



Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership

Plan for Children and Young People in Gateshead 2025 - 2027



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What is Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP)?

The government document “Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018” has been the document that all partnerships across England and Wales has used to develop local arrangements – these are known as Multi-Agency Safeguarding arrangements (MASA for short). The government document outlines legal requirements and government guidance in relation to how we should work locally to keep children safe. In each area the police, integrated care board (ICB) and local authority are jointly responsible for ensuring that the legal requirements and guidance within this document are used to develop strong ways of working that protect and promote the welfare of children, make sure that local services are effective, that we listen to children and young people’s views and use this to develop practice, and we consider what has worked well and what could be done differently through reviewing and learning from what we do. The document further advises other agencies and organisations of their responsibility to consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their work, and, to work with the police, integrated care board and local authority as a partnership. This includes schools, colleges and other education providers have a key role in safeguarding children too.

In Gateshead we have written our [MASA arrangements](#) and they are published on our GSCP website. Our MASA document sets out how we ensure that we use the legal requirements and national guidance to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Gateshead.

We have also published our [Annual Report](#) that highlights some of our achievements over 2023/2024.

During 2023/24 we have used the above information to keep up to date with what is required nationally, as well as developing what we agree is required in Gateshead. In December 2023 the government published an updated version of the document “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023”. The latest version provides new guidance and we are working through the changes and will publish an updated MASA document on our website in December 2024 that will outline some new ways of working. Any new changes will only strengthen our work to keep children safe.

Our safeguarding arrangements are designed to offer us the chance to work more effectively and with joint purpose to protect children and young people and support those who most need our help into adulthood.

Foreword by Statutory Partners

Welcome to the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) Plan for 2025 - 2027.

As the three statutory safeguarding partners (Gateshead Council, Northumbria Police and the Northeast and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board), we have a joint and equal duty to make arrangements to work together as a team to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Gateshead; and include and develop the role of wider local organisations and agencies in the process.

The GSCP is a multi-agency partnership in which colleagues from different organisations work together to deliver out statutory duties outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. As a partnership undertake activity to understand what impacts the safeguarding of children and young people in our area, what needs to be done, how we can work together to deliver positive change and monitor that our work makes a difference.

This plan sets out how we will work together, and with partners, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people in Gateshead over the course of 2025 - 2027.

Our dedication and commitment to collectively work together to safeguard children and young people in Gateshead is unwavering. We have governance structures in place that ensure we have oversight of agreed priorities, and mechanisms to challenge the progress of these.

We remain agile in our work plans to respond to new challenges or directions of policy alongside our planned work programme. We believe this is a great strength within our partnership approach to keep children safe.



Sharon Chatterton

Chief Superintendent - Northumbria
Police Area Commander for
Gateshead
Northumbria Police



Helen Fergusson

Strategic Director Children's
Services and Lifelong Learning
Gateshead Council



Richard Scott

Director of Nursing (North)
North East & North Cumbria
Integrated Care Board

Our Shared Vision

Our shared vision is that through our collaborative approach we:

Ensure that children and young people in Gateshead:

- Are protected from harm
- Experience improved outcomes across all levels of need and types of harm
- Receive a prompt, appropriate and effective response if they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, ensuring that they are protected and supported

As a partnership we will do this by:

- Promoting and embedding a learning culture that support our services to become more reflective and implement change to practice
- Having a good knowledge and understanding about the quality of practice and the impact of children and families
- Challenging the effectiveness of our arrangements, organisations and agencies appropriately and hold each other to account
- Listening to and acting upon information provided to us by children and families in relation to their lived experience and use this to shape practice
- Using practitioner knowledge and insights from performance information to provide a greater understanding of the areas of strength and/or improvements needed within arrangements and/or practice
- Seeking information, analysing, sharing and breaking down protected characteristics to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families, and understand outcomes for different communities of children
- Collating, sharing and analysing performance information to enable early identification of new safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats and co-ordinate a joined-up approach across relevant agencies

Our Shared Responsibility:

“Nothing is more important than children’s welfare. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support. This requires individuals, agencies, and organisations to be clear about their own and each other’s roles and responsibilities, and how they work together.” Working Together 2023

As the three statutory partners we have a joint and equal responsibility to make arrangements in Gateshead, together with our wider organisations and partners. As the strategic leads we are required to deliver successful outcomes for children and this depends on the existence of strong partnership working between parent and carers, children and young people and the practitioners and organisations working with them. We know that strong, collaborative leadership and timely decision-making are crucial to the effectiveness of multi-agency working and to identify and address system issues. There is a strong focus on how we work with children and their families using our restorative and relational practice model. This is a whole system, whole city approach promoting relational working, which places children at the centre of everything we do. Gateshead’s systemic and strengths-based approach recognises the interconnectedness of trauma-informed practice and narrative writing. There is a commitment to empower children and families, enabling them to thrive within their communities. Collaboration between partners is fundamental for a meaningful positive impact. Our practitioners take a child-centred approach which prioritises the voices of children and young people.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (Working Together) is the multi agency statutory guidance that sets out expectations for the systems, processes and ways people work together to help, support and protect children and their families. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework

Our Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) explains our local arrangements and can be accessed [here](#)

Setting the context: About Gateshead

- Total population of 196,100 split into 22 wards which are divided into four areas – Central, East, South and West.
- 39,784 children (0-17) live in Gateshead and 16,653 young adults (18-25).
- Gateshead is a borough of contrasts. It has a large urban hub centred around the main town centre area , with a number of smaller urban centres and busy employment areas.
- Around two thirds of the borough is rural with numerous small settlements such as Kibblesworth, Sunnyside, Chopwell and High Spennings.
- Gateshead is ranked 47th most deprived out of 317 local authority areas in England. Within the borough there are 21 areas which fall within the 10% most deprived areas in England, equating to almost 32,700 people or 16% of the population of Gateshead.
- Much of this deprivation is based within the central and eastern urban areas of the borough.
- 31% of our residents live in the 20% most deprived areas in England, 38.6% of children living in poverty.
- There has been a 7.5 % decrease of children under 16 who live in relative poverty but this figures remains 19.6% with the proportion of children entitled to free school meals being 29.06%
- Different levels of health inequality with life expectancy varying depending upon where you live in the borough.
- 17.48% of pupils in Gateshead schools (of which there are 93) identify as having a minority ethnic background. The single largest ethnic group (after white British) is white Eastern European, followed by other ethnic group and then mixed white and Asian. Languages other than English are spoken as a first language by 11.64% (3243) of pupils
- There has been a 7.5 % decrease of children under 16 who live in relative poverty but this figures remains 19.6% with the proportion of children entitled to free school meals being 29.06%.
- Whilst the total percentage number of children young people in relation to the overall population has reduced over recent years (now 28% of the whole population) the demand for services to support children and young people has increased.
- In relation to crime, Gateshead is one of the safest places in England and Wales with a third lowest crime rate amongst fourteen statistical neighbours.
- Recorded crime in Gateshead is slowly increasing and there is a higher than average rate of domestic homicide and drug-related deaths.

Support to Children and Families

Children's Services in Gateshead - the current situation

Total number of young people under 18 in Gateshead
39784



ONS Mid Year Population estimates (0-17, 2023)

6.5%



from ethnic minority communities



Children on a child protection plan



493
children in care



7920

Children on Free School Meals

School Census (October 2024)

19.6% Local Children



aged U16 in relative low income families (Child Poverty)

Local Authority, FYE 2022/23 (DWP Children in low income families statistics)

1924

Children with an EHCP
(Active EHCP as at December 2024)



3848

School age children overall with SEN support

School Census (October 2024)



98% of good or better schools

(State funded schools as at January 2024)



25
First time entrants to YJS

(Period April to December 2024)

655

Children in receipt of early help



1406

Children in need



347

Care experienced young people

251

Children with a disability



What children tell us is important to them

Nationally children have said that they need in relation to safeguarding:

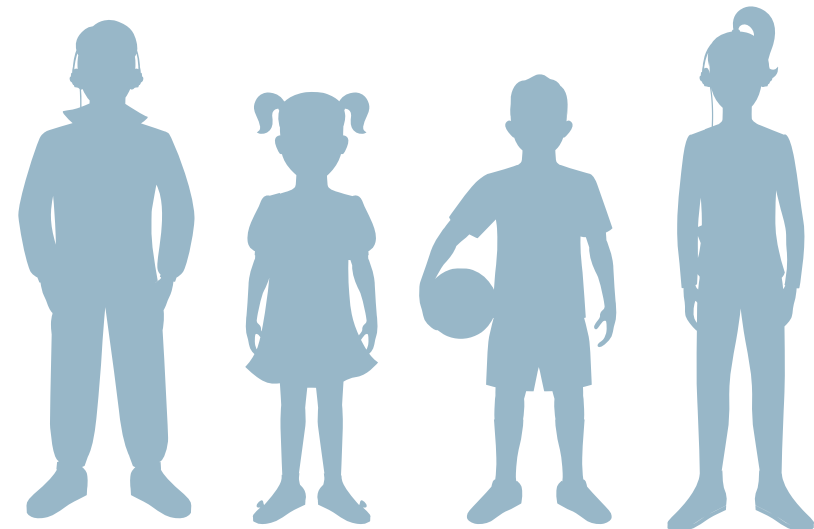
- **Vigilance** – to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and action** – to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- **Stability** – to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **Respect** – to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **Information and Engagement** – to be informed about, and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **Explanation** – to be informed of the outcome of assessments, and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **Support** – to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **Advocacy** – to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **Protection** – to be protected against all forms of abuse, exploitation and discrimination, and the right to special protection and help if a refugee

Working Together 2023

The views, experiences and wishes of children and Young People in Gateshead have underpinned this plan and formed the basis for the priorities.

Children and Young People in Gateshead have told us that they:

- Want to feel safer. This includes the importance of having safer spaces to socialise in and feeling safe in school, as well as online
- Are worried about crime with a particular concern about knife crime or the fear of this and feeling safe after dark.
- Feel that there is a lack of accessible mental health services to support with emotional wellbeing.
- Are concerned about the effects of poverty on families and services.



Strategic Priorities for 2025 - 2027

As a partnership we gather information and intelligence that tells us about our children, young people, their families and carers across Gateshead and we use this to ensure that we keep children and young people safe from harm. We use information to help us understand the diverse needs of our communities, and the need for us to be flexible to meet those different needs to ensure that all children and young people are protected and supported.

We work with wider partnerships and organisations across Gateshead to ensure that we have a whole system approach to keeping children safe. Importantly, we consult with children, young people and families, and seek feedback from practitioners who work with children, young people and families and we use the information provided to identify what is important to prioritise and to help us shape our work.

We analyse our information to check what we are doing well, identify aspects of safeguarding that require increased focus, how well we work together and to identify any issues that might impact on children and young people in Gateshead

As a result of this cycle of work we have identified the following as areas of particular focus for 2025 – 2026. The priorities, programme and activities are set out in this plan and include how we will measure impact. There are other activities and workstreams that will also deliver outcomes relating to this work. Some of these are described within the plan, others are not specifically referenced but will be reviewed by the partnership as part of any outcome updates.

Our Priorities for 2025 - 2027

- Strengthening the effectiveness of multi-agency practice relating to child protection
- Strengthening practitioner awareness and responsiveness to children and young people who suffer from Neglect
- Reducing the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people and protecting them from harm
- Reducing the fear of knife crime and involvement in serious youth violence.
- Improving the mental health of children and young people who are in need of protection from harm



Strengthening the effectiveness of multi-agency practice relating to child protection – shaping our actions

Our utmost priority, as a partnership, is to ensure we keep children and young people safe from harm.

“Nothing is more important than children’s welfare. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support” (Working Together 2023)”

What we know:

- Contacts and referral received by IRT - 6155
- Referrals received by CSC – 1689. Repeat referrals - 18.0%
- Section 47s initiated - 649
- Children in receipt of Early Help - 947 (as at March 2024)
- Children in need – 792 (as at March 2024)
- Number on Child Protection Plans – 238
- Those on Child Protection Plans for a second or subsequent time – 21%
- Children in care - 528
- Children who were a victim of ‘violence against the person’ - 436
- Increase in child sexual offences of 37% across Gateshead (+ 52 offences) when comparing 2023/24 to 2024/25 figures.
- Overall School Attendance is 92.5%; Permanent Exclusions - 0.12 per 100 pupils; Suspensions – 10.49 per 100 pupils
- Number of those Electively Home Educated - 364
- Number of exploitation records linked to child sexual exploitation – 36
- Number of missing episodes involving children and young people - 942 (332 children). Those involving Looked After Children - 486 (106 children) (July 2023 – August 2024)
- Number of allegations referred to LADO - 287 enquiries, 122 referrals and 31 allegation management meetings.

(Data is for April 2023 – March 2024 unless otherwise stated)

Strengthening the effectiveness of **multi-agency practice** relating to child protection – action we will take

We Will:

- Ensure that children and young people have strong and healthy relationships, where possible within families, supported by wider family networks
- Provide a prompt, appropriate and effective response to children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, ensuring they are protected and supported
- Enable children and young people to feel and be safe from harm within their communities and on-line (including threats and harm from exploitation and violence, peer pressure and bullying).
- Ensure that where additional vulnerabilities are identified in children and young people who are in need of protection that we recognise this and provide the right support to meet their needs (including SEND and potential risks through non-school attendance)

We will deliver this by:

- Developing a multi-agency performance framework that evidences improved outcomes across all levels of need and types of harm.
- Strengthen our partnership approach relating to all forms of neglect including through focused work on practice models and toolkits for practitioners.
- Embedding our partnership approach to the identification of risk and support to children and young people in relation to harm outside the home.
- Working with education settings and families across Gateshead to increase awareness of online risks and measures to stay safe.
- Ensuring we have a partnership approach to helping more children and young people who present with challenges to attending school.
- Review the [Threshold, Indicators of Need Document](#).

We will evidence this has made a positive difference through

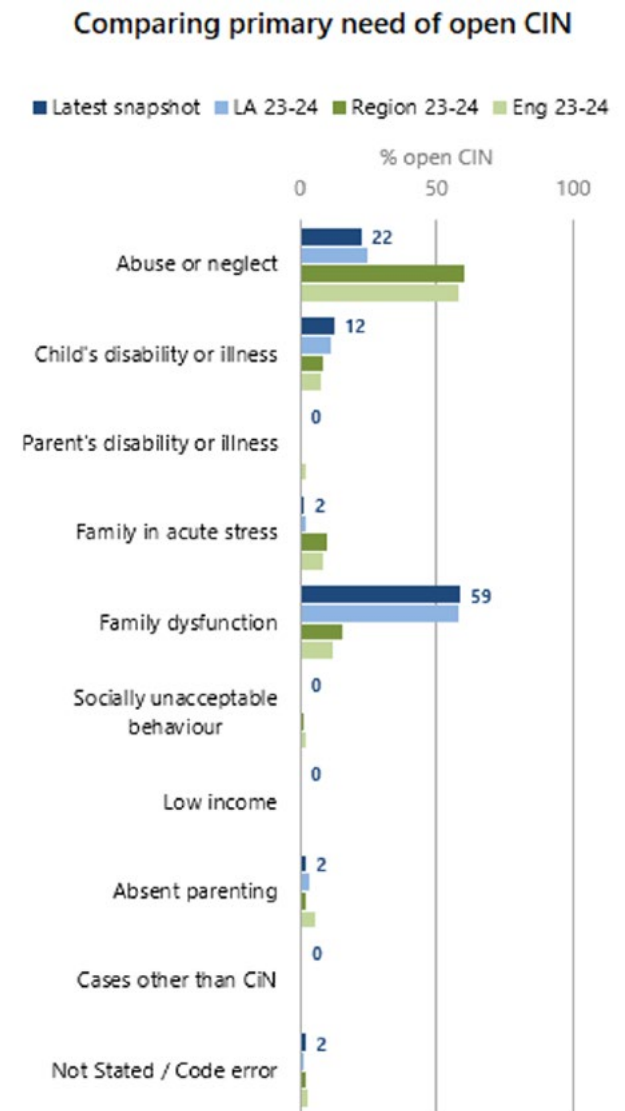
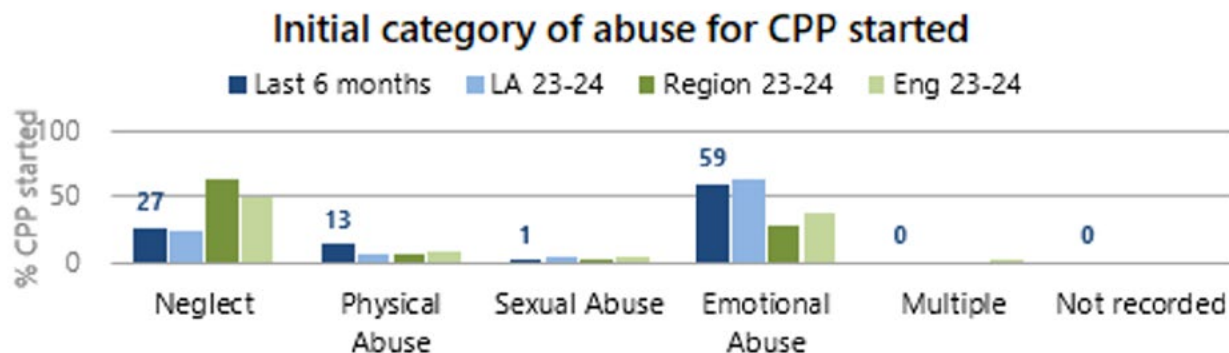
- Seeing increasing levels of children and young people feeling and being safe within communities and on-line.
- Our information evidencing that children, young people and families are receiving the right support at the right time with children who are in need of protection from harm receiving a prompt response.
- Reducing the numbers of children and young people who are not attending school
- Increasing the number of children and young people who we know are at risk of or subject to exploitation, reducing risk levels, increasing disruption activity and the number of perpetrators identified and dealt with.

Strengthening practitioner awareness and responsiveness to children and young people who suffer from **Neglect** – shaping our actions

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- provide suitable education

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)



What we know:

- The number Early Help Assessments completed due to concerns about neglect. – 91 families comprising 198 children were assessed between 01/04/23 and 31/03/24 where the reasons for assessment were Parenting Capacity and/or Financial Stability
- The percentage of referrals to children's social care where the primary concern is child neglect and the proportion that progress to statutory assessment - 8.2% of referrals to Children's social care had a primary concern of Neglect and of those 98.5% progressed to statutory assessment.
- The number of repeat referrals (within 2 years) to children's social care due to concerns about neglect – 38 repeat referrals (Neglect here is based on the DFE primary need category, N1 Abuse or neglect)
- The number of children on child protection plans due to concerns about neglect. - Number of children starting on CP Plan with neglect as concern during April 2023 to March 2024 = 81 (source – DFE CIN Census)
- Numbers of persistent absentees from school – 5893 persistent absence a rate of 22.56% (23/24 academic year)

Strengthen practitioner awareness and responsiveness to children and young people who sufferer from **Neglect** - action we will take

We Will:

- Recognise signs of neglect and how this differs from Emotional Abuse.
- Understand the crossover of need between Neglect, Emotional, Physical and sexual harm.
- Develop a shared multi agency understanding on how we identify early signs of neglect and intervene early
- Develop a shared model to assess and respond to neglect.
- Strengthen the confidence and abilities of our practitioners to respond holistically to child and their families around Neglect.
- Strengthen the voices of our children and families within care planning and family networks to reduce the impact of Neglect.

We will deliver this by:

- Deep dive of performance information and create a multi agency score-card on neglect
- Multi Agency Audit to have a shared baseline on our local picture in Gateshead.
- Seek the feedback from practitioners around what does it look like in practice and are we applying consistency with thresholds.
- Co- Production form the lived experience of our children and their families top inform the following-
- Developing a Neglect strategy.
- Developing a workforce development approach including a Neglect Toolkit with consistent tools and interventions to track impact for children and young people. (i.e. a home conditions checklist – HEAT Assessment)

We will evidence this has made a positive difference through

- We will be able to measure performance information indicating change in culture across the multi agency partnership within Gateshead where children will receive the right interventions at the earliest opportunity to reduce their experience of living in neglectful situations.
- There will be a common language and response to our families who suffer from Neglect. With advice, guidance and evidence-based tools to minimise the impact of Neglect upon children and their families.
- Increased uptake in universal services, Family Hubs and earlier interventions to minimise the number of children who experience neglect and who require social work intervention.

Reducing the impact of **domestic abuse** on children and young people and protecting them from harm – shaping our actions

“We know that children who witness domestic abuse are at risk of both short and long-term physical and mental health problems. Every child will be affected differently to the trauma of domestic abuse. Since the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children that have been exposed to domestic abuse are now recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right” Barnardo’s website 2024

What we know:

- Domestic incidents to Northumbria Police increased by 5% (October 2022 – September 2023)
- Referrals made to Gateshead’ Council’s Domestic Abuse Team (DAT) - 2040 (approximately 1.9 referrals for each victim)
- Domestic Abuse referrals made to DAT which involved children and young people - 1553 referrals (67.7%)
- Children and young people were linked to adults supported by (DAT) - 432
- Police number of incidents of domestic abuse where children involved/present – 38.2% (in 2023)
- Children/young people also involved with Children’s Social Care or Early Help at the start of DAT intervention - 215
- 16-17 year olds who were a DA victim - 38. This is 2% of all victims.
- Referrals received by Gateshead MARAC involved a victim aged 16 or 17 – 1.0% in 2023
- Referrals received by Children’s Social Care for children aged 16 and 17 years old where domestic abuse has been a factor - 24.
- Operation Encompass reports to Children’s Social Services where schools had concerns about domestic abuse related to children in their settings - 1,742 (October 2022 – September 2023)
- Those presenting as homeless ‘as a result of domestic abuse’ - is just above 20% of all homelessness cases; of these, the number of cases involving children, is around 50%. This is noticeably higher than the percentage of domestic abuse incidents involving children that are reported to the Police.

(Data is for April 2023 – March 2024 unless otherwise stated)

Reducing the impact of **domestic abuse** on children and young people and protecting them from harm – action we will take

We Will:

- Ensure that children and young people in need of protection from harm caused by domestic abuse receive targeted and effective trauma informed support.
- Ensure that violence against women and girls is a focused priority.
- Strengthening the involvement of children and young people's in shaping strategic work.
- Support the delivery of Gateshead Council's strategic review recommendations relating to domestic abuse, with greater emphasis on preventing harm to children and young people.
- Support the delivery of the Gateshead Domestic Abuse strategy with a focus on reducing the impact on children and young people, increasing the support package that ensures prompt, appropriate and effective targeted support is available for all children and young people who need it.

We will deliver this by:

- Working with the Gateshead Domestic Abuse Partnership relating to actions within the strategic review and domestic abuse strategy.
- Undertaking a systematic approach to risk assessment tools for use where children are identified as experiencing harm caused by domestic abuse (from point of referral, through assessment and child protection plans).
- Focusing work across all partners relating to work with perpetrators and eliminating victim blaming language.
- Reviewing Operation Encompass in relation to evidencing impact and positive outcomes to children and young people
- Strengthening the knowledge and awareness across the partnership of the impact to children and young people and promote the partnership approach and support available.

We will evidence this has made a positive difference through

- An increase in the number of children and young people being provided specialist support (directly or as part of a household)
- Greater understanding of the impact of and positive outcomes that Operation Encompass delivers.
- Reducing the number of children and young people who are repeat victims of domestic abuse and violence.

Reducing the fear of knife crime and involvement in serious youth violence – shaping our actions

The World Health Organisation defines serious violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”

The governance for reducing serious violent crime is through Safer Gateshead, in line with the Serious Violence Duty. GSCP will work with Safer Gateshead and the Gateshead Youth Justice Board in relation to serious youth violence, fear of violence and knife crime.

What we know:

The Northumbria Serious Violence Response Strategy 2024 – 2029 tells us that:

- Serious Violence includes homicide, attempt murder, rape, sexual assault, robbery and assault with injury.
- One third of serious violence in Northumbria Police area is domestic abuse related.
- Young people mostly feel safe during the day but this drops significantly after dark due to seeing gang activity or large group gatherings, alcohol and drugs, unlit areas, anti-social behaviour and fear of other young people carrying knives.

In Gateshead during 2023:

- Serious violence has increased in Gateshead by 6% with incidents of knife-enabled serious violence increasing by 12%
- Most violent crime is violence without injury (pushing and shoving)
- Much of the violence in Gateshead involves men aged 25 – 45 (both victims and those perpetrating violence)
- There were 18 hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object
- There were 168 robberies (47 knife related)

Reducing the fear of knife crime and involvement in **serious youth violence** – actions we will take

We Will:

- Increase children and young people's knowledge of risks and how to keep safe from harm relating to knife crime, exploitation, county lines, drugs, alcohol, vulnerability, online safety and peer pressure.
- Enable children and young people to feel safe in their communities and on-line.
- Work with Safer Gateshead in relation to the Safer Gateshead Partnership Plan 2024 - 2026
- Work with the Youth Justice Board in relation to the Youth Justice Strategic Plan
- Work with the Violence Reduction Unit in relation to the Serious Violence Response Strategy 2024 – 2029
- Safeguard vulnerable children and young people from the impact of hate crime

We will deliver this by:

- Develop collaboration and assurance reporting mechanisms across and between wider partnership/boards relating to oversight of serious youth violence and knife crime in Gateshead.
- Working with children, young people and our education settings in relation to increasing knowledge and awareness.
- Reviewing our multi-agency approach and practice relating to CAPVA (Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse) ensuring that children, young people and parent/carers receive prompt and targeted support).
- Developing clear pathways of early intervention and support for any young person found carrying a knife

We will evidence this has made a positive difference through

- Our information evidencing that we have reduced the fear of violent and knife crime within children and young people in Gateshead
- Reducing the number of children and young people involved in serious youth violence or knife related crime.
- Reducing the number of children and young people attending hospital for assault and/or non-accidental knife injuries.
- The number of proven serious youth violent offences and the proportion of proven serious youth violence offences as a proportion of total offences (a key performance indicator for the Youth Justice Board)
- Preventing the escalation of harm.

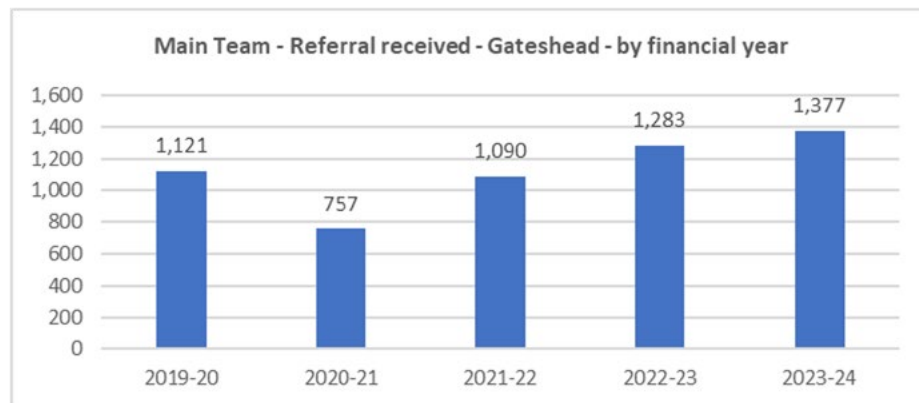
Improving the **mental health** of children and young people who are in need of protection from harm – shaping our actions

The Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Strategy vision is for “Good jobs, homes, health and friends”, a place where everyone thrives and aims to deliver the most positive outcomes for everyone. Priorities for children, young people and families include addressing inequalities, reducing the differences in children’s access to positive experiences in early life and eradicating adverse childhood experiences.

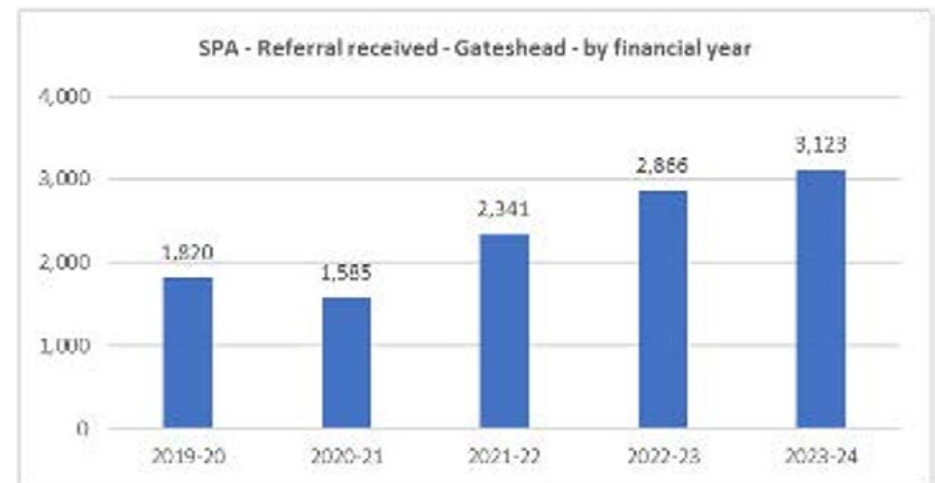
The Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Transformation Plan 2023 – 2024 is the local plan focused on improving access to help and support when needed and improve how children and young people’s mental health services are organised, commissioned and provided. The vision being to enable every child and young person with mental health needs to achieve their goals and life potential and improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children , young people and families, who will thrive through access to the right support at the right time in the right place.

What we know:

- Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (10-14 years) 2022/23: Count: 65; Rate: 564.2 per 100,000
- Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (15-19 years) 2022/23: Count: 60; Rate: 548.9 per 100,000



Number of referrals into CNTW CYPS from April 2019 - March 2024



Number of referrals into SPA from April 2019 - March 2024

Improving the **mental health** of children and young people who are in need of protection from harm – action we will take

We Will:

- Intervene early to support children's emotional wellbeing and prevent need escalating
- Ensure that children and young people in need of protection from harm are able to access prompt, appropriate and effective support that improves outcomes across all levels of need.
- Ensure that the most vulnerable children with the most complex needs gets the bespoke support they need
- Work with the Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board in relation to Priority Four – children's and young people's mental health.
- Support action in relation to the priorities outlined within the The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Transformation Plan 2023 – 2024

We will deliver this by:

- Developing collaboration and assurance reporting mechanisms across and between wider partnership/boards relating to oversight of mental health of children and young people who are in need of protection from harm in Gateshead.
- Supporting the development of clear pathways to support services that are understood by children, young people and families and embedded into practice.
- Working with services who support parents with mental health needs to ensure the children are well supported and where appropriate identified as young carers

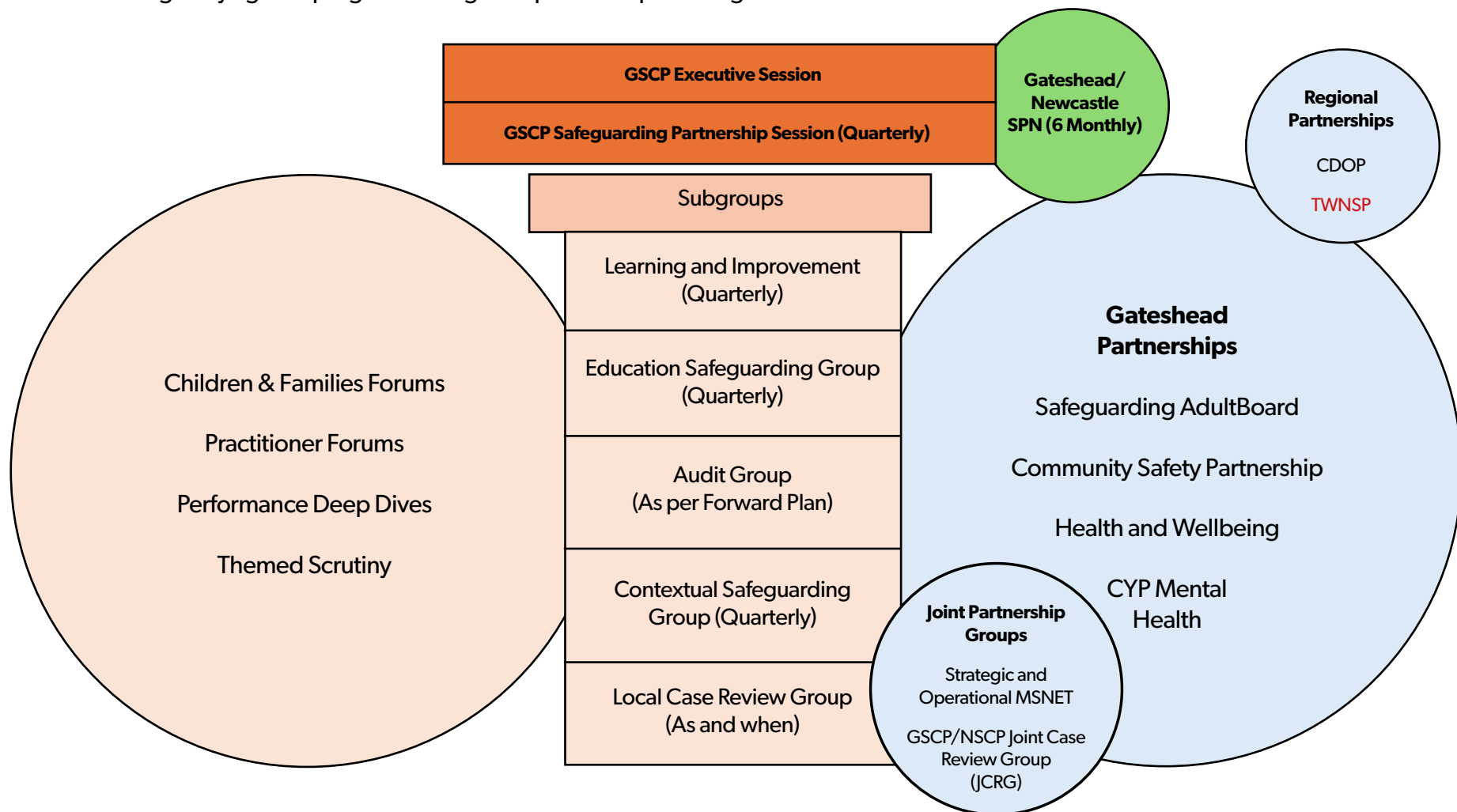
We will evidence this has made a positive difference through

- Our information evidence an improvement in the emotional wellbeing and mental health of all children and young people who are in need of protection from harm.
- The development of a multi-agency "Think Family" approach to the mental health needs of all children and young people in need of protection from harm that provides early intervention and meets the needs of children and young people, parents and carers.
- All children, young people and their families have access to local mental health support based upon the best available evidence and provided by practitioners with an appropriate range of skills and competencies.

GSCP Governance:

The diagram below sets out the structure of the partnership groups that will oversee and support the delivery of the GSCP Plan.

A multi-agency delivery plan is used to track delivery of the work in relation to the priorities together with any national or local emerging issues. This is reviewed regularly against progress through the partnership meeting structure.

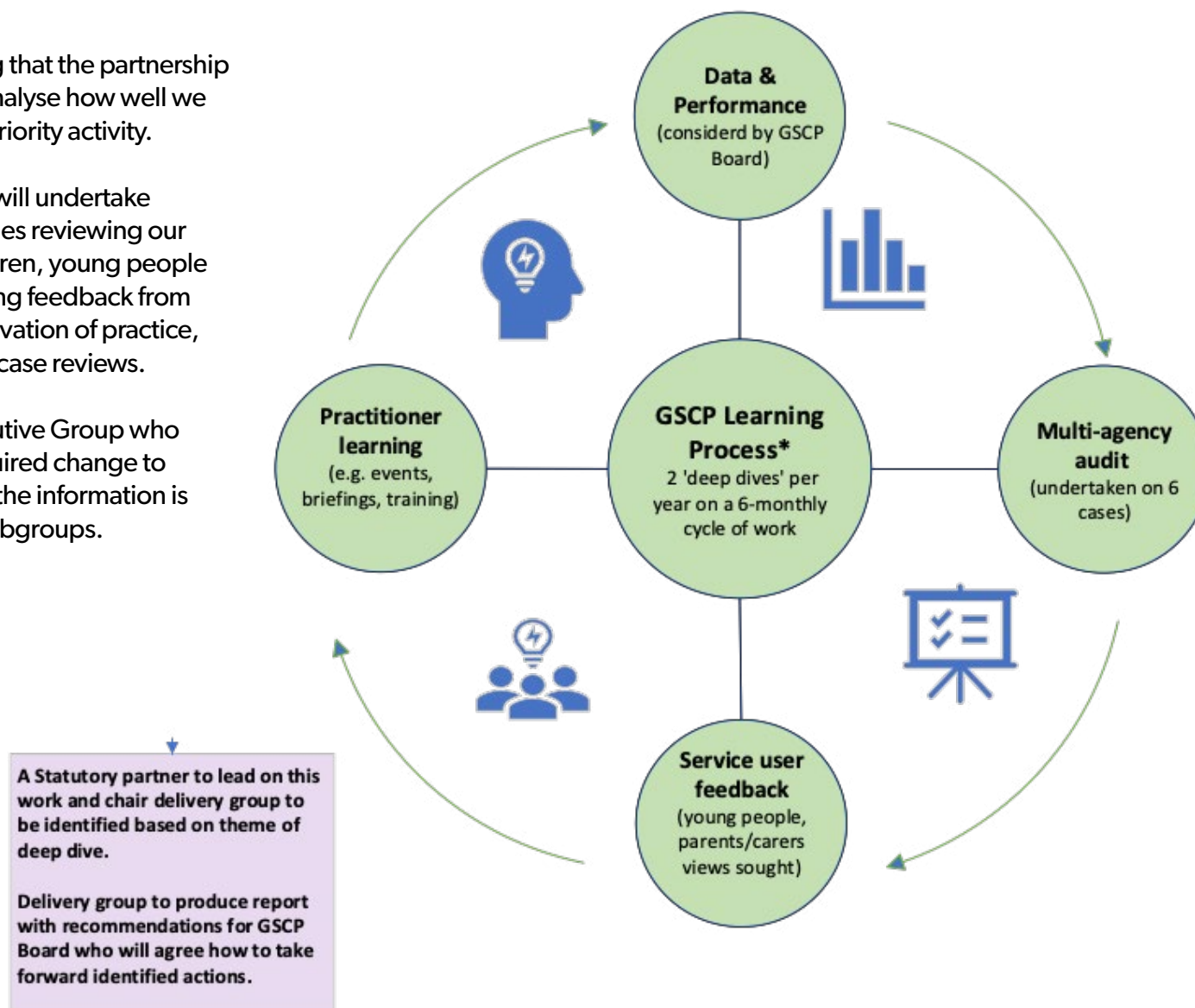


GSCP Scrutiny, Assurance and Learning Cycle:

The diagram sets out the cycle of learning that the partnership uses to gather information, review and analyse how well we are working in relation to our identified priority activity.

Over the course of the business plan we will undertake scrutiny and assurance activity that includes reviewing our policy and practice; consulting with children, young people and families with lived experience; seeking feedback from practitioners in relation to practice, observation of practice, multi-agency audit activity learning from case reviews.

This workstream is overseen by the Executive Group who utilise the findings to implement any required change to strengthen practice, and where relevant the information is shared with the wider partnership and subgroups.



GSCP Scrutiny, Assurance and Learning Cycle:

In Gateshead an Independent Scrutineer has been appointed to provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with rigorous, effective support and challenge at both strategic and operational level. The role supports the partnership drive for continuous improvement and assurance that arrangements work effectively for children, families and practitioners and adds value to the work of the partnership. This role contributes to a wider system of assurance and accountability including:

- Assurance and accountability action undertaken at the request of the three statutory safeguarding partners
- Wider partnership activity (such as quality assurance, performance management and learning frameworks)
- Independent inspectorate inspections

Our Independent Scrutineer has reviewed areas for focused scrutiny to be delivered from January 2025 onwards. Prioritisation of these proposed areas will be agreed with the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP) Group, through the period of this strategic plan. Although these areas are proposed, the DSP Group together with the Independent Scrutineer can select any additional areas for scrutiny as they arise. Scrutiny work includes seeking assurance of involvement and influence from children, young people, wider families and practitioners in shaping the work of the partnership.

Areas of scrutiny April 2025 onwards are agreed through the DSP Group but include the following:

- Leadership
- Engagement with Relevant Agencies
- Outcomes for Children and Young People
- Learning and Development
- Assurance activity in relation to the work of the partnership and strategic priorities with children, young people families and practitioners
- Assurance Activity relating to the Strategic Priorities
- Other Activity as agreed between the LSP/DSP and Scrutineer
- Learning from National and Local Reviews
- Quality Assurance and Information Sharing

Strengthening our Partnership

– Additional Areas of Focus:

Across the priorities there will be a focus on activity relating to:

- Embedding Working Together 2023
- Involvement of Children, Young People and Families to influence the work of the partnership
- Effective Information Sharing
- Strengthening our learning, development and training accessibility across the wider partnership
- Measuring and Evidencing Positive Impact and Outcomes
- Strengthening Partnership Communication
- Being Professionally Curious

In addition to our strategic priorities the partnership will undertake work on other aspects of safeguarding (including scrutiny and assurance activity) relating to the following:

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Exploitation and County Lines

Other partnership activities and workstreams exist that additionally deliver outcomes relating to our work and our work with wider partnerships and boards in relation to cross-cutting safeguarding issues. Some of these are described within our plan, others whilst not specifically referenced are overseen and reviewed through our partnership governance arrangements.

Interdependencies with Wider Partnerships and Boards:

TWNSP (Tyne Wear and Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership):

- Electively Home Educated (EHE) – reviewing regional approaches
- Training and Learning – collaboration across the region
- Performance Framework – developing a regional scorecard

[Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[Safer Gateshead Partnership Plan 2024 – 2026](#)

[Gateshead Domestic Abuse Strategy](#)

[Northumbria Serious Violence Response Strategy 2024 – 2029](#)

[Northumbria Police Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) Delivery Plan 2023 - 2025](#)

[Gateshead Children and Young Peoples Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan](#)

[Gateshead Youth Justice Service Plan](#)

[Child Death Overview Panel \(CDOP\)](#)

Cross cutting themes:

GSCP is involved in aspects of safeguarding that we work with together with other partnerships and boards at both local and regional level (see GSCP Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements MASA for full details).

In addition to priorities already referenced, the below are some key areas of cross cutting work:

Contextual Safeguarding – contextual safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding that recognises harm outside of the home, quite different to traditional safeguarding practice. A team has been established within Gateshead Council Children's Services and works with young people at risk of exploitation and their families. A key part of contextual safeguarding is to identify the places and spaces in communities where young people may be at risk and put plans in place to try to mitigate those risks.

Exploitation (both children and adults) – this takes many forms including criminal and sexual exploitation, county lines, modern day slavery and human trafficking. The co-ordination of activity links to the safeguarding children and adult partnerships but also to youth justice, community safety and health and wellbeing board. The workstreams in relation to exploitation are referenced in plans relating to all the partnerships and boards. We collaborate and co-ordinate this activity and ensure we work together to ensure effectiveness at protecting people from harm and targeting those who perpetrate harm.

Emerging Areas of Business – we work together on other safeguarding aspects and activities that are not specifically referenced within this plan, at local, regional and national level. We remain responsive to new and emerging issues and concerns and will work together where relevant in addressing these as they emerge.

Health in All Policies – the priorities we have outlined all are interlinked to supporting children, young people and families in relation to aspects that include physical and mental health. The GSCP is part of a wider strategic network of partnerships, boards and individual organisations and we will work with Public Health, ICB and Commissioned Services to ensure that public health is a key part of activity relating to safeguarding children, young people and their families in Gateshead.

Consultation with Children, Young People and Families – we will work together on seeking feedback from children, young people and families, and wider communities across Gateshead. We will undertake GSCP specific activity but we will also use information from other partnerships, boards and organisations to assist in shaping our work.

Feedback from Practitioners – will will work together on seeking feedback from practitioners across partnerships and organisations in Gateshead. We will undertake GSCP specific activity but we will also use wider information to assist in shaping our work.

Our Plan on a Page

Vision

- Ensure that Children and Young People in Gateshead are:
- Are protected from harm
- Experience improved outcomes across all levels of need and types of harm
- Receive a prompt, appropriate and effective response if they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, ensuring that they are protected and supported

Priorities

- Strengthening the effectiveness of multi-agency practice relating to child protection
- Strengthening practitioner awareness and responsiveness to children and young people who suffer from Neglect
- Reducing the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people and protecting them from harm
- Reducing the fear of knife crime and involvement in serious youth violence
- Improving the mental health of children and young people who are in need of protection from harm

Strengthening Our Partnership

Across the priorities there will be a focus on activity relating to:

- Embedding Working Together 2023
- Involvement of Children, Young People and Families to influence the work of the partnership
- Effective Information Sharing
- Strengthening our learning, development and training accessibility across the wider partnership
- Measuring and Evidencing Positive Impact and Outcomes
- Strengthening Partnership Communication
- Being Professionally Curious

In addition to our strategic priorities the partnership will undertake work on other aspects of safeguarding (including scrutiny and assurance activity) relating to the following:

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Exploitation and County Lines

Partnership Principles and Ambitions

- Promoting and embedding a learning culture that support our services to become more reflective and implement change to practice
- Having a good knowledge and understanding about the quality of practice and the impact of children and families
- Challenging the effectiveness of our arrangements, organisations and agencies appropriately and hold each other to account
- Listening to and acting upon information provided to us by children and families in relation to their lived experience and use this to shape practice
- Using practitioner knowledge and insights from performance information to provide a greater understanding of the areas of strength and/or improvements needed within arrangements and/or practice
- Seeking information, analysing, sharing and breaking down protected characteristics to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families, and understand outcomes for different communities of children
- Collating, sharing and analysing performance information to enable early identification of new safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats and co-ordinate a joined-up approach across relevant agencies