals intervene early in accordance with the Helping Children and Families In North Lincolnshire document
- **The number of contacts has decreased by 10% whilst the number of referrals has risen by 5%:** This was in the context of an increase in enquiries to the Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Through multi agency auditing there has been learning for agencies including them providing advice and guidance to families with whom they are already in contact with, instead of families contacting the SPOC. The re-referral rate at 16% remains below the latest national and statistical neighbour averages
- **There has been an increase in Children's Services Assessments completed:** This is aligned to the fluctuation in referrals, though it is anticipated that populations will become more stable
- **The number of strategy discussions has decreased:** Dip sampling and audits within the Integrated Multi-Agency Partnership (IMAP) identify that strategy discussions are held appropriately, and outcomes are aligned to the child's needs and presenting risk

Headlines and Summary of Performance and Populations continued

Summary of performance activity continued

- **The numbers and rates of children in need and those subject to child protection plans have decreased and remain below the latest national and statistical neighbour averages:** Children who require a child protection plan benefit from timely conferences that prevents drift and have strong multi agency support that leads to the timely ending of child protection plans based on lasting change
- **The children in care population remains low and is well below the latest national comparators:** This reinforces our ambition for children to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities
- **Children in care experiencing placement stability has continued:** Children experiencing three or more placements in the year remains low and below the latest national and statistical averages demonstrating the commitment to stability for children in care. Those in care for 2.5 years and remaining in the same placement remains in a strong position
- **Care leavers who are in suitable accommodation also those in education, employment or training has remained higher than national and statistical neighbour averages:** This shows the impact of our ongoing commitment to better outcomes for young people leaving care
- **The 2021/22 absence rates, published in March 2023, show an increasing trend for both primary and secondary schools:** Schools and the Local Authority continue to pro-actively work to increase attendance with an increased emphasis on those who are persistently and severely absent. A series of training and briefing events on the new school attendance guidance have taken place and ongoing opportunities to attend governor meetings to discuss school attendance are in progress
- **Provisional figures for 2021/22 indicate that exclusions have increased on the previous year:** However, 2020/21 figures were artificially lower because of the reduced time that schools were open for all children. Figures from the first two terms of 2022/23 indicate that performance could be at a similar level or higher than 2021/22. Challenge remains in place for suspensions and permanent exclusions and there has been significant progress in this area
- **The number of Electively Home Educated children increased in the Spring term of 2022/23:** In addition to a case management approach to each request, a new initiative has been developed to support better engagement from these families. This includes a termly newsletter, offer of swimming lessons, Bikeability and road safety, internet safety, Big Talk Education relationships and sex education and termly coffee mornings across localities. This has had a positive uptake

Headlines and Summary of Performance and Populations continued

Summary of performance activity continued

- **The number of children identified to be at risk of or who have experienced sexual or criminal exploitation at the end of the year has remained similar compared to the previous year:** There is enhanced management oversight of this cohort through regular case audits, within case supervision, at the Multi Agency Children Exploitation meeting, through the newly established Child Exploitation Lead Officer Group and through the Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group. Partners are working to ensure that children receive help at the lowest level, are supported and protected, and that perpetrators are disrupted alongside harmful places and spaces being addressed
- **The number of children reported missing and incidents has increased:** The numbers remain significantly lower than 2019/20. The Multi-Agency Missing Children Meeting is embedded and robust in focussing on reducing missing incidents with action plans being devised to complement statutory or early help plans and to initiate early help assessments or provide support. All children were offered an independent return interview and 99% were taken up
- **The number of children entering the youth justice system as first time entrants continues to be low:** A high proportion of cases are prevention and out of court disposals demonstrating the success and effectiveness of the preventative approach
- **The rate of proven reoffending for 2021/22 was low and there have been no children sentenced to custody during 2022/23:** Although early in the period for measurement, the 2022/23 performance data indicates that re-offending is reducing
- **There has been an increase in allegations against people who work with children:** The December 2020 update of Working Together saw the inclusion of a fourth criteria in respect of 'transferable risk'. We believe that this, along with further awareness raising of the managing allegations process through training, accounts for the increase in the number of allegations
- **The number and proportion of referrals with a presenting issue of domestic abuse have increased slightly when compared to the previous year:** However, at the assessment point for either children or parents/carers both the numbers and proportions have reduced. There was a similar number of child protection plans where domestic abuse was a factor for the children and/or parents/carers at 78% and 80% respectively
- **The number of cases heard at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) has reduced:** The number of children connected to MARAC victims and the repeat MARAC rate have reduced

Key Developments and Successes

Outcomes of inspection

The **Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)** took place in October 2022 over a two-week period, in which Ofsted undertook a range of inspection activity which provided them with the opportunity to deep dive and look at our systems, processes and practice at all levels across our children and families offer, and to triangulate how this is impacting on our children and families.

The ILACS inspection judgements and grades were as follows:

- The **impact of leaders** on social work practice with children and families = **OUTSTANDING**
- The experiences and progress of children who need **help and protection** = **OUTSTANDING**
- The experiences and progress of **children in care and care leavers** = **OUTSTANDING**
- **Overall effectiveness** = **OUTSTANDING**

In addition, there were no identified areas for improvement.

This 'outstanding' result, and associated report, demonstrates the importance of relationships and partnerships, as well as the love, care and respect we have for our children.

The full report can be found [here](#), though examples of headline strengths and impacts is as follows:

- **The One Family Approach is at the heart of the whole council and most impressively has been embraced by partners**
- **There is a genuine commitment to seeking continuous feedback from children and families which is consolidated into service development**
- **Leaders are determined champions for children, with high aspirations to ensure children's best outcomes**
- **Strategic partnerships are robust and well embedded**
- **Children in need of help and protection are provided with the right help when they need it, via the fewest best interventions**
- **Children and families are supported effectively to build resilience through a wide-ranging early help offer which is making a real difference**
- **Thresholds are understood by all**
- **Where children are at risk of exploitation, there is a strong and swift multi agency response to identifying and managing the risk to the child**
- **When the plan is for children to return home, there is detailed and co-ordinated work to assess and support the family**
- **The family solutions approach supports families to find their own solutions and develop their own network of support**
- **Children and young people are actively involved in planning for their future**

In line with our commitment for listening, learning, reviewing and adapting, we identified further areas for ongoing innovation and transformation as we continue to develop our integrated children and families offer, which is being monitored through established governance arrangements

Key Developments and Successes

Outcomes of inspection

The **Police Effectiveness Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL)** inspection took place in 2022 in which HMICFRS inspected how good Humberside Police is in ten areas of policing.

The graded judgements for nine of the ten areas as are follows:

Outstanding judgements were identified in relation to:

- Preventing crime
- Treatment of the public
- **Protecting vulnerable people**
- Managing offenders
- Developing a positive workforce
- Good use of resources

Good judgements were identified in relation to:

- Investigating crime
- Responding to the public

An **adequate** judgement was identified in relation to:

- Recording data about crime

Humberside Police were also inspected on how effective a service Humberside Police gives to victims of crime, though no judgement was made into this overall area.

The report demonstrates continuous improvement and high level performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime and refers to effective partnership working to tackle local problems.

The full report can be found [here](#), though examples of headline strengths and impacts, specifically in relation to **protecting vulnerable people** are as follows:

- The force has a detailed understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability
- The force has a comprehensive understanding of the resources it needs to protect vulnerable people and work with other agencies

Other examples of innovations identified were that:

- The force has developed a vulnerability hub, which allows it to manage its vulnerability demand more consistently and efficiently
- The force has developed an automated vulnerability tracker
- The force understands and uses its own powers to protect and safeguard vulnerable people
- Issued a joint statement to tackle violence against women and girls
- Safeguarding and support of sex workers

Key Developments and Successes

Early Help

Led through the Early Help Strategic Leads Group (EHSLG), ongoing collaborative working has further shaped and developed the early help system.

Key development activity includes:

- Configuration of the system for logging and recording early help work across the partnership, enabling a stronger focus on outcomes and sustainable improvements for families
- Following consultation across the partnership and with families, revision of the early help assessment and review plan format, taking a formulation approach and embedding the Supporting Families outcomes framework
- New guidance to accompany the new format has also been developed alongside a refresh of the Early Help Peer Support Forum arrangements, and an enhanced presence on the Children's MARS website
- Early Help training further developed to include Family Voice Representatives with over 200 practitioners across the partnership trained

The quality and impact of practice continues to be evidenced across a range of indicators, including key performance and populations data, scrutiny and oversight, audit and feedback. Examples of feedback include:

- *I was allocated a worker who has supported myself and the children during this time. This has made such a difference to all my children and me. We have held a family meeting and being able to air our concerns with each other, we have completed a rota of how we can all help in the family home with various chores and we have made time to talk and try and understand each other. My daughter has really enjoyed being taken out of the family home and had some 1-1 support by the worker and felt listened to. Things have changed so much in a very short time due to this support and I cannot thank the family support service enough*
- *Thank you so much, I cannot even describe what a difference this support has made. I will never be reluctant to accept support in the future should I need this again!"*
- *Thank you so much for all your help, advice and love. I really feel so supported by you all and I can't thank you enough. I truly believe you have saved my life - he would have killed me, I just know he would*

Examples of feedback from the Early Help training include:

- *The training has given me a better understanding of the early help process and how I can support my colleagues when they are conducting their early help, along with how it needs to be much more family friendly language*
- *The families that shared their experiences of being in the early help arena were very powerful*
- *I'm new to this so it was helpful, everyone was so enthusiastic about the vision they have about how early help can help families, it was infectious*

Key Developments and Successes

The Early Help: Practice and Process training was rolled out across the partnership following the re-launch of the Early Help Assessment and new online recording system. There has been 273 practitioners trained throughout the year and feedback has been extremely positive.

Impact on practice

The below example was shared by a school in North Lincolnshire following their attendance on the early help training.

In the Autumn Term, we began a review of all families on an early help plan. A lot of the families we were supporting had met their targets within their early help plans and their plans were closed. We found that some did not meet the criteria for early help or had met their targets, but the families needed or wanted support from school through informal meetings/conversations.

As a result of this, we created our own Family Support Meeting document that is in its first trial period. The informal meetings/conversations are the next step on from the Universal Support provided by school. It provides families with the opportunity to speak to a trusted/familiar adult. The teachers provide support to families in their classes and contact families a minimum of three times a week through emails/phone calls. Where there are other identified needs, teachers will contact parents and offer support.

The numbers of families we support within the early help arena has dramatically reduced since we carried out the review and the Universal Support that the school offers over the year has improved.

We now use the Early Help Assessment format provided in the training to ensure that we set SMART targets with our families.

This example highlights the positive impact that the training has had on their universal and targeted offer of support for families, using the new learning to better identify levels of need and improve plans through the SMART approach. The school recognised that their universal family support offer could meet the needs of many of the families who were currently being supported via an early help plan and by doing this they saw a positive impact upon staff workloads.

Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

Across the Children's MARS arrangements, there is a commitment to **listening, learning, reviewing and adapting** from views and experiences and ensuring people are involved in decisions that affect their lives. To contribute to this, we continue to focus on feedback, consultation, participation and co-production with children and families. We introduced our Strategic, Thematic, Engaging and Empowering, and Routine - S.T.E.E.R. model to position voice and engagement as part of the wider transformation of the integrated children and families offer.

From a voice and engagement perspective, examples of activity, impact and outcomes include:

Strategic

- Children and families voice and engagement continues to feature across the Children's MARS Board and local arrangements
- Parent and Carer Voice for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is strong and there continues to be an effective relationship with system leaders and managers
- We have embedded the Children's Challenge in Action process across key boards and partnerships to provide opportunities for children and young people to challenge strategic leaders and managers i.e., via the Children's MARS Board in relation to safe places to go and things to do
- Children, young people, parents and carers are engaging in and contributing to local and national meetings, events and conferences

Children and families remain at the heart of all we do, and their views and experiences continue to shape and influence across the early help and safeguarding pathway.

The PIP Parent Forum meet regularly with strategic leaders and managers to shape and influence the local offer; and SENDIASS have hosted structured themes and update meetings with SEND leads across the local area.

Children, young people, parents and carers views are shaping and influencing at a local and national level i.e., via the Children's Commissioner Care Experienced Advisory Board, Virtual Heads Conference and Annual SEND Conference

Thematic

- There were 77 children, parents and carers who engaged in thematic consultation to seek out views as to how children and young people are supported to manage change in their lives

Practices around closure of formal support to young people, and the language used in correspondence have been reviewed

Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

Engage and Empower

- In July 2022, young people were engaged in a Democracy Event to enhance their understanding and raise awareness of local democracy and local issues, help and support; and the Children's MARS team were represented to raise awareness as well as consulting with 25 young people regarding healthy relationships and teenage relationship abuse, the outcomes of which were fed into the Children's MARS governance arrangements
- There were 188 children and young people from 19 schools who attended the 2022 Stay Safe Conference to celebrate the work of the peer mentors and buddies and engage in workshops around keeping safe and well
- Children and young people have co-produced films i.e., in relation to topical issues about community safety, youth justice, young people living with parental substance misuse and SENDIASS
- Children and young people with disabilities and their parents/carers have been involved in the development of the Complex Care Campus

Taking account of the consultation outcomes with young people in relation to healthy relationships and teenage relationship abuse, overall, young people had a good level of understanding as to what constitutes a healthy relationship and also the behaviours inherent in unhealthy relationships.

When asked as to whether they were able to spots the signs of teenage relationship abuse, overall, young people had a good level of insight as to what signs to look out for i.e., changes in behaviours, impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health and/or physical injuries.

When asked as to what they would do if they needed advice about an abusive relationship, overall, young people demonstrated that they could find someone to talk to and/or that they would seek out information and support.

As a result of the feedback, there has been an amplified focus on sharing information and resources in relation to healthy relationships through Children's MARS communication mechanisms i.e., Children's MARS website, @SafeNorthLincs and virtual communications.

The feedback from children attending the 2022 Stay Safe Conference demonstrated an increased understanding of child exploitation, that they were empowered to share information with peers, they had increased confidence in identifying risk and developing ways to stay safe, they felt able to trust adults who can help, and they felt safe to contribute and share views.

Children's views and experiences have contributed to films to raise awareness of local issues and enable children and young people to keep themselves safe and well.

Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

Routine

- We reviewed and refreshed the Child and Family Feedback Framework in collaboration with children and families, which now take account of the 'I' statements in the outcomes framework
- Under the auspices of the Feedback Framework, a total of 6,678 responses were received from children, parents and foster carers

Overall, almost all understood the reasons why Children and Families practitioners were involved, are given opportunities to have their say, feel listened to and understand their plan.

Almost all children and foster carers and the very large majority of parents indicated that they were getting the help they think they need, believe the work we are doing is making them feel safer and that what we are doing is making a difference.

From a voice and engagement perspective, other examples of recent progress against identified actions and areas for consideration and development include:

- further development of our expert by experience framework via the introduction of Supporting Families in Partnership Assistant posts, which has provided opportunities for people who have experienced services to shape and influence local information, support and interventions
- a 2022 refresh of the Children's Challenge has been finalised. Outcomes of consultation in relation to the Children's Challenge, including in relation to SAFE, have been weaved into partnerships, boards, forums and workstreams as appropriate

Supporting Families in Partnership Assistants have co-produced a refresh of their title, to Family Voice Representatives, which they feel better communicates the scope of their role. Family Voice Representatives have also:

- contributed to Early Help Training across the partnership, at which they have shared their experiences of early help interventions and support
- contributed to Parent/Carer Panels for Family Hubs developments and shared feedback through the Children and Young People's Partnership and are contributing to shaping and influencing the integrated children and families offer via a neighbourhood approach
- led on consultation with St Luke's School on parents/carers needs understanding of early help
- attended fostering network and special guardianship meetings as a further opportunity to weave in lived experiences

- Under the auspices of the Youth Offer, work is underway to develop places to go, things to do and people to talk to – this is also an ongoing focus as part of the Risk Outside the Home Strategy and underpinning delivery plan
- All (open) Council buildings are safe spaces and this has been widely advertised - young people can come in, use the facilities and ask for urgent support and this has been shared with schools and across the partnership as well as in the media.
- A bespoke meeting has been undertaken to further explore and respond to the challenges posed by young people and co-production work is planned to develop branding associated with safe spaces

Voice and Stakeholder Engagement – Children's MARS Conference 2022

The Children's MARS Conference took place on 5 May 2022 at Forest Pines Hotel Conference Centre. Over 150 people attended from across the partnership including leaders at all levels and young people. The conference was an opportunity to bring together practitioners and local leaders who have responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As well as having a focus on our local arrangements, there was input from a national speaker who helped us to reflect upon local practice.

Positive feedback on the day included:

- *'There was great oversight of all of the fantastic multi-agency work we all strive to do, which is ultimately for the children of our area'*
- *'The day was a real celebration of all that we do as a team across North Lincolnshire '*
- *'It was really interesting to learn about the different areas and how as a multiagency everyone strives to reach the same one family approach. It was clear what the outcomes of the day were, the interaction with other professionals was really helpful too'*



Key presentation topics included:

- the significant successes which demonstrate that the Children's MARS Arrangements have a positive impact on outcomes for children, young people and families
- an overview of good practice that our Independent Scrutiny Officers have seen throughout their work in North Lincolnshire and the positive impact that it has had on children and families
- how we use the One Family Approach to enable change and promote family empowerment
- an overview of the integration between the 0-19 Health and Wellbeing Service and Targeted Family Support to provide children with the best start at the earliest point in their lives
- the impact of the Partnership Integrated Triage (PIT)STOP meetings which aim to provide families with help by the most appropriate person at the lowest level and at the earliest stage
- an overview of the many positive examples of good practice that have taken place in schools and settings to safeguard children
- an overview of our local approach to Risk Outside the Home which was launched at the conference

We welcomed Gavin McKenna, founder of Reach Every Generation, as our keynote speaker who discussed his personal journey from childhood. A key aspect of Gavin's presentation was around how the use of negative language and children being treated differently to peers removes hope from a young person's life and damages their self-esteem. He spoke about the importance of creating the right conditions for children and young people by 'flooding communities with positive role models'. Using the analogy of escaping a burning building, Gavin advocates that those supporting young people create 'fire exits' by creating hope and opportunity. Finally, Gavin discussed the importance of oversight and that young people value having a trusted adult who has oversight of them.

A special edition conference news update sharing the key messages from the event is available on the [Children's MARS website](#).

Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

Child and Family Feedback Framework

The Child and Family Feedback Framework is an established mechanism which captures the views of children, young people, parents, carers and foster carers. Taking account of feedback from children, young people, parents/carers and staff across the workforce, the questions have been refreshed to ensure they aligned with the 'I' statements in the outcomes framework. All case-holding staff (within Children and Families) discuss these questions with children, young people, parents, carers and foster carers on a regular basis and guidance is provided to support a consistent approach. Any less positive responses or concerns expressed are followed up on a case-by-case basis with actions recorded on the child's case file.

Overall responses indicate that:

- The vast majority of children young people, parents and carers, and all foster carers, understood the reasons that services are involved
- The vast majority of children/young people and all foster carers are getting the help they think they need, and the large majority of parents/carers indicated they are getting the right help
- All foster carers and the vast majority of children/young people, parents and carers feel they are given opportunities to have their say
- All foster carers and the vast majority of children/young people, parents and carers feel listened to
- All foster carers, the vast majority of children/young people and the large majority of parent/carers feel that what we are doing is making them and/or their children safer
- All foster carers and the vast majority of children/young people and parent/carers understand their plan

Voice and stakeholder engagement: pending opportunities

Arrangements are ongoing in preparation for the Children's MARS Event which is scheduled to take place on 13 November 2023. The event is an opportunity to bring together practitioners and local leaders at all levels who have responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As well as having a focus on our local arrangements, there will be inputs from national speakers who will help us to reflect upon local practice in relation to professional curiosity and intersectionality.

Other pending opportunities include:

- Stay Safe Conference for primary and second school children and young people which will take place on 22 and 23 June 2023, at which there will be a range of workshops to help keep children safe
- Designated Safeguarding Leads Conference is due to take place on 11 July 2023, which will have an online abuse focus

In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on and further build our opportunities to engage directly with children, young people and families to understand their views and experiences and empower them to shape and influence our local arrangements, including through co-production.



Shine a Light Area of Focus

Risk Outside The Home

We said we would further develop the multi-agency approach to Risk Outside the Home with a focus on Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation and Teenage Relationship Abuse

Risk Outside the Home

The North Lincolnshire Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Strategy 2022/25 has been refreshed and published on our website taking into account our local work with children, young people, their families and communities also national research/reports. The annual delivery plan underpinning the strategy communicates partnership actions that are over and above routine practice and examples of these are outlined below:

What have we done?

- The North Lincolnshire ROTH Approach was launched at the Children's MARS Board conference in May 2023. Feedback received via an Independent Scrutiny Officer is that this launch made a significant impact on those who attended and on their understanding of what it entails, also their own role in implementing it
- During 2022/23 we have continued with a significant programme of communications, the development of resources and toolkits, raising awareness, also multi-agency education and training in relation to risk outside the home (ROTH)
- An info-sheet with links to all relevant policies, procedures and guidance and ROTH documents has been developed and published on the Children's MARS website. Staff are able to use the info-sheet as a point of reference and to familiarise themselves with key documents relating to ROTH
- Awareness raising within the community and night time economy has been undertaken as part of partnership plans relating to tackling harmful places and spaces. Work has also been targeted at specific hotels to ensure that staff and owners of the premises are aware of child exploitation, understand the signs to look out for and know their responsibilities in responding to concerns
- There has been an enhanced education and training offer in relation to child exploitation within NLaG NHS Foundation Trust for staff working on adult wards, as they come into contact with 16 and 17 year olds who may be placed on these wards from A&E
- Safety awareness sessions on online safety including sexual harm and child criminal exploitation (CCE) have been held in schools facilitated by the Youth Justice Partnership (YJP), health and police. As part of a programme of events, year 7 pupils were targeted from a prevention and early help perspective and to enable children and young people to keep themselves safe. Education sessions have also been commissioned for a number of schools relating to 'No More Knives'

Risk Outside the Home

What have we done?

- A Spotlight on teenage relationship abuse was developed and published on the Children's MARS website to share key tools and resources with practitioners
- We have sought the views of young people on healthy relationships, teenage relationship abuse and child exploitation. Further information is detailed on slide 17
- Following the establishment of the Humber Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP), the ROTH Strategic Group have worked closely with the VPP and the YJP in utilising available funding for youth engagement. As part of this, Eski (Not in Our Community) was commissioned to co-produce three virtual reality films with young people locally that can be used as an education resource to tackle child exploitation, knife crime and substance misuse. This project will see young people engage in activities to ensure that the films portray an accurate reflection of the risks faced by children and young people in North Lincolnshire
- There has been a focus on preventative work and early help - we have developed the Child Exploitation Lead Officer Group (CELOG) which considers children who have a range of vulnerabilities that research has indicated means they may be at increased risk of exploitation. The meeting facilitates prevention work and early help for these children where multiple vulnerabilities exist such as low school attendance, a number of suspensions and missing from home/care incidents
- The ROTH Strategic Group continues to have oversight of the ROTH Profile which provides a clear geographic and demographic picture across the local area and is used to prevent and protect children from CCE and child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- The ROTH Strategic Group and the CELOG are sighted on police operations and organised crime groups that link to child exploitation and also provide oversight of missing children. The MACE meeting and Multi-Agency Missing Children meeting chairs feed information into the groups to strengthen the partnership strategic oversight of investigation activity, disruption and emerging themes to inform strategic direction
- Young people aged 18 plus are considered as part of the MACE meeting agenda in relation to transition to adulthood. The support required for them as young adults is considered and partnership action is taken to address the factors that compromise their safety outside of the home

Risk Outside the Home

Outcomes and Impact:

- By strengthening the available resources and training materials on the Children's MARS website and the dissemination of briefings and reports through the communications list, staff have increased access to advice and recommended tools to use in practice
- Increased awareness of the local ROTH Approach including raising the profile of teenage relationship abuse
- Through engagement with hotels and night-time economy premises, key staff within the community have an increased awareness of exploitation including understanding the signs to look out for and their responsibility in responding to concerns identified
- Feedback from the safety awareness sessions held in schools has been positive from both children and staff which highlighted that children were empowered to keep themselves safe
- There has continued to be strengthened practice in addition to workforce, leadership and systems development in relation to CSE and CCE which have supported improved outcomes for children
- The ROTH Strategic Group and the Children's MARS Board have strengthened oversight of the impact of local practice relating to prevention and early help through the establishment of the CELOG. Children with multiple vulnerabilities have benefited from preventative work and early help plans
- As children at risk of exploitation transition into adulthood they continue to be offered support from a range of partners to reduce risk and improve their outcomes

Next steps:

There is an ongoing need to focus on identifying and responding to children at risk of or experiencing child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. The Children's MARS Board have recognised the need to continue to 'Shine a Light' on exploitation in 2023/24 with an emphasis on further developing multi-agency transitional arrangements as children move into adulthood.

Risk Outside the Home: Child Sexual Exploitation

Independent Scrutiny

Under the Children's MARS Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, there has been a multi-agency case audit Practice Learning Line of Sight event on the theme of **child sexual exploitation** led by Dave Basker, Independent Scrutiny Officer.

There is evidence of strengths and good practice as follows:

- The strength of positive relationships is a key theme
- There are positive examples of multi-agency communication and information sharing
- There is strong evidence of inter-agency working. Practitioners worked collaboratively as a team and knew what each other were doing with the family
- The positive relationships between practitioners are evident. They complimented each other's practice and encouraged each other whilst also articulating that there were moments where they have challenged each other
- Practice is restorative and relational
- Practitioners worked constructively and creatively with families - interventions are done 'with' and 'alongside' the family
- Both families were empowered to tell professionals what they want and to come up with their own solutions
- The views and needs of the child and family were in the centre of planning
- Practitioners demonstrated a passion for practice and helping children and discussion was not centred on processes
- Practitioners are tenacious and stuck with the plan instead of being reactive to periods of crisis

A 7 minute briefing on the learning from the event has been circulated to practitioners and managers across the partnership and is available on the Children's MARS website.

Risk Outside the Home: Child Criminal Exploitation

Independent Scrutiny

We held a multi-agency case audit Practice Learning Line of Sight event on the theme of **child criminal exploitation** led by Dave Basker, Independent Scrutiny Officer.

The strengths and good practice are:

- Proactive multi-agency working is evident
- Information sharing is robust and proactive
- All agencies were in agreement with the plans for the young people and felt their voice was being heard
- The One Family Approach was evident in that practice was relational, strengths based and creative
- The final report by the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommends new universal care standards for children in care which start off with building and maintaining loving relationships and such relationships have been shown during the case discussions
- The whole partnership has put an emphasis on the quality of relationships. This aspect comes through as the number one thing in the *'Ready or not': care leavers' views of preparing to leave care 2022* Ofsted report
- Staff are flexible in their roles and there is a willingness to keep reviewing and changing the plan where required
- There is evidence of outcome focused planning – all professionals are striving for the same outcome and are on the same page
- There is a strong focus on relationship building both between professionals and the young person, and between family members in the child's life
- There is a real focus on the child's voice and lived experience, using a non-judgmental loving approach
- Acknowledging the complexities and challenges in cases of child exploitation, the practitioners in the room were caring, compassionate and empathetic
- A focus on promoting and supporting young people's talents, interests and aspirations was evident and this should be continued
- The Panel reflected on the keynote speech from the Children's MARS conference and how creating 'fire exits' and opportunities for young people by building on their aspirations was evidenced in these cases

A 7 minute briefing on the learning from the event has been circulated to practitioners and managers across the partnership and is²⁴ available on the Children's MARS website.

Risk Outside the Home: Teenage Relationship Abuse

Independent Scrutiny

The third multi-agency case audit Practice Learning Line of Sight event held during the year was on the theme of **teenage relationship abuse** led by Edwina Harrison, Independent Scrutiny Officer.

Strengths and good practice evidenced are:

- The child's plan considered the impact of the assaults on the child by her partner both at school and in the home. It also considered the family as a whole due to the mother's alcohol use and bereavement issues
- The incident was risk assessed within the school and positive work has been done with the child and her ex-partner around healthy relationships
- The school, social worker and Children's IDVA have continued to work together to support the child
- The school and social worker had received training in harmful sexual behaviour and domestic abuse and were confident in supporting both children involved including through the use of direct work tools
- Practitioners were tenacious and were willing to deal with difficult subjects and have difficult conversations. Practitioners in the room were confident and celebrated the periods of stability for the family
- Communication between agencies was strong. All practitioners knew the family and were aware of the dynamics
- Professionals were quick to recognise Adverse Childhood Experiences and the need to do things differently when working with past trauma
- The One Family Approach was used in action in that the child was in their family, in their school and in their community
- Both cases evidenced professional curiosity
- The communication and joint working between Adults and Children's Services was strong
- The school were proactive in providing support to both children where teenage relationship abuse had taken place
- The use of fewest best interventions was evident in a child's case where family support were doing the hidden harm work with the child instead of referring to DELTA, the young people's substance misuse service

A 7 minute briefing on the learning from the event has been circulated to practitioners and managers across the partnership and is available on the Children's MARS website.



Shine a Light Area of Focus

Online Abuse

We said we would further develop the multi-agency approach to preventing and reducing the impact from online abuse

Online abuse

What have we done?

- A Children's MARS Spotlight on online abuse has been developed and disseminated widely across the partnership
- Communications have continued to be disseminated through the Children's MARS communications list and @SafeNorthLincs social media profiles
- A partnership representative attended the Safeguarding Children in the Digital Age Conference held by Children and Young People Now and resources were disseminated following the event
- The Family Voice Representatives have reviewed the online resources on the Children's MARS website from a parents/carers perspective and work has been done in response to this to strengthen available advice and guidance
- Partner agencies' corporate communications teams have strengthened their promotion of information and resources relating to online abuse. This has included supporting and promoting national campaigns such as Safer Internet Day
- Work has been done to develop the local picture around online harm. Partners have been working together to gather data of the prevalence of online abuse as a presenting issue which will feature within the ROTH Profile
- A family online safety training package is in development as part of our integrated family help offer
- Through the Children's MARS annual school's safeguarding audit, a high level of assurance is provided around whether pupils are educated on keeping themselves safe online. In July 2023, a conference for Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools will have a focus on online harms which partners are contributing to

Outcomes and impact

- Practitioners have increased access to advice, guidance, tools and resources which they can utilise in their practice
- Children and young people are being equipped with the skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe online



Shine a Light Area of Focus

Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprise Sector

We said we would further develop the interface and relationships between the Children's MARS Local Arrangements and the Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprise sector

Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprise Sector

What have we done?

- In collaboration with the Safeguarding Adults Board and Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, the Children's MARS team have been working with Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire (VANL) to develop a safeguarding children and adults awareness training package to roll out across the Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. Work is in progress to develop a domestic abuse awareness training package to be rolled out alongside the above training according to the needs of the VCSE organisation
- A reporting mechanism for monitoring training figures across the VCSE sector has been agreed with VANL to ensure that safeguarding training across the VCSE sector can be monitored on a quarterly basis. This information will be fed into the Safeguarding Pathway Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG) and will give lead officers an enhanced oversight of which organisations and sectors have had safeguarding training so that they are able to identify any gaps
- Arrangements are ongoing in relation to a VCSE networking event which will take place in October 2023. This event aims to raise awareness of the role and function of Children's MARS Board amongst the VCSE sector. It will also provide networking opportunities for both the VCSE sector and partner agencies to strengthen relationships and to raise awareness of the local offer to children and families

Next steps:

Due to a number of workstreams in progress, the Children's MARS Board have recognised the need continue to 'Shine a Light' on the relationships with the VCSE in 2023/24. In continuing this as an area of focus, we will be able to further embed the development work and seek assurance around the impact that it has had on children and families.

Outcomes and impact

- We have strengthened the interface with VANL and built upon existing mechanisms to communicate and build relationships with the VCSE sector
- Staff and volunteers in the VCSE have increased access to advice, guidance, tools and resources which they can utilise when working with children and families
- In working collaboratively with the Safeguarding Adults Board and Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, we are preventing duplication and providing access to consistent safeguarding information, advice and guidance



Shine a Light Area of Focus

Men including fathers, male carers and wider family

We said we would further develop the multi-agency approach to men including fathers, male carers and wider family members

Men including fathers, male carers and wider family members

Activity:

- A Children's MARS Spotlight on engaging men and male carers was developed and published on the Children's MARS website. The Spotlight contains top tips for working with men, key resources and links to national reports and research
- Other national reports and research relating to engaging with men and male carers has been circulated across the partnership
- As part of scrutiny and assurance activity, case audit forms have been amended to strengthen the focus on the involvement of men and male carers and their voice

Outcomes and Impact:

- Practitioners have increased access to advice, guidance, tools and resources which they can utilise in their practice
- Engagement with men and male carers and consideration of their voice and experiences are considered routinely as part of scrutiny and assurance activity

Through the Yorkshire and Humber Multi-Agency Safeguarding Trainer's Group, the Children's MARS Board supported the 'Ey Up, Dad! Engaging with men in children's lives' webinar series.

Sessions included presentations from the Lead Reviewer of 'The Myth of Invisible Men' national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report, Dad Matters UK and Sheffield Parenting Hub. Staff in attendance at the event fed back that they had a greater understanding of the topic of engaging fathers and male carers from different viewpoints, learning from reviews and have greater access to practice tips and tools.

Examples of feedback from practitioners were:

This event has made me want to research things further and I will definitely be speaking about it in the office with my colleagues!

I will take forward the tips on engaging with fathers in my practice going forwards for example how to engage fathers in small simple ways at school events and the importance of these

I feel like this has been such a great refresher and it is definitely getting me thinking about my practice going forward!

Fantastic presentations, great work. very moving videos. I will be more conscious about the dads and ensuring I make an effort to include dads more in the work I do. Not just assuming mum is the main person to contact

This has given me more confidence in speaking to Dad's about their children's lives, obtaining their views about different areas of their children's lives.

Men including fathers, male carers and wider family members

There has been an amplified focus on understanding our approach across the partnership to engaging with men and male carers and to further developing our offer. Through the SPLIG, there has been a focus on collating an overview of activity, impact and outcomes from engagement activity with men and male carers, examples as follows from [RDASH NHS Foundation Trust](#) perspective:

ACTIVITY

- All service training regarding engaging fathers / partners completed in 2023. Allocation of in service champions to maintain service quality improvement
- In service learning discussions at team meetings, a focus group and professional forums around the Myth of Invisible Men report
- Review of all client letters sent by service - revised to include invitation to fathers / partners to attend core contacts and developmental reviews
- Audit completed of electronic patient record, identified further work needed to ensure all groups and relationships are recorded with specific detail around fathers and partners, including historic relevant relationships
- Client record to be opened on fathers / partners where direct work completed
- Completion of Survey Monkey via social media platforms to gather father / partner feedback around engagement with the service
- Expression of interest circulated for attendance at a Fathers Voice event to explore how the service can improve engagement
- Fathers only outdoor event advertised 2023 - walking in the park with baby / toddler. Opportunity to share views, meet other fathers and ask questions
- Liaison with information sharing meetings, e.g., Multi-Agency Pre-birth Liaison and Consultation meetings, to ensure the focus on fathers is embedded
- Antenatal multi-agency education sessions identified as an ideal time to engage fathers and provide relevant information and advice - delivery times and venues changed to encourage attendance. Now offered in each locality 'out of hours' to accommodate work times and also continued as a virtual class if preferred
- Fathers welcome at all community groups, reviews and education sessions

NEXT STEPS

Actions identified for ongoing developments, for example audit activity to ensure father details are visible, father specific e-clinic platform, focus on fathers promoting breastfeeding and LGBTQ+ inclusive approach in antenatal education sessions

IMPACT

- Re-audit of client electronic records planned for June 2023 to review groups and relationships section of patient record and ensure fathers details are visible in record and assessment
- Attendance of fathers at antenatal education sessions has increased substantially. Previously male attendance was extremely rare. Fathers are regularly attending, contributing to discussion and providing feedback
- Feedback from the initial Survey Monkey results and poor attendance at events advertised specifically for dads has been considered in future service delivery. Fathers told us they did not feel comfortable attending a session / forum or group aimed directly at them and facilitated by a professional. They stated they preferred to be actively included in conversation and assessment at core contacts or attend an appointment or session with their partner. Therefore, this approach has been adopted in practice
- Fathers were interested in the service digital offer, they did want to engage with the web page and social media platforms, therefore promotions aimed directly at fathers have been scheduled throughout the year

Men including fathers, male carers and wider family members

There has been an amplified focus on understanding our approach across the partnership to engaging with men and male carers and to further developing our offer. Through the SPLIG, there has been a focus on collating an overview of activity, impact and outcomes from engagement activity with men and male carers, examples as follows from a [NLAG NHS Foundation Trust](#) perspective:

ACTIVITY

- Fathers / male partners / carers can now attend all antenatal appointments / scans and they can be present at the birth
- Fathers / male partners / carers are encouraged to attend for the tour of the unit that is offered to those mothers under the care of the Consultant Midwife
- Reintroduced open visiting for fathers / male partners / carers on the antenatal wards freely between 8 am and 8 pm and during the night for delivery
- We sign post fathers / male partners / carers to the Dad's Pad digital support app at every opportunity
- Postnatally, if Midwifery Support Workers are providing additional support to the mothers, then the fathers / male partners / carers are encouraged to be present to cover practical skills etc
- As part of the maternity booking process midwives ask all fathers / male partners / carers if they have any concerns or need support with their mental health historically or currently. Midwifery offer support and referral through the perinatal mental health team or support self referral to the Talking Shop
- Midwives continue to discuss domestic abuse and complete the confidential enquiry with women at the earliest opportunity. This is recommended by NICE guidance to discuss at least 3 times during pregnancy in the absence of male partners. In relation to any concerns regarding domestic abuse perpetrated against males, similarly enquiries would be made to support any potential male victims of domestic abuse

IMPACT

- This has a positive impact as we try to include fathers / male partners / carers on the birth journey
- We have had positive feedback in regards the Dad's Pad
- Fathers / male partners / carers feel more confident, comfortable and engaged regarding the delivery when they have completed tours of the maternity unit and have been involved with the practical skills sessions
- Increased involvement and engagement from fathers / male partners / carers now that Covid restrictions have been removed within families antenatal and postnatal journey

NEXT STEPS

Continue to improve engagement with fathers / male partners / carers throughout the antenatal and postnatal journey

Men including fathers, male carers and wider family members

There has been an amplified focus on understanding our approach across the partnership to engaging with men and male carers and to further developing our offer. Through the SPLIG, there has been a focus on collating an overview of activity, impact and outcomes from engagement activity with men and male carers, examples as follows from [North Lincolnshire Council](#) perspective:

ACTIVITY

- Development session with Practice Supervisors and Social Workers around Myth of the Invisible Men report to share key points and reflect on the findings and analysis
- Practice development in relation to ensuring that assessments take into consideration the previous history and life narrative of fathers and male partners / carers
- Review of case records to reflect on how the voice of fathers and male partners / carers is obtained
- Review of direct work tools and pod development sessions to ensure a range of tools, research and theory are utilised in the assessment planning and intervention
- Focussed development around managing challenging and hostile behaviour
- Use of correspondence to support and encourage engagement
- Access to Community Care Inform and Research in Practice to support continuous professional development in relation to engaging males in intervention and change work - including spotlight articles on working with fathers in child protection: lessons from research, foreign convictions against mothers' partner and care proceedings, and working with fathers, self-harm, asylum pre-proceedings and the Public Law Outline
- Access to the Re:Form project at the Blue Door enabling intervention for couples who want to remain together
- Strengthened case audit process to ensure that this includes the voice of parents including fathers and male partners / carers
- Through the embedding of the You Say Who framework, we have supported reunification of children in care to fathers
- In collaboration with colleagues through the Yorkshire and Humber Multi-Agency Safeguarding Trainers Group, we have promoted free training in relation to engaging with men in children's lives ('Ey Up, Dad!' - Yorkshire and Humber Conference)

IMPACT

- Improved engagement of males within the planning for children
- Enabling families to remain together through managing risk presented by fathers and male partners / carers
- Increased knowledge, skills and understanding through workforce development with access to training and resources specifically relating to engaging males in children's lives
- Audit activity is inclusive of seeking the views of fathers and male partners / carers enabling reflection on practice and enhancing service provision

NEXT STEPS

Actions identified for ongoing developments, e.g., further review of case records, Myth of Invisible Men development sessions to be held with new staff members and continuing review of resources



Shine a Light Area of Focus

Neglect

We said we would further raise awareness and develop our practice to prevent and reduce the harm from neglect

Neglect

What have we done?

- A Children's MARS Family Help toolkit on the topic of neglect has been developed to provide advice, guidance and resources for practitioners
- In August 2022, a neglect task and finish group was held with key members of the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group to consider the local approach to neglect and associated education and training
- NSPCC trained 20 staff across Children's Services and other partner agencies in 2017 as trainers in the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) – neglect assessment tool. Since then and to enhance multi agency practice, the Children's MARS Board have trained over 200 professionals across the partnership in the GCP2 and accredited them so that they can use this tool and training continues
- A database of resources has been shared via MS Teams with all practitioners who have been trained to use the GCP2 to ensure they have access to additional support and tools to use with children and families
- GCP2 practice surgeries and webinars held by the NSPCC to respond to neglect have been promoted widely across the partnership
- In 2022/23 there were 107 children where a GCP2 assessment had been undertaken by children's social care staff (including children's social work and family support). Similar numbers of GCP2 assessments have been undertaken for the 3 years prior to the above

Outcomes and impact

- Practitioners have increased access to advice, guidance, tools and resources which they can utilise in their practice
- Co-working on GCP2 assessments has built practitioner confidence and increased the use of the tool
- Outcomes of the GCP2 and areas of intervention are being integrated into children's plans
- Feedback from practitioners indicates that the GCP2 neglect assessment model has supported consistency in language and in the approach to neglect across early help and the safeguarding pathway
- **Practitioners have said that the GCP2:**
 - enhances understanding of the lived experience of the child
 - has promoted parental engagement
 - helped families to be clearer, at an earlier point, when there are concerns about neglect
 - was easy and relatively quick up to write up
- **Family feedback about their experiences when the GCP2 has been used in assessment practice has included:**
 - easy to understand
 - it's not like an assessment is being completed
 - clear and the colour coding helps to understand the strengths and areas of concern



Learning and Improvement

Multi-Agency Education and Training

Children's MARS Education and Training has continued to be offered both virtually and face to face. Child Protection training has continued to be offered as a priority course throughout the year and is well attended and in high demand. The Child Protection training has been a key mechanism to embed the One Family Approach and to raise awareness of key strategic documents with new staff across the partnership, such as the North Lincolnshire ROTH Approach. The Children's MARS Education and Training Programme has also been refreshed to strengthen the connectivity with the Children's MARS Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and to orientate our education and training to core activity and our 'Shine a Light' areas of focus.

Key highlights include:

- 273 practitioners trained in Early Help: Practice and Process
- 496 e-workbooks were completed across a range of awareness topics including safeguarding, child criminal and child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. In quarter 3, 2022/23, a new early help e-workbook was published
- 298 Designated Safeguarding Leads and school pastoral staff have attended the quarterly Designated Safeguarding Leads briefings and have been trained in early help, private fostering, Prevent and supporting the education of children in need and those on child protection plans. A Designated Safeguarding Leads Conference was also held in July 2022 at which workshops focussed on domestic abuse, early help, safeguarding policies and emotional wellbeing
- 184 Designated Safeguarding Leads from early years settings have attended the quarterly forum and have had briefings on domestic abuse, information sharing, early help and identifying injuries in babies and young children
- A new early help forum was established in 2022/23 and 141 partnership staff undertaking early help have attended. Bespoke briefings have been provided on mental health, housing related support and SENDIASS
- 7 minute briefings, special edition newsletters and briefings have been used to communicate learning to frontline practitioners
- New resources for school staff have been published including additional 2 minute briefings on topics such as neglect, prevent, coercive control and early help and a CPD PowerPoint focussed on the changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Children's MARS team have supported a number of Humber-wide Domestic Abuse Learning Events throughout 2022. 5 sessions were held with a total of 1679 attendees present from across the Humber region who heard the experiences of Luke and Ryan Hart from CoCo awareness and watched a production of 'Mockingbird High' from Certain Curtain Theatre Company
- National and regional online webinars and training courses have been promoted through the Children's MARS communications channels on a range of subjects including drug and alcohol misuse, online harm, child exploitation and child abuse linked to faith and belief
- Through the Yorkshire and Humber Multi-Agency Safeguarding Trainer's Group, a series of webinars have taken place throughout the year including:
 - 'Ey Up, Dad! Engaging with men in children's lives' – Sessions included presentations from the Lead Reviewer of 'The Myth of Invisible Men' national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report, Dad Matters UK and Sheffield Parenting Hub
 - 'Professional Curiosity' – Sessions included presentations on the importance of professional curiosity, supervising a professionally curious workforce, professional curiosity in the digital world and disrupting perpetrators through a professionally curious multi-agency approach

Multi-Agency Education and Training

In the report on the effectiveness of the Children's MARS Arrangements, the Independent Scrutiny Officer highlighted that:

Effective mechanisms are in place for disseminating key messages to the front line. The importance of supporting practitioners in the difficult work they have to do is understood. A comprehensive training programme is in place and is well used.

The quality of the Children's MARS training offer was viewed as helpful and informative.

The quarterly training evaluation reports presented to the SPLIG have highlighted that there has been an overall improvement on practitioners' confidence in the subject matter after all Children's MARS training courses. Based on feedback and evaluation, training remained of a high quality, delivered by knowledgeable and engaging trainers with examples of positive impacts on practice such as enhanced knowledge and skills to engage, assess, plan and work directly with children, young people and families.

Feedback from practitioners

An electronic feedback survey is distributed after each training course delivered as part of the Children's MARS Education and Training Programme. Practitioners have provided the examples below of how training has improved their knowledge and will impact on their practice:

- *The Child Protection training has given me more confidence in continuing to do my role effectively as well as sharing information and support for staff. Ensuring that we are following the correct protocols to keep children safe as well as supporting families to make them feel that they are not on their own when they need someone to talk to*
- *The Child to Parent Violence and Abuse training will definitely help me with my daily interventions with families and made me feel more confident in understanding child on parent violence*
- *The Strategy Discussions training will make me be more confident to challenge and share relevant and proportionate information*
- *The training has strengthened my ability to lead a well-structured, well documented strategy discussion and to make appropriate considerations for good planning*
- *I will find it easier to support parents through the early help as it will be more relevant to them and they will have much more of a say as the plan will be in their own words and they can state exactly what the main issues are*
- *It will make completing Early Help Assessments more relevant and fit for purpose. Today's advice has inspired me to look closely at existing Early Helps and using the criteria discussed today make an informed decision on keeping them open or close with parent support to follow up.*
- *The Graded Care Profile 2 will be used to aid family development to inform areas needing improvement and to showcase areas which families are strong*

Communications

There is a commitment to communicating across the safeguarding partner organisations and other agencies. The Children's MARS website is central to our communications strategy and is regularly refreshed to include a variety of resources, tools and learning from local and national reviews for professionals to access.

Children's MARS news updates continue to be used to communicate information and messages relating to the Local Arrangements to key stakeholders. Messages also continued to be shared through our social media channels, @SafeNorthLincs.

Regular email communications via the Children's MARS communications list alert practitioners to what is new and available both locally and nationally. This has been an important mechanism to increase the reach of key messages across the partnership and there continues to be high levels of engagement with the information circulated. There are further opportunities to target communications i.e., with the voluntary charity and social enterprise sector to raise awareness of and engagement in our Local Arrangements.

Children's MARS Spotlights continue to be used to coordinate key messages for practice, training opportunities and key tools and resources around a specific topic. The Spotlights have been disseminated via our communications list and published on the Children's MARS website. Staff are encouraged to circulate the Spotlights across their teams and discuss them as part of team meetings. A number of thematic Spotlights have been developed in 2022-23 including:

- Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage
- Joint Targeted Area Inspections
- Early Help
- Online abuse
- Working and engaging with fathers and male carers
- Teenage relationship abuse



In the Spotlight...

Working and engaging with fathers and male carers

In the Spotlight...

Teenage Relationship Abuse

In the Spotlight...

Online abuse

Communications

Some examples of communication activity include:

- There has been a gradual increase in followers on @SafeNorthLincs Facebook and Twitter profiles throughout the year which enables us to reach a wider audience
- Supported and promoted the #DogSafety campaign and circulated associated posters and fact sheets
- Disseminated reports and briefings from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel including national reviews, practitioner briefings and Panel newsletters
- Promotion of posters, fact sheets and resources from the Child Accident Prevention Trust as part of Child Safety Week
- Promoted and disseminated the Humberside Partnership Intelligence Form to raise awareness
- Supported and promoted the Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner's summer domestic abuse campaign
- Promotion of the Children's Society #LookCloser campaign and dissemination of new resources, posters and infographics
- Promotion of the 'Dad Pad' app which supports expectant and new fathers
- Supported and promoted the White Ribbon campaign
- Promotion of the Karma Nirvana's virginity testing campaign and dissemination of new resources, posters and infographics
- Promotion of safer sleeping for babies
- Disseminated key national messages for practitioners relating to the increase in Scarlet Fever and Group A Strep and what to do if you identify mould and damp issues
- Supported and raised awareness of a series of mental health campaigns including Qwell mental health support and the Humber and North Yorkshire Childline Christmas mental health campaign
- Promoted and disseminated information relating to CEOP's 12 day festive countdown which included practical tips, information and advice to help parents and carers with keeping their children safer online over the school holidays
- Promotion of wider partnership events including the Safeguarding Adults Board conference and the Violence Against Women and Girls Conference
- Promoted an early years and education careers fair to raise awareness of working in the sector
- Dissemination of information and application forms for the Humberside Fire and Rescue Fire Cadets Programme for 13-16 year olds

Funding

Safeguarding partners have a shared ownership of funding responsibilities and they have agreed equitable and proportionate contributions to ensure the implementation of the Local Arrangements. These consist of actual funding and in-kind resources, for example representatives from safeguarding partner organisations contribute to the development and delivery of the education and training programme. In addition, each of the safeguarding partners have agreed that key subject matter experts from their organisations will lead specific pieces of work to progress the areas of focus, strategies and delivery plans.

In the event of a safeguarding practice review, it has been agreed that funding will be met by the three safeguarding partners and where necessary, each partner will contribute equitable and proportionate funding over and above the normal allocation in order to fulfil the costs of any review.

Funding from wider individual agencies has continued for 2022/23 as indicated in the tables below.

Contributions	2022/23 (£)
North Lincolnshire Council	50,000
North Lincolnshire Health and Care Partnership	38,241
Humberside Police	13,000
Probation Service	2,184
John Leggott College	1,140
North Lindsey College	1,140
Education	38,000
Total	143,705

In relation to expenditure for 2022/23, the safeguarding partners agreed the funding allocation inclusive of a Lead Officer, Partnerships and Policy Officer, Independent Scrutiny Officer(s), training and subscriptions and memberships.

Costs relating to room bookings, equipment and publications have not specifically been accounted for as monetary contributions in the safeguarding partner's funding agreement however these costs can be met using the remainder of the budget.

Budget allocation	2021/22 (£)
Staffing costs	106,134
Independent scrutiny	20,000
Training	10,000
Subscriptions and memberships	1,044
Total	137,178

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The Children's MARS Board / safeguarding partners were notified of a potential serious child safeguarding incident in 2022-23. Following receipt of the notification, the safeguarding partners met to consider whether the child's case met the criteria for notification to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. The safeguarding partners concluded that the case did not meet the criteria for notification.

Independent scrutiny of the identification and notification process first took place in 2020 following the initial publication of our Local Arrangements. This included independent scrutiny of cases considered by North Lincolnshire Children's Services as potentially meeting the criteria for serious child safeguarding incidents. The exercise has been repeated annually and now includes cases considered by Children's Services or partner agencies as potentially meeting the criteria for serious child safeguarding incidents.

The 2022 Independent Scrutiny report highlights: *There is a clear process in place for identifying potential cases. Whilst some of the cases, in my view, represented routine casework it seems to me that it is preferable for more cases to be brought to discussion. This allows the opportunity for an ongoing dialogue about the issues and for the development of a consistent understanding among the management team. Having considered the relevant documents, it is my view that the decision making was robust.*

We have also continued to annually seek assurance through the SPLIG that partner agencies and key relevant agencies:

- have internal processes in place for identifying potential serious child safeguarding cases
- are aware of the criteria for a serious child safeguarding case and how to notify the safeguarding partners for them to consider whether the criteria are met and whether a rapid review is undertaken to determine if a child safeguarding practice review is required
- have internal processes in place and are aware of/know how to request that the safeguarding partners or their representatives consider undertaking a child safeguarding practice review if the criteria are not met, yet the case may raise issues of importance to the local area and there has been the identification of good practice, poor practice or 'near miss' events
- have or have not discussed and considered one or more potential serious child safeguarding cases yet concluded that they do not meet the criteria for notification

This was completed to assure ourselves that there had been no serious cases that were not notified to the safeguarding partners.

Key staff were knowledgeable about the process and Children's MARS policies and procedures. The Children's MARS Board were subsequently assured that agencies know how to identify and notify the safeguarding partners of a serious child safeguarding case.

Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: National Reviews

We have taken account of the learning of the review by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on **‘Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings’**.

Activity undertaken in response to the review and phase 1 and 2 reports is as follows:

- A briefing was compiled for both the Children's MARS Board and the Corporate Parenting Board following receipt of a letter from Annie Hudson, Chair of the Safeguarding Practice Review Panel dated August 2022 which outlined a number of urgent actions to be taken as a result of the ongoing review. An overview report detailing the actions taken locally was subsequently presented to the Boards. Assurance was provided that Quality and Safety Reviews had been completed to a high standard and any actions stemming from them were being progressed and monitored until completion
- We have reviewed and refreshed local policy and procedures in relation to external residential education provision
- Bespoke briefings detailing the learning from the phase 1 report were developed for practitioners and senior leaders. These were disseminated widely across the partnership and the practitioner briefing was published on the Children's MARS website. The national Panel's briefing note following publication of the phase 2 report in April 2023 was likewise widely disseminated
- A benchmarking matrix was undertaken to consider the North Lincolnshire response to the key priorities for improvement and supplementary recommendations as set out in the phase 2 report

Next Steps:

A bespoke SPLIG development session will be held to reflect again on the embedment of learning from the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel reports and briefings including those outlined above. This will provide an additional layer of assurance that the learning continues to be embedded in practice across the partnership.

Scrutiny and Assurance

The Children's MARS Scrutiny and Assurance Framework was published alongside the Local Arrangements. In addition to scrutiny and assurance activity already referenced in relation to multi-agency case audit practice learning line of sight events, there has been additional activity, including independent scrutiny, leading to local learning, partnership action, changes in practice and outcomes.

Thematic audit – 'Front door' including Single Point of Contact enquiries, contacts and referrals

In January 2023, a thematic audit was undertaken to seek assurance as to the quality and effectiveness of decision making at the 'front door' and how partner agencies fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. The independent scrutiny officer also considered whether the outcomes are proportionate and consistent. The audit found many positives including that decisions about risk and need are well understood and consistently applied and that children get the right help at the right time.

Agency 'Call in' - Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust

There are opportunities for safeguarding partners to call in agency representatives to assure the Board of the agencies' section 11 responsibilities, their contribution to the local arrangements or in relation to a specific issue. In October 2022, the Children's MARS Board wrote to key leads within the RDaSH Children's Care Group to seek further assurance in relation to children's emotional wellbeing and mental health services in North Lincolnshire and the different pathways that support children and young people. The response provided a good level of assurance in respect of the issues raised. Representatives from RDaSH were also invited to attend the April 2023 Children's MARS Board to provide an overview of their offer to children and young people.

Thematic assurance event – 'PITSTOP'

In September 2022, a thematic assurance event took place to seek assurance as to the impact and effectiveness of the PITSTOP. The event included observation of 3 PITSTOP meetings, interviews with key partnership leads and a desktop review of key documents. The report from the Independent Scrutiny Officer was overwhelmingly positive regarding the partnership approach to preventing need from escalating and ensuring children and families receive a direct offer of help at the lowest level.

Scrutiny and Assurance

Multi-Agency Reflective Practice Forum

The Multi-Agency Reflective Practice Forum (MARPF) meets on a four weekly basis and provides a reflective practice forum for managers and practitioners working with families to review the quality of practice and intervention across the partnership. There have been six MARPF meetings held throughout the year on themes such as children in tier 4 provision, early help, child criminal exploitation, Youth Justice Partnership interventions, entry to care by way of police powers of protection and vulnerable children not in education. The good practice, key learning and recommendations for strategic action are fed into the SPLIG on a quarterly basis and a summary of learning for frontline practitioners is included in the Children's MARS news update.

Impact and outcomes

Scrutiny and assurance events continue to generate an evidence base of effective local practice and learning which the Children's MARS Board has utilised strategically to further develop and improve multi-agency practice. A summary of learning and key themes are provided to those involved and disseminated widely through the Children's MARS news updates and 7 minute briefings that are available on the Children's MARS website.

Scrutiny and assurance events that have taken place within 2022/23 have highlighted key themes relating to areas of good practice and assurance:

- The values and principles of the One Family Approach are being demonstrated within practice to enable children to be in their families, in their schools and in their communities
- The multi-agency partnership is proactive, mature and intent upon providing the right help, by the right person, at the right time
- Practitioners are tenacious and are willing to deal with difficult subjects and have difficult conversations
- The workforce is strong, consistent, flexible and skilled. There were positive examples of professionals working according to the needs of the child and family, considering the child's voice and their lived experience
- There is a strong focus on relationship building both between professionals and the young person, between family members in the child's life and between the professional group around the family

Scrutiny and Assurance

Section 11 (Joint Safeguarding Self-Assessment)

The Section 11 process places a duty on specific organisations and agencies to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Together with the Local Safeguarding Adults Board, a joint safeguarding self-assessment audit was disseminated to agencies for them to complete in December 2022 and submit in early 2023. Overall, the self-assessments provided assurance that the agencies subject to Section 11 are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Annual safeguarding audits

Under Section 175 of the Children Act 2004, the 2022 safeguarding audit for schools and colleges overseen by governors measured compliance with the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and enabled the Children's MARS Board to receive assurance about essential safeguarding practice across all schools, colleges and settings. Since 2021, audits are requested from all schools (including special and independent) in North Lincolnshire, colleges in North Lincolnshire, alternative provision utilised by North Lincolnshire and all out of area provision that North Lincolnshire children attend. In 2022, there was a 100% return from schools, colleges and alternative provision. The outcomes of the audit highlighted consistently good practice in relation to safeguarding and strong partnership working.

In addition to this all Private, Voluntary and Independent Childcare Providers complete the safeguarding audit. Nurseries and pre-schools complete it on an annual basis and childminders on a bi-annual basis. There was a 100% return rate for the audit (66 childminders and 67 settings) in 2022. Responses have been individually reviewed to ensure compliance, provide assurance and to determine levels of support and challenge for settings. Themes emerging from the analysis inform termly Designated Safeguarding Lead's updates, childminder networks, bespoke safeguarding training for settings and safeguarding updates for the sector as a whole.

Responses to the audit demonstrate that settings are committed to safeguarding children through ensuring policies and procedures continue to be robust and effectively communicated to staff, safer recruitment practices are adhered to, all staff recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and know procedures relating to an allegation against a staff member. Staff are also confident to attend child protection conferences and child in need meetings to share their knowledge and to effectively support children in their setting. Staff are professionally curious and follow up poor attendance of children and liaise with other agencies as appropriate to support children and families. Additionally, all childminders demonstrated a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, what they need to do in the event of a safeguarding concern both related to a child in their care, themselves or another adult living or working at their address.

Findings from the audits are analysed and shared with the Children's MARS Board and action plans are put in place to monitor further improvements.

Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

As part of our commitment to listen, learn, review and adapt and to ensure that we are fulfilling our responsibilities under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, our Local Arrangements for 2022/23 have been independently scrutinised. The Independent Scrutiny Officer indicated that the recommendations from last year have all been fully considered and implemented where appropriate.

This year's independent scrutiny of our Local Arrangements included:

- desktop research/prior reading of Children's MARS Board, subgroups and other records
- facilitation of multi-agency strategic leader's and practitioner's forums
- meeting with key officers who manage and support the Children's MARS Board
- observation of the Children's MARS Board (April 2023)
- observation of a review child protection conference and follow up afterwards

The independent scrutiny officer was asked to include a focus on:

- the impact of the ROTH approach
- impacts associated with the Shine a Light areas of focus
- evidence of schools and wider agencies involvement

A full report outlining the findings has been shared with the Children's MARS Board.

Additional feedback from **Edwina Harrison, Independent Scrutiny Officer** is highlighted in the follow slides:

The Independent Scrutiny Officer summarised that:

'The Children's MARS Board sets the tone and culture across the partnership. Respectful challenge is accepted as normal and constructive and is intended to make a positive difference to the lives of children and families. The difference between the levels, from the Children's MARS Board to the multi-agency front line is understood, and creative approaches are used to communicate across agencies and levels. The move to locate teams within communities offers an increased opportunity to understand the lived experience of children and families and to make a positive impact on their safety and wellbeing'

Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

Strengths

- **The ROTH approach** was developed out of the Child Exploitation and Missing Children Strategy. It included learning from a local pilot, national research and best practice. There is a clear demarcation between the strategy, delivery plan and toolkit but also lines of communication between each element. They were launched at the conference in May 2022 which was attended by over a hundred people. This launch at the conference appears to have made a significant impact on those who attended. Also, on their understanding of what it entails and their own role in implementing it. The ROTH Strategic Group meetings are well attended with representation from relevant agencies
- **The links to other partnerships are evident**, for example the Violence Reduction Unit and the Community Safety Partnership. The connection to adult safeguarding is also in place, particularly with regard to transition to adulthood. Links between the ROTH Strategic Group and other groups e.g. Early Help Strategic Leads Group are in place
- The **Line of Sight event on teenage relationship abuse** arose from the ROTH Strategy. In the interactive sessions this was said to be really useful and had been well received, as was the **case audit on CCE/CSE**
- The **CE and Missing Children Profile (Problem Profile)** was shared with the ROTH Strategic group and MACE meeting for action. This is a very comprehensive document which includes information about hotspots and perpetrators
- The **resources on the website** are comprehensive, with 29 pages of links to other resources that are both national and local
- Through reading the documents it is possible to see how the **areas of focus** are reached, and they include issues of local and national significance. The determination to make an impact on the areas of focus is demonstrated in the delivery plan and is far reaching
- In order to assist in understanding impact, the **Children's MARS Performance Framework** includes the Shine a Light areas of focus. There is a brief analysis of whether the situation is improving and in any event, what action is being taken. Indeed, in reviewing the documents the determination to make an impact on these areas is evident throughout the Children's MARS Board and associated groups
- The events which provide a **multi-agency learning opportunity** which is focussed on cases, but which also draw out wider learning appear to be particularly effective at engaging practitioners and managers in the work of the Children's MARS Board, for example the MARPF and the Line of Sight events. That these take place within a culture which is strengths based, with a focus on learning and where workers will not feel "blamed" is an important contributor to their effectiveness in encouraging participation and in embedding learning

Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

Strengths

- The **determination to provide support at the earliest possible opportunity** continues to be an important factor in the work of the Children's MARS Arrangements. One example of this is that the Early Help Strategic Leads Group has been given parity with the CHaPP Group in terms of governance. (i.e., the relationship to the Children's MARS Board)
- The **rotation of the chair role** between the three statutory partners has continued as planned with Humberside Police assuming the role in April 2022. In the draft revision Working Together 2023 there is an emphasis on the importance of the role of Chair being assumed by one of the statutory partners, rather than an Independent Chair. Comment is also made about the chair speaking for the partners, and not their home agency. I have observed that the Children's MARS Board chair clearly speaks on behalf of the partnership
- As in previous years, the **quality of the supporting documents** is impressive and provides the confidence in the work which underpins the board. The action log reflects the decisions in the meetings, and actions are followed up. This is not simply an administrative process; it gives a clear message that the board means business. The volume of significant, lengthy and important national reports, research and consultations has been noticeable in the past year and that in itself places a pressure on the Children's MARS team. As ever, they have responded with commitment and dedication
- The use of **Independent Scrutiny** is clear and focussed. It ranges from the comprehensive report in response to the national report on Star and Arthur to the specific in local multi-agency case audits. The model used by North Lincolnshire has allowed the closest match of skills between the area under scrutiny and the scrutineer. The model is under review by the Children's MARS Board and is one of the areas covered in Working Together 2023, which points to a model more like that used in North Lincolnshire. Clear external focus has been a key feature of the Children's MARS Arrangements from the outset
- There is evidence of thoughtful discussion of the **relationship with other strategic partnerships**, for example substance misuse and the Community Safety Partnership, the Channel Panel and the Violence Reduction Unit. The emphasis on governance across the partnership ensures that there is a focus on clarifying which board has primacy on specific issues
- There is a **comprehensive suite of performance information** and evidence of attempting to get behind the data to understand what the data is indicating
- Escalation processes are rarely required, and a considerable amount of work can be seen to go into **resolving matters at the lowest level possible**

Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

Strengths

- Throughout the review child protection conference meeting, the focus was on the needs of the children and their wishes and feelings. Their very **different needs were addressed separately as was diversity**. There was a strong focus on strengths and protective factors and on encouraging the mother to keep doing what she does well
- As part of the Shine a Light area of focus, **attendance by males** is being monitored at child protection conferences
- The performance framework includes **Elective Home Education, Children in Alternative Provision (AP) and absence/persistent absence**. The potential for children to be more vulnerable because they are absent from school is recognised
- One important point which arose during the discussion was how the work of the Children's MARS Arrangements assists with **equipping schools and colleges to address vulnerability**, keeps them up to date about local risks and understand what is or may be happening to the children which may be affecting their ability to learn. In turn that helps to keep them safe in their school, and potentially reduces the number of exclusions
- In terms of **communications**, the Children's MARS Newsletter was thought to be *'really useful'*
- There is an increasing emphasis on how the arrangements engage with social media as these can be an important route into communities. One example of how the Children's MARS Board **communicates with wider groups including the VCSE**, is through Safe North Lincs social media
- In both the practitioner's and the strategic leader's forums, **the One Family Approach** was recognised and understood in terms of the practice as well as the theory. As in previous workshops, the practitioners assumed responsibility for their own development as well as accessing relevant training and development opportunities. The range of training and development opportunities is extensive
- Practitioners demonstrated an understanding that there is **a process for learning to be shared** so that it can inform wider practice which is via the SPLIG
- **Relationships with adult safeguarding were said to be good at strategic through to front line level**. Examples included the shared joint Safeguarding Self-Assessment, Line of Sight events and reviews, multi-agency training and the shared use of data and intelligence
- The feedback from training is good, there is a **'team ethos'** and it was noted that the culture is clear in that everyone is *'very positive'*

Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

Strengths

- One issue which is worthy of note is one which has been consistent throughout the time that I have been undertaking this process, and that is the credibility of the **Children's MARS partners as people who could tackle 'real life front line' experiences**
- From the observation of the Children's MARS Board meeting, **ownership of the agenda items was shared** and there was no sense that one agency was responsible for an issue. This was an expectation which underpinned the safeguarding reforms and is explicit in the draft Working Together 2023 consultation
- The Children's MARS Board members appeared comfortable with each other and with offering **respectful challenge**. They also treated the participants who attended to present reports with the same respectful challenge, thus creating an environment which is conducive to creativity and to a learning environment

Areas for consideration

- How is the ROTH Approach being used to inform the partnership response, and will it be updated, as that would be further evidence of impact which is an area of interest to the Children's MARS Board?
- What is the status of the links to national resources which are provided which are on the website, are there checks in place about the quality of the information, particularly as practitioners may use the website without discussion with managers/supervisors?
- Reduce the number of areas of focus, maintain some of them for a longer period of time or have a specific launch or communication
- In view of the increasing number of BAME children in education settings, consider whether the Annual School Safeguarding Audit would be enhanced by a question on diversity
- There may be schools/provisions which are harder to include in the arrangements and it could be useful to understand the explanation. Consider whether a specific approach is needed with these schools to ensure that they feel that they can contribute to the arrangements

Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

Areas for consideration

- How does the Children's MARS Board assure itself that children's specific needs are identified and that an appropriate response is in place into the future when they have experienced significant loss or bereavement, particularly when that loss has been traumatic?
- Reflecting on undertaking this process for some years, the attendance at the sessions is invariably greater by Children's Services. It may be that other ways are available to reach other practitioners from other agencies, for example through a brief online survey. Ensure that the range of agencies includes representation from groups which represent the diversity of the child population
- Although it was said that Alternative Provision (AP) is included, consider how views from children in AP can be obtained about their experience and whether it prepares them for a return to mainstream education. In view of the recent report from the DfE on children in AP, consider whether the needs of children from diverse communities are being met
- Consider whether the voice of children and young people could be used more in the role of the independent scrutiny officer
- Consider how the independent scrutiny officers could ensure that diversity is included in all aspects of their work.
- Given the scale of the changes within the Integrated Care Board, and the intention for minimal impact at local level it could be useful to understand the experience at the multi-agency front line and whether there is also an understanding of the strategic intent of the changes
- Consider whether the current data on diversity could be extended to include the areas which have been identified as priorities for the year
- Note whether this escalation (of a different approach by Humberside Police regarding Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referrals and subsequent information received from the National Police Chiefs Council) results in an increase in the number of referrals which are made to the LADO from Humberside Police



Children's MARS Local Arrangements

What Next?

Shine a Light Areas of Focus for 2023/24

In order to define our **Shine a Light** areas of focus for 2022/23, we have taken account of emerging national themes, outcomes of research, local learning, performance data and analysis, practice wisdom, voice and experiences. Key areas of influence include:

- An ongoing need to focus on identifying and responding to children at risk from or experiencing child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation, and particularly in relation to transitions to adulthood
- An ongoing need to focus on the voluntary, charity and social enterprise sector regarding opportunities to enhance engagement and contributions to the Children’s MARS local arrangements. Also, in recognition of the need for an amplified focus on utilising their assets and strengths in creating the conditions to engage with children, young people and families to build their resilience and find resolutions for themselves
- A strengthened focus on early help to ensure that the developments pertaining systems and processes are providing the effective conditions for partners to meet need at the earliest point
- A need to enhance our interface with and contributions to the Domestic Abuse Strategy and governance arrangements, through a specific focus on domestic abuse and the impact on children

As such, our **Shine a Light** areas of focus for 2023/24 are as follows:

'Shine a Light' Areas of Focus	Lead Partnership	Governance	Anticipated Partnership Action and System Change
Further develop the multi-agency approach to Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation, with a focus on transitions	Risk Outside The Home Strategic Group	Children’s MARS Board Safeguarding Adults Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a multi-agency thematic assurance event, led by an Independent Scrutiny Officer, to include case audit/review of child criminal and sexual exploitation cases focussed on transition to adulthood, observation of a MACE meeting/MACE triage and a desktop review on the impact of MACE/MACE triage • Develop a transition to adulthood policy pre and post 18 (to include early planning before 18 for transition, joined up expectations, high ambitions for young people/adults) • Develop transition to adulthood practice standards • Explore further opportunities to utilise ‘experts by experience’ to develop resources to raise awareness and mitigate risk factors

'Shine a Light' Areas of Focus	Lead Partnership	Governance	Anticipated Partnership Action and System Change
Further develop the interface and relationships with the Voluntary Charity and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector	Children's Help and Protection Pathway Group	Children's MARS Board Safeguarding Adult Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop bespoke VCSE web-based communications on the Children's MARS website • Work collaboratively with Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire (VANL) to develop a bespoke certified safeguarding training package and build in monitoring arrangements • Led by VANL, contribute to the development of a VCSE event/conference and safeguarding forum • Target communications to VCSE sector regarding the Children's MARS local arrangements and practice developments • Link into established VCSE groups and forums to share messages and raise awareness
Enhance our multi agency approach to Early Help	Early Help Strategic Leads Group	Children's MARS Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake independent audit activity pertaining early help, including the interface with the front door • Further enhance our early help training offer, including (but not exhaustive) the development of early help training and working with resistant families also the impact of domestic abuse and neglect on families • Develop and implement early help audit process and report into relevant governance processes • Undertake consultation activity to inform the development of proposals for strengthening consultation and advice for early help work in the context of the neighbourhood approach and the integrated children and families offer
Further develop our understanding of and our multi agency response to domestic abuse and the impact on children	SPLIG Domestic Abuse Strategy Group	Children's MARS Board Domestic Abuse Partnership Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold multi-agency case audit practice learning line of sight event, led by an Independent Scrutiny Officer, pertaining domestic abuse and the impact on children • Enhance our training offer, including (but not exhaustive) a bespoke webinar around the understanding of coercive control and the effects on children

Communications via the Children's MARS Spotlight methodology will be developed for each shine a light area of focus across the year

As well as our specific 'shine a light' areas of focus, the Children's MARS Board adopts a 'right to roam' approach and as such, will maintain a **line of sight** across the early help and safeguarding pathway in order to seek assurance, challenge, shape and influence partnership action and system change, some of which are the responsibility of other partnership and planning frameworks. As part of this, to orientate 'line of sight' activity, the Children's MARS Board will take account of local learning, performance, practice wisdom and voice and experiences on wider emerging need and harm.

Development Plan

As safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, we will continue to listen, learn, review and adapt in order to ensure our Local Arrangements best meet the needs of the children, young people and families in North Lincolnshire, so they are resilient and safeguarded to enable them to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities.

As well as the actions associated with the ‘shine a light’ areas of focus, our Local Arrangements are underpinned by a strategic development plan, which is built around the following areas:

- Actions carried forward from the previous development plan, where progress has been made, but where a further focus is required
- Key actions pertaining the safeguarding partner’s portfolio areas
- Recommendations from the Independent Scrutiny Review of the Children’s MARS Local Arrangements
- Actions associated with key policy drivers

Portfolio Areas	Development Plan Action	Safeguarding Partner lead
Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the annual independent scrutiny of the identification and notification process for serious child safeguarding cases to seek assurance of our local decision making and partnership processes 	Director of Children and Families
Stakeholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the relationship between the Virtual Head Teacher and the Children's MARS Board and Local Arrangements (to take account of their extended role) • Develop further opportunities for engagement and co-production to enhance the voice and influence of those with lived experiences 	Director of Children and Families
Data Intelligence and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop the performance framework across the partnership to underpin our Local Arrangements 	Chief Superintendent and South Bank Divisional Commander
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review funding contributions and identify future priorities for expenditure to innovate and to develop evidence informed approaches to practice in order to continue to deliver our Local Arrangements 	Chief Superintendent and South Bank Divisional Commander
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope, develop and implement arrangements for the Children’s MARS Event 2023 • Review training resources against the YHMAST standards, to review the subject matter and the connectivity to Children’s MARS arrangements, and develop a survey to be disseminated across the partnership to generate understanding regarding the impact of training • Further develop our understanding of diversity and our associated practice (and refresh education and training offer as appropriate) 	Place Nurse Director
Scrutiny and Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further explore, evaluate and develop our scrutiny and assurance framework, including independent scrutiny arrangements, also the embedment of learning 	Place Nurse Director

Development Plan continued

Area	Development Plan Action	Safeguarding Partner lead
Scrutiny and Assurance (actions from Independent Review of Children's MARS Local Arrangements)	<p>Recommendations from main report (relating to the breadth of the local arrangements)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the ROTH Approach being used to inform the partnership response, and will it be updated, as that would be further evidence of impact which is an area of interest to the Children's MARS Board? • What is the status of the links to national resources which are provided which are on the website, are there checks in place about the quality of the information, particularly as practitioners may use the website without discussion with managers/supervisors? • Reduce the number of areas of focus, maintain some of them for a longer period of time or have a specific launch or communication • In view of the increasing number of BAME children in education settings, consider whether the Annual School Safeguarding Audit would be enhanced by a question on diversity • There may be schools/provisions which are harder to include in the arrangements and it could be useful to understand the explanation. Consider whether a specific approach is needed with these schools to ensure that they feel that they can contribute to the arrangements • How does the Children's MARS Board assure itself that children's specific needs are identified and that an appropriate response is in place into the future when they have experienced significant loss or bereavement, particularly when that loss has been traumatic? • Reflecting on undertaking this process for some years, the attendance at the sessions is invariably greater by Children's Services. It may be that other ways are available to reach other practitioners from other agencies, for example through a brief online survey. Ensure that the range of agencies includes representation from groups which represent the diversity of the child population 	<p>All</p> <p>Place Nurse Director</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>Director of Children and Families</p>

Development Plan continued

Area	Development Plan Action	Action Lead
Scrutiny and Assurance (actions from Independent review of Children's MARS Local Arrangements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although it was said that Alternative Provision (AP) is included, consider how views from children in AP can be obtained about their experience and whether it prepares them for a return to mainstream education. In view of the recent report from the DfE on children in AP, consider whether the needs of children from diverse communities are being met Consider whether the voice of children and young people could be used more in the role of the independent scrutiny officer Consider how the independent scrutiny officers could ensure that diversity is included in all aspects of their work Given the scale of the changes within the Integrated Care Board, and the intention for minimal impact at local level it could be useful to understand the experience at the multi-agency front line and whether there is also an understanding of the strategic intent of the changes Consider whether the current data on diversity could be extended to include the areas which have been identified as priorities for the year Note whether this escalation (of a different approach by Humberside Police regarding Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referrals and subsequent information received from the National Police Chiefs Council) results in an increase in the number of referrals which are made to the LADO from Humberside Police 	All Place Nurse Director Place Nurse Director Place Nurse Director All Chief Superintendent and South Bank Commander and Director of Children and Families
Responding to key policy drivers: Working Together 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a collaborative response to Working Together 2023 Ensure preparedness for Working Together 2023 to be enacted in 2024, including but not exhaustive the review and refresh of the Children's MARS Arrangements and information sharing agreement(s) Contribute to the refresh of the One Family Approach Practice Model and Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire (threshold document) 	All All All

Glossary

C	<p>Child criminal exploitation (CCE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where a child (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal nature</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Practice Review may be undertaken following identification and agreement that a case meets the criteria of a serious child safeguarding case. It is for the safeguarding partners to determine whether the criteria are met and whether a local child safeguarding practice review is appropriate taking into account that the overall purpose of a review is to identify improvements to practice. In some cases where the definition of a serious child safeguarding case is not met yet there may be issues of importance to the local area, the safeguarding partners may choose to undertake a local child safeguarding practice review</p> <p>Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator</p> <p>A new purpose-built Complex Care Campus which is in development will include bespoke overnight short breaks, residential and transitional provision for children with complex needs and disabilities</p>
I	<p>Integrated Multi-Agency Partnership (IMAP) is a partnership of co-located social work, police, health and education practitioners and supervisors who take contacts and referrals on children where there are safeguarding or protection concerns. They share and analyse information to inform decisions regarding whether a child is in need or in need of protection</p>
M	<p>Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Meeting is a partnership group who work together to improve outcomes for children and young people who are experiencing and/or at risk of child sexual or criminal exploitation</p> <p>Multi-Agency Pre-Birth Liaison and Consultation (MAPLAC) Meeting is a partnership group who have oversight of cases of pregnancy where there may be identified additional vulnerabilities and the family would be likely to benefit from targeted early help at the earliest stage possible</p>
N	<p>Northern Lincolnshire and Goole (NLaG) NHS Foundation Trust is the provider of NHS services through Scunthorpe General Hospital and community services in North Lincolnshire and two other neighbouring local areas</p> <p>Not In Our Community (NIOC) is a campaign developed across the Humberside Police force area that helps young people protect themselves and their friends against grooming and child exploitation</p>
O	<p>The One Family Approach (OFA) aims to create a system that works for all children, young people and families in North Lincolnshire</p>
P	<p>Partnership Integrated Triage (PITSTOP) Meeting is a multi-agency daily triage which considers police information and identifies potential levels of need at the earliest level including any action required</p>

Glossary

P	<p>Parent Involvement and Participation (PIP) Parent Forum is a forum for parents / carers of children with SEND</p>
R	<p>A Rapid Review Is undertaken when the safeguarding partners have agreed that the criteria for a serious child safeguarding case have been met. The Rapid Review enables facts to be gathered, any immediate action to ensure children’s safety to be taken and considers the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Rapid Review assists the safeguarding partners to decide what steps they should take next, including whether or not to undertake a local child safeguarding practice review</p> <p>Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH) is the provider of NHS services and community services in North Lincolnshire</p> <p>Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) As well as risks to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial risks might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These risks can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple risks, including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered</p> <p>Re:Form is a domestic abuse perpetrator programme which aims to manage risk to victims and families, increase safety and reduce incidents thereby improving outcomes around perpetrators being able to sustain non-abusive behaviour</p>
S	<p>@SafeNorthLincs is a partnership social media presence joint between the Children’s MARS Board, Local Safeguarding Adults Board and the Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Section 11 (Children’s Act 2004) places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children</p> <p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is used to describe a child or young person who has a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support</p> <p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) offers information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities</p> <p>Single Point of Contact (SPOC) is the ‘front door’ of children’s social care in North Lincolnshire where help, advice and guidance is provided to families and professionals</p>
Y	<p>The Youth Justice Partnership is North Lincolnshire’s Youth Offending Team</p> <p>Yorkshire and Humber Multi-Agency Safeguarding Trainers (YHMAST) group provides opportunities for learning and development professionals from across the region to come together to ensure the delivery of appropriate and effective safeguarding children training and learning opportunities. The aim of the group is to help improve the quality, consistency and continuity of safeguarding training across the region</p>

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