



SSCB ANNUAL REPORT

April 2018 – March 2019

**Safeguarding and promoting the
welfare of children and young people
in Sunderland**

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1. Foreword by Independent Chair

It has been a privilege to have chaired Sunderland's Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) for my second year. The Board brings together representatives from all the agencies which work to keep children safe in Sunderland. 2018-19 saw the Board settle comfortably into our new more streamlined arrangements; with strong senior engagement of all partners in strategic discussions at the Board, and ever-increasing levels of collaborative working within the Programme Boards.

It is important for us to have a clear picture of how safe children are within Sunderland, and we gather our information in a variety of ways. We have boosted our consultation directly with children this year, who have expressed clearly the areas where they continue to have anxieties. They do not always feel safe on the streets; they are concerned about online safety, and they want support in developing healthy relationships.

We also undertake regular multi-agency audits in areas of potential concern, set out in section 7, which allows us to dive deep into topics that may have been highlighted from our performance data or from individual case reviews.

We have been strengthening our analysis of performance data from across the agencies. The data shown in section 7 highlights how the levels of child protection activity tend to be high in Sunderland – we receive more referrals than many comparable areas, place more children on child protection plans, and look after more children. Data, however, is always fallible – the gap between Sunderland's data and those of our comparator authorities is not as wide as it appears, since our data shows some rises in our numbers in the last year, whilst not yet capturing mainly larger rises in our comparators.

Throughout the year TFC has been the subject of monitoring visits from Ofsted, to check on progress since the very critical inspection of 2015. Each report has been broadly positive, and the Board has worked with TFC to take forward any new issues identified by Ofsted. We have also contributed to the Improvement Board that was established to oversee progress, which has

been chaired by a Commissioner, Nick Whitfield, appointed by the Department for Education. The Improvement Board has charted steady positive progress, and a "deep dive" study commissioned by the Improvement Board was very positive about the work of the SSCB.

I reported last year on Ofsted's re-inspection of TFC, which reported in July 2018. That report showed improvement in 3 out of 5 of the areas monitored – adoption performance in particular was graded as "good". However, the overall grading just failed to lift children's services over the bar, and the overall grading remained as "inadequate". Amongst other things this report highlighted the potential difference between positive judgements made during 5 monitoring visits, and more critical judgements within a full inspection. During the course of 2018-19, the monitoring visits have produced a variety of conclusions, all of which the Board reviews. Together for Children has a Quality Improvement Committee on which I sit. As Chapter 14 of this report sets out, other partners who have also been inspected during the year have largely received positive reports.

Boards across the country have been responding to the recent Children and Social Work Act, changing the legal requirements for safeguarding. Our new arrangements, which take effect from August 2019, are now published; on the surface, much of the structure remains the same, but increasingly we are working closely with partners across the Northumbria region to ensure that safeguarding practice is as consistent and efficient as possible.

The mood is positive in Sunderland, despite the many challenges we all face. We are blessed to be supported by a strong Business Unit, very ably led by Lynne Thomas and supported by Nicola Morrow, Paul Jarps, Natasha Kerr and Vivien Turner, to whom we offer warm thanks.



Sir Paul Ennals



2. Introduction

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) have a statutory responsibility to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services.¹ The report is published to give the public assurance about how effective the safeguarding children arrangements are in the local area. In Sunderland the Annual Report is published on the [SSCB website](#).

Over the last year the SSCB has continued to strengthen the arrangements that were implemented following the full review of the SSCB in 2017. The new arrangements were established to achieve compliance with the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the anticipated Working Together 2018.

Board meetings are now quarterly as are the SSCB Executive Group and both Programme Boards. The Chair is a member of the Children's Strategic Partnership and the Quality Improvement Committee established following the inspection of Together for Children – Sunderland (TfC) in April-May 2018. Regular meetings are held between the SSCB Chair and the Director of Children's Services, agency Chief Executives including the Chief Executive of the Local Authority, and the Chair of the Together for Children – Sunderland² Board. The Lead Member for Children³ is a Participatory Observer of the SSCB Board as required by statute.

In line with the new Board arrangements and the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 the SSCB is strengthening its engagement with schools and education bodies through the development of a Safeguarding Education Forum. Consultation with these bodies has identified a commitment from schools and education

bodies to strengthen their safeguarding children practice and engagement with the Board.

Following the publication of [Working Together 2018](#), the SSCB has reviewed and published its proposed multiagency safeguarding arrangements that will go live in 2019, including its proposed new plans for undertaking child practice reviews. The Plan includes proposals for further collaboration across the Northumbria area. The current SSCB arrangements will transition into the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP). The new arrangements and plan can be found [here](#).



¹ This is a statutory requirement under [section 14A of the Children Act 2004](#).

² [Together for Children – Sunderland](#) are commissioned by Sunderland Local Authority to deliver children's services on their behalf

³ [Lead member for Children](#)

3.1 Local Data

Sunderland is a city on the North East coast of England. The main built-up area of Sunderland historically developed around coal and shipbuilding industries and the Port. Outside the urban core lie two distinct sub areas. The south and west of the city known as the Coalfield area reflects the dominant industrial heritage. The second is Washington, a new town which has been part of the Sunderland district since 1974.

The child population in Sunderland is set out below with a comparison to regional and national figures:



Measure	Local	Regional	National
Live Births (2017)	2,903	27,488	646,794
Children aged 0-4 Years (2017)	15,100 (5.4%)	146,100 (5.5%)	3,384,900 (6.1%)
Children aged 0-19 years (2017)	60,600 (21.9%)	592,800 (22.4%)	13,169,100 (23.7%)
School children from minority ethnic groups (2018)	3,277 (8.3%)	42,598 (11.3%)	2,544,753 (32.3%)
School pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (2018)	1,239 (3.1%)	10,707 (2.8%)	193,657 (2.4%)
Children living in poverty aged under 16 years	23.6%	22.6%	17%
Life expectancy at birth (2015-2017) BOYS	77.0	77.9	79.6
Life expectancy at birth (2015-2017) GIRLS	81.3	81.6	83.1

3.2 Baseline Information – Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children



Rate of referrals per 10,000 of the population

Sunderland – 856.80

North East – 601.70

Statistical Neighbour – 582.07

England – 552.50

Rate of Child in Need (CIN) per 10,000 of the population

Sunderland – 532.50

North East – 460.20

Statistical Neighbour – 443.74

England – 341.00

Rate of Child Protection Plans (CPP) per 10,000 of the population

Sunderland – 106.00

North East – 95.00

Statistical Neighbour – 99.80

England – 64.00

Rate of Children Looked After (CLA) per 10,000 of the population

Sunderland – 90.90

North East – 65.70

Statistical Neighbour – 60.60

England – 45.30

* Sunderland data 2018/2019. Statistical Neighbour, North East and National Data and National data as of October 2018 – via the Local Authority Interactive tool (LAIT)

3.3 Inspection outcomes and performance of Agencies in Sunderland and across the region (where relevant)

Agency	Inspectorate	Date of Inspection	Type of Inspection	Outcome
Together for Children - Sunderland	Ofsted	Apr- May 2018	Single Inspection	Inadequate
		Sep-18	Fostering	Good
		Sep-18	Adoption	Good
		Sep-18	Children's Home: CR	Outstanding
		Oct-18	Children's Home: MV	Outstanding
		Jun-18	Children's Home: RR	Good
	Care Quality Commission (CQC)	July-18	Support Services for Disabled Children	Good
Northumbria Police	HMICFRS	January 2019	Post Inspection Review - January 2019	Requires Improvement
City Hospitals	CQC	17 th April 2018	Quality of Care	Good
Northumberland Tyne and Wear Foundation Trust	Care Quality Commission (CQC)	16th April 2018	Quality of Care	Outstanding
Harrogate and District Foundation Trust	Care Quality Commission (CQC)	6th Nov to 9th Nov 2018	Use of Resources	Good

* Note the newly formed South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust (formerly South Tyneside Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland Foundation Trust) were not inspected under the new agency

General Practice



Education

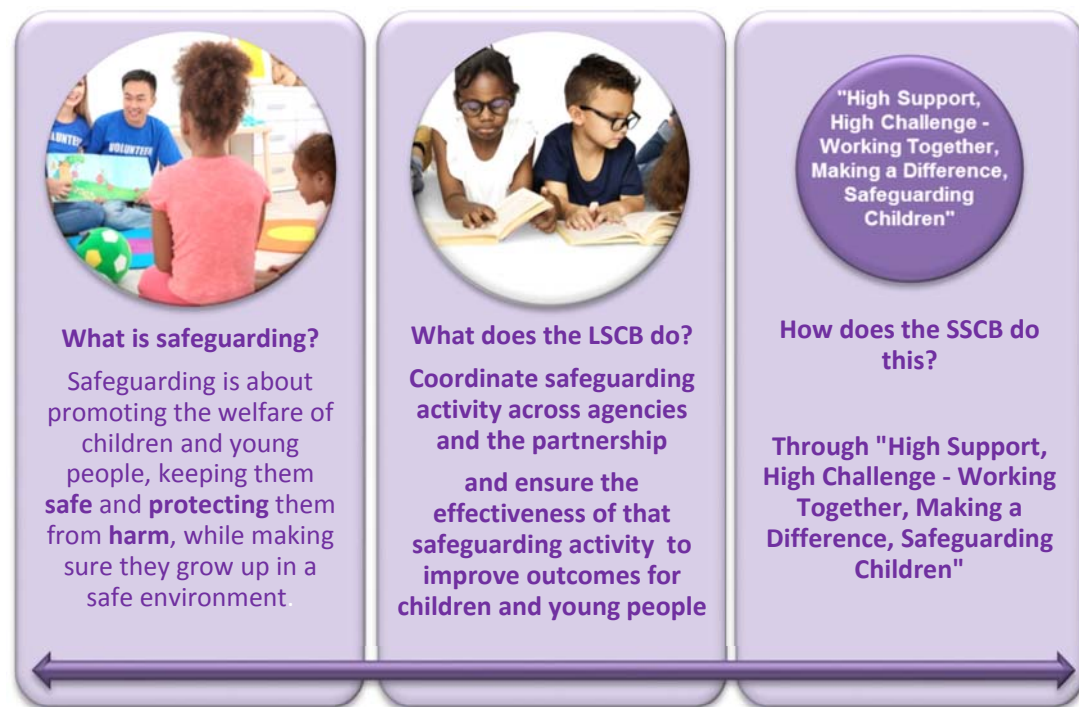
- 90% of the schools in Sunderland are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted
- 202 children / young people were electively home educated in 2017/2018 – a rise of 40%
- 24.5 % of schools in Sunderland have rated themselves as fully compliant within the SSCB Section 157/175 Audit with 75.5% of schools rating themselves as partially compliant



4. Governance and Structure

Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board

Each local authority has been required to have an LSCB which is a statutory partnership established under [Section 13 of the Children Act 2004](#) and it works in line with previous statutory guidance '[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015](#)'.



The Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) is chaired by an independent person and meets quarterly. The SSCB is supported by the [SSCB Business Unit](#).

The functions of the LSCB are:

- To develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area
- To communicate and raise awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the local authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve
- To participate in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority
- To undertake reviews of serious cases and advising the local authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned

The SSCB governance arrangements are set out in the SSCB Constitution. All Board and SSCB Group members are required to attend an SSCB induction session to ensure that they understand their roles, responsibilities and functions in undertaking work on behalf of the SSCB and their requirement to undertake all of their day to day functions with a focus on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Sunderland.

The SSCB, through the Chair and other Board members, is an active Children's Strategic Partnership Member, and has contributed significantly to the development of the Children and Young People's Plan for Sunderland.

4.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 removed the requirement for LSCBs, instead requiring local areas to have a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership (MASA) led by the 3 Safeguarding Partners.

A “Safeguarding Partner” in relation to our local authority area is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the [Children and Social Work Act, 2017](#)) as:

- City of Sunderland Council
- NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group
- Northumbria Police

The Government published new guidance in 2018 that set out how local areas should work to replace Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with new safeguarding children partnership arrangements.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 requires that as local safeguarding partners we set out arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children including identifying and responding to their needs.

Our Safeguarding Plan sets out our intention to work together, and with, wider partners to safeguard and promote positive outcomes for children and young people. The new Sunderland MASA Plan was published on 24th June 2019 and is available [here](#).

The Act also places a duty on new [Child Death Review \(CDR\) partners](#) to review the deaths of children normally resident in the local area. The CDR partners are the Sunderland City Council and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group.

It is anticipated that the key focus of the revised safeguarding arrangements will be based on a dual “Think Family” basis where there will be a stronger connection between strategic and operational safeguarding functions that better aligns with safeguarding practice within the Partnership, demonstrating compliance, overview and evidencing impact for children and families.



4.2 Working across Partnerships and LSCBs

The SSCB works with a number of other Sunderland partnerships as set out below:

- [Children's Strategic Partnership \(CSP\)](#)
- The [Health and Wellbeing Board](#) (HWBB)
- The [Safer Sunderland Partnership \(SSP\)](#)
- Sunderland [Domestic Violence Partnership \(SDVP\)](#)
- Sunderland [Safeguarding Adult Board](#) (SAB)

Examples of this partnership working include:



Further collaborative working will be progressed with the Adult Safeguarding Board and other relevant partnerships in Sunderland. The more we progress towards a joint collaborative model the more we can add more substance and evidence to the 'Think Family' approach. In addition, we will be evidencing maximising the use of partner's time, commitment and wider understanding of safeguarding across the life course.

Sunderland is moving towards developing an integrated approach to safeguarding, bringing together the work of the 3 key partnerships (the Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safer Sunderland Partnership).

Each Partnership will have its own relevant structure sitting beneath their Board/Partnership as appropriate with key checkpoints built in to evaluate how effectively this model is working in achieving each arrangements' statutory functions. Reporting will be into the HWBB and its constituent partnerships as appropriate.

By the end of the September 2020 it is intended that the work of the 3 Boards will also be more integrated, perhaps through all the Boards meeting quarterly on the same day and structured in such a way that supports key shared safeguarding issues being discussed and addressed once rather than three separate times. This arrangement will be supported by a local integrated safeguarding hub approach across the relevant support staff.

The Chairs and Business Managers of the 3 Partnerships will meet quarterly within the new City Safeguarding Group, with a remit of ensuring effective coordination between the 3 Boards, agreement as to how to oversee cross-cutting safeguarding issues (such as domestic abuse, modern day slavery, serious violence etc), and resolution of any escalated issues.

The SSCB will continue to provide “**high challenge** and **high support**” to these partnerships where appropriate.

4.3 Cross Boundary LSCB work



The SSCB has worked with Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland and South Tyneside LSCBs to strengthen regional and sub regional work.

The LSCB Business Managers for Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland have produced the following in 2018-2019:

Data set and scorecard which can be amended as needed for local issues. This will allow for better cross region benchmarking etc

Standardised section 11 audit tool and process - analysis will also take place across the region thus freeing up local resources

Sharing learning from learning and serious case reviews and shared approach to the dissemination of learning through a corporate 7 minute briefing template etc.

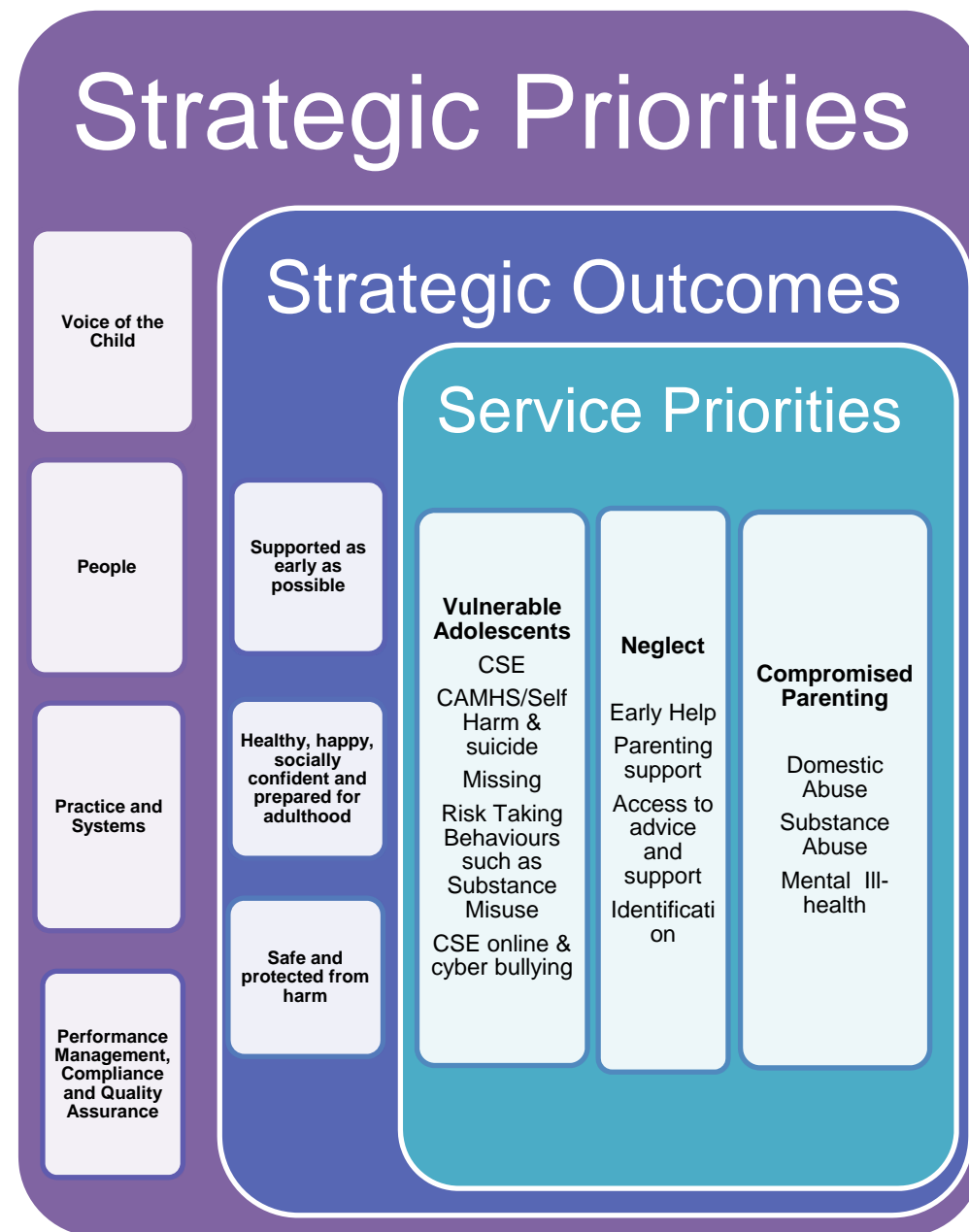
Safeguarding Training

PAN Safeguarding Children Procedures

The six areas were Early Adopters as part of the [DfE Early Adopters Programme](#). This programme is exploring which key safeguarding functions can be more effectively undertaken across a wider footprint, and which functions need to retain a place-based focus at local authority level.

During 2019-2020, further work will be completed on integrating functions across the Northumbria Police Force footprint, and a wider structure review will be undertaken in the spring of 2020.

5. SSCB Strategic and Business Plan 2019 - 2020 progress



The SSCB Strategic Plan sets out the Board's identified strategic and business priorities to inform its work. The SSCB Business Plan 2018-2019 was also in place until all tasks were achieved by quarter 2 of 2019 – 2020.

Achievements and progress on delivering the SSCB Business Plan 2018-19

- Launched new SSCB [Guide to Our Thresholds of Need](#) in November 2018 to assist practitioners in identifying a child's level of needs and indicate what the most appropriate referral pathway is to assess and meet those needs. Multi-Agency Workshop sessions have been delivered to embed the Guidance.
- Introduced [Safeguarding Staff Engagement Forums](#) for frontline staff on issues such as Domestic Abuse.
- Implemented a SSCB Workforce Development and Training Strategy, Competency-Based Framework for the Workforce and standards for a core curriculum for safeguarding children training
- Reviewed the increasing demand for safeguarding and child protection services and undertook work to safely turn the curve
- Undertook Interim Snapshot Evaluation of the MSET Operational Group – See Impact below

Impact –“ Police research, whilst single agency and based purely on whether MSET has led to a reduction in further crime, tends to demonstrate that despite areas for improvement, MSET plays an effective part of the safeguarding process, and combined with the expertise and range of supportive services embedded within the victim hubs, results in the obtaining of disclosures from young people that otherwise may not have been achieved - It appears that the involvement of MSET Operational Group does lead to positive outcomes for young people “– January 2019

6. Progress on the SSCB Service Priorities 2019-2020

Service Priority 1 – Vulnerable Adolescents

What do we mean by Vulnerable Adolescents?

- “Young people whose resilience and ability to manage their own emotional and social behaviour, relationships and environment is compromised by, for example, family context, neglect, and other risk factors, and whose behaviour creates harm to themselves and to others”
- This "Risk Taking Behaviour" includes activity such as drug and alcohol use and going missing etc

Vulnerable Adolescents

- 92.6 per 100,000 for admission episodes for alcohol specific conditions for under 18's compared to a National Rate of 32.9
- 154.6 per 10,000 for hospital admissions caused by injuries in children under 15 compared to a National Rate of 96.4
- 159.8 per 100,000 hospital admissions for mental health conditions compared to a National Rate of 84.7

The Vulnerable Adolescent Strategic Project Group (VASPG) has continued into 2018-2019. The VASPG analyses the SSCB Performance Scorecard measures linked to its agenda and provides challenge and scrutiny which informs the performance report submitted to the Board.

A full review of the MSET Operational Group has been undertaken to better focus the Group on measuring impact and outcomes. The operational group is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of those children and young people who have been identified as medium/high risk on the Child Sexual Exploitation Screening Tool. The Group also provides

advice, learning, signposting and additional support to those frontline workers responsible for medium/high risk young person. The SSCB [MSET Operational Group Escalation policy](#) has been strengthened following a review of its application.

MSET Risk Assessments

- In 2018/2019 566 risk assessments forms were submitted to pre-MSET for consideration of which 37 were discussed at MSET Operational Group (25 males:12 females)

Together for Children - Sunderland commission Barnardos to undertake Return Home Interviews for children who go missing from home or care. Regular reports from Barnardos are received into VASPG following a concern raised by the SSCB highlighting barriers to service effectiveness such as difficulty engaging, sharing of intelligence and instances where groups of young people are missing together.

Return Home Interviews (RHIs)

- Were completed in 92% of cases where they had been offered

Missing Episodes

- 1038 missing episodes were reported to police for 322 individuals, a reduction of 19%
- Missing episodes are categorised using the following classifications: High, Medium, Low and Not at Risk
- The biggest increase in 2018-2019 was seen in the Low Risk category with a rise of 321% from 28 to 118 missing episodes being classed as Low Risk

Service Priority 2 – Neglect and Poverty

What is Poverty?

- Relative poverty generally means that a person can't afford an "ordinary living pattern"—they're excluded from the activities and opportunities that the average person enjoys
- A household is in relative poverty (also called relative **low** income) if its income is below 60% of the median household income

What is Neglect?

- Child neglect is a failure to look after a child and could result in poor health or development
- Children (including unborn babies), need food, water, shelter, warmth, protection and health care to grow and develop
- Children need their parents or carers to love and care for them
- Neglect can also include physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse

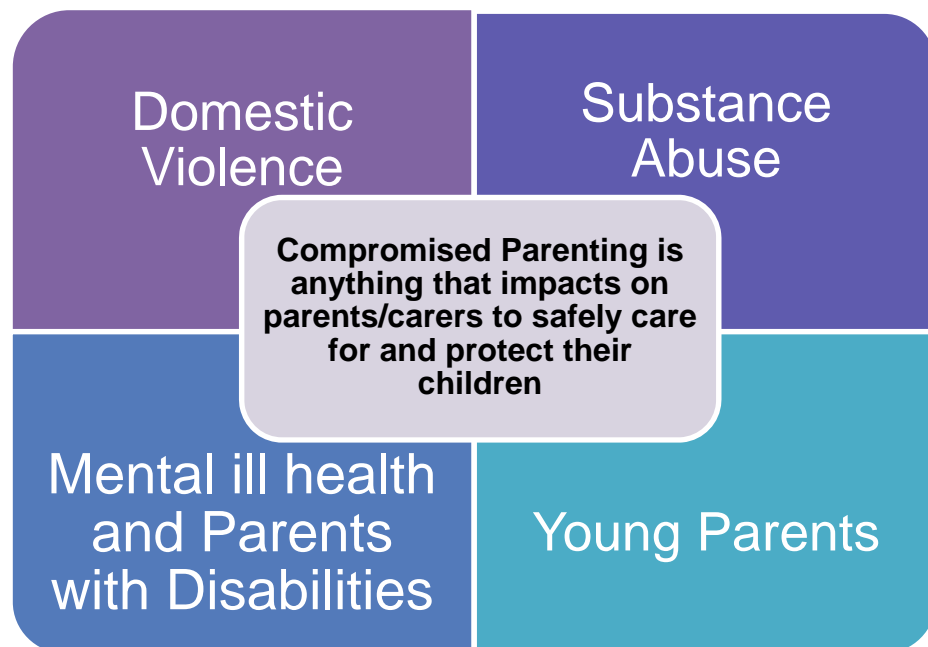
Neglect

- Continues to be the most frequent reason for children to be placed on a child protection plan in 2018-2019 (56.6%)

Work to tackle Neglect and Poverty

- Developed and launched the SSCB Neglect Toolkit in conjunction with the Children's Strategic Partnership, to ensure that children impacted on by neglect, receive assistance to minimise the impact as early as possible

Service Priority 3 – Compromised Parenting



Compromised Parenting

- 3216 Domestic Abuse incidents reported with a child present, an 8% rise from 2017-2018
- 2895 Operation Encompass referrals in 2018-2019
- 31.9 per 100,000 under 18 conceptions compared to a National Rate of 18.8
- Suicide rate of 10.6 per 100,000 compared to a National Rate of 9.6
- 966 per 100,000 admissions for alcohol related conditions compared to a National Rate of 632
- 119 substance misuse treatment starts with a child living in the household

What have we achieved?

- Initiated a whole city approach to Domestic Abuse through the establishment of the SSCB led Domestic Abuse Strategic Project Group (DASPG). During 2017-2018 the Group has:
- Supported streamlined working and reduced silo working across partnerships through a collective approach
- Benchmarked Sunderland against the Violence against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations and developed a plan to improve our collective response to children, young people, adults and families impacted on by domestic abuse
- Consulted with professionals and providers to inform future work and a commissioning strategy
- Planned engagement and consultation sessions with frontline staff and providers to seek their views to inform the work of the Group
- Operation Encompass: The Next Step is a collaboration between Northumbria Police and Northumbria OPCC, Operation Encompass, and Barnardos. Its vision is to build on the very successful Operation Encompass initiative, to provide enhanced support to children and families affected by domestic abuse, and to staff within schools, to enable appropriate support and safeguarding within the safe school environment.
- **IMPACT - in 2018-2019 there have been 2895 Operation Encompass referrals made. All schools in Sunderland are signed up to Operation Encompass. Feedback from schools is positive and they feel it strengthens their ability to safeguard children**

7. Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance

During the past 12 months the Performance & Quality Assurance Programme Board has embedded the systems and processes that the SSCB need to consider, to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of multiagency practice in respect of safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and young people in Sunderland.

Where gaps are identified, implications for the SSCB are considered and any agreed actions and risks are escalated to the SSCB and monitored through the SSCB Risk Register.

The Performance and Quality Assurance Programme Board has;

- Implemented the Single Agency Audit Monitor – to provide a level of assurance to the Programme Board as to the actions for agencies following Inspection outcomes
- Contributed to the development of a regional performance dataset and templates
- Supported the collation of Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls data for Domestic Abuse Strategic Project Group (DASPG)
- Overview of a set of key performance indicators in relation to 'Demand' on services within Sunderland
- Drafted new Exception report format to Board which is more visually effective

Whilst the SSCB dataset is comprehensive the SSCB Performance Reports to the Board highlight exceptions only

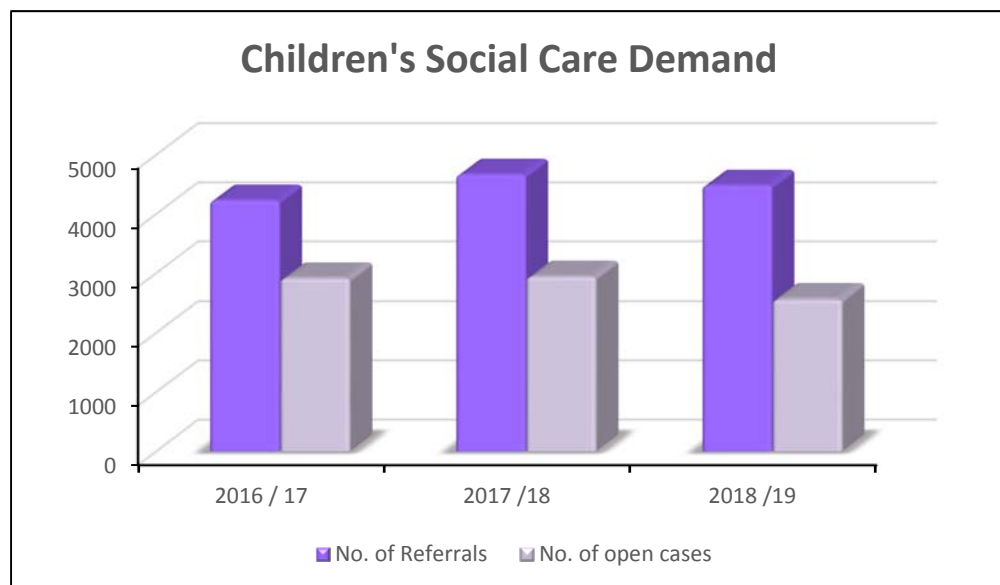
Impact - To ensure a focussed approach to identifying good performance and areas where improvement is required

Quality Assurance

- Ensure that schools are meeting their statutory obligations regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Carry out multi-agency audits and identify lessons to be learned and make recommendations which are compiled into a Learning and Improvement Matrix - shared with the Learning and Workforce Development Programme Board
- Multi-agency audit reports to inform the SSCB of the quality of work being undertaken and its impact on outcomes for individual children and young people
- The SSCB Data Scorecard has been streamlined to ensure that performance reporting and analysis is aligned to the SSCB Strategic and Service priorities

Impact - The Audit Cycle and Learning and Improvement Matrix has led to improvements in the appropriateness of referrals from key agencies such as health agencies and in the quality of responses to referrals by Children's Services however the quality of assessments and plans need to be improved

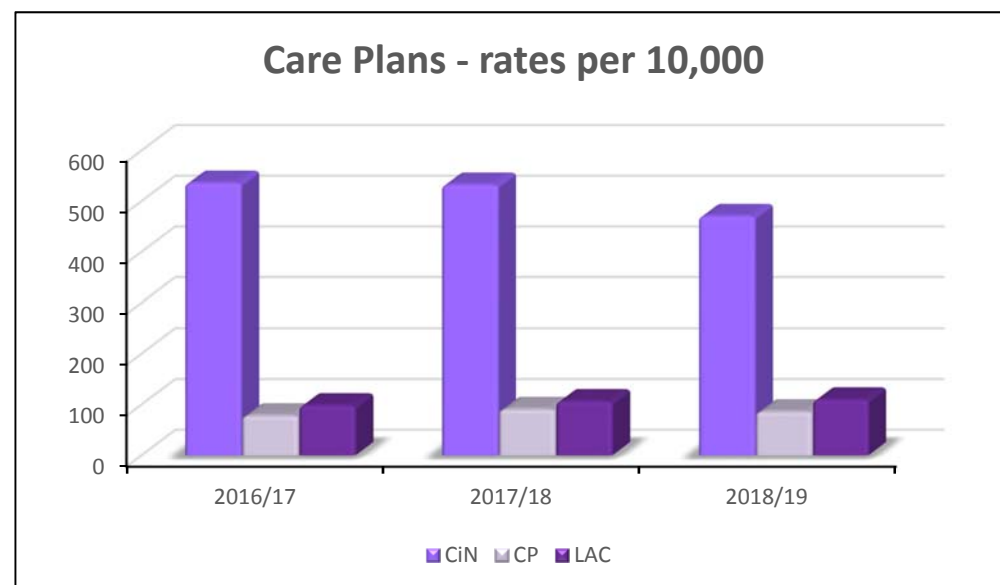
Performance:



2018-2019 saw a reduction in the number of referrals received by Together for Children by 4% to 4480. The number of open cases to social care also saw a reduction of 13% compared to 2017/2018. Northumbria Police are the highest referring agency into TfC at 29.9%

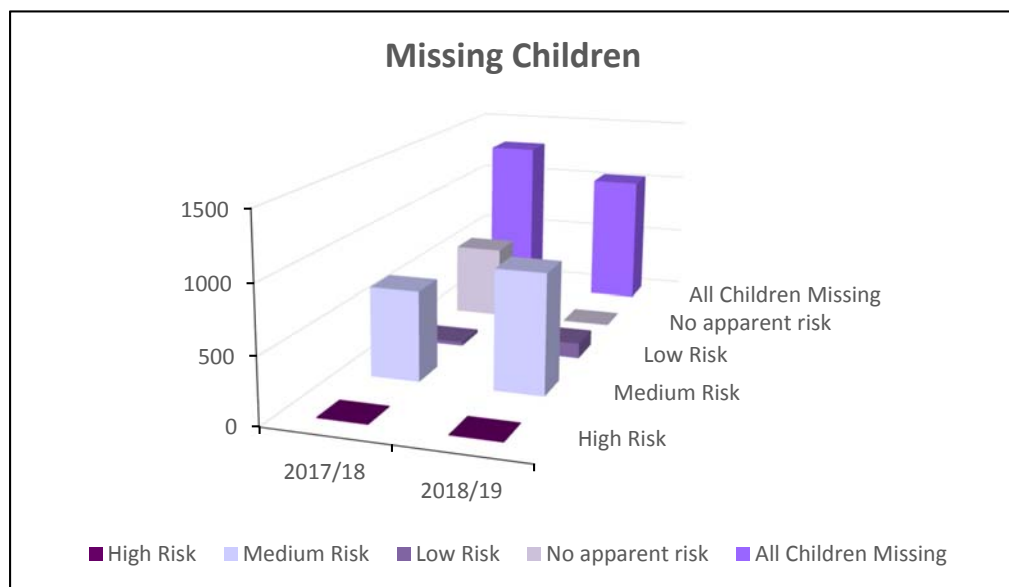
% of all referrals to CSC from different agencies:

Individual (self, relative, carer/acquaintance)	7.5%
Education (schools/early years and other providers)	19.5%
Health (G.P, Health visitors, School Nurses, Other Primary Health Care Services)	18.7%
LA Services	10.8%
Other Service	7.2%
Police	29.9%
Other	6.4%



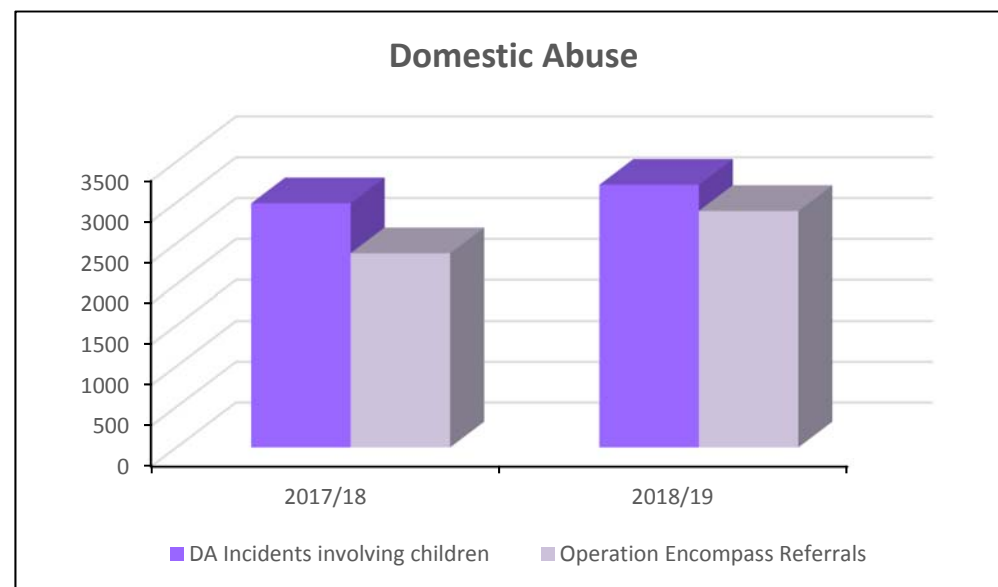
The rates of Children in Need (CIN), Child Protection Plan (CPP) and Looked after Children (LAC) remain higher than statistical neighbour and national averages. The rate of CiN has seen a significant rate decrease of 61.9 and the rate of CPP has decreased by 4.6. However, the rate of LAC has seen a rate increase of 3.4, continuing a trend of yearly rate increases.

Further analysis of performance across Demand Indicators will be carried out in October 2019 when the statistical neighbour, north east and national data is updated and available via the Local Authority Interactive tool (LAIT).



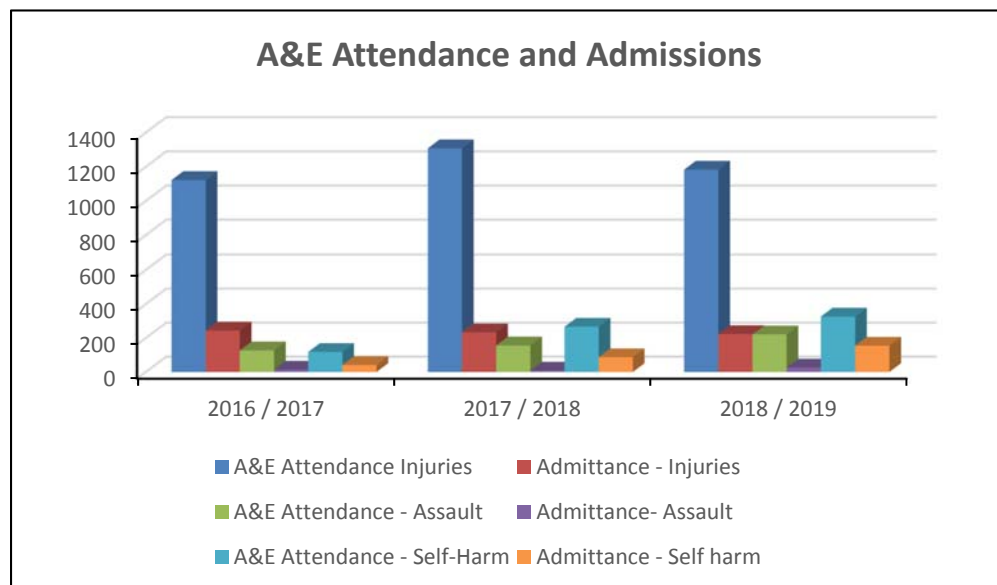
2018/2019 saw the first full year of data using the risk categories of high, medium, low and no apparent risk (previously absent). This equated to significant changes to the categories used.

	2017/18	2018/19	Change (Volume)	% change
All children reported missing	1288	1038	-250	-19%
High	7	5	-2	-29%
Medium	688	911	223	32%
Low	28	118	90	321%
Individuals	293	322	29	10%



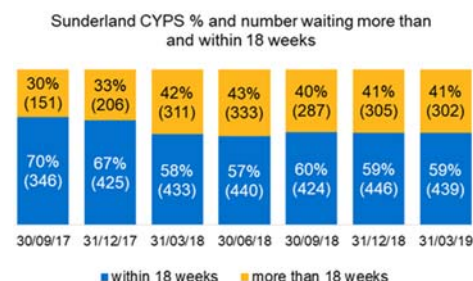
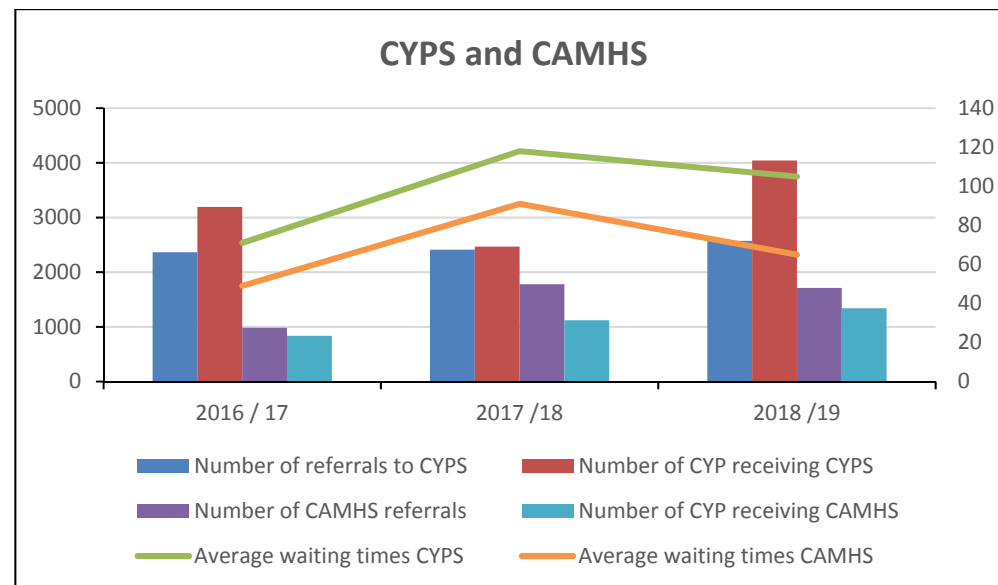
The number of Domestic Abuse (DA) incidents recorded with a child present saw an 8% increase, this is in line with the overall Northumbria Police force increase of 7%. Arrests associated with DA have increased by 16% which is in line with the overall force increase of 20%.

A few projects are currently being undertaken in the city which are fed into the Domestic Abuse Strategic Project Group (DASPG) which include: Change that Lasts, the Pause Project, the Family Nurse Partnership Adapt Model, Reducing Parental Conflict, Operation Encompass – the next steps and the Early Adopters DA bid. A DRAFT Sunderland's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Needs Assessment 2019 has been written and shared with the group. The Needs Assessment highlights the economic and social costs of domestic abuse which equated to around **£315,000,000** per annum in Sunderland.



2018 / 2019 saw a reduction of the number of children and young people attending A&E and subsequently being admitted for unintentional and deliberate injuries. However, the numbers of children and young people attending A&E for assault and self-harm have increased significantly by 41% and 22.5%. The severity of the injury due to assault or self-harm have seen the admission rate for both increase by 225% (18) and 78% (68).

Work undertaken by P&QA PB was undertaken regarding possible correlation between waiting times for mental health services and the number of children and young people attending A&E for self-harm. Two audits identified no correlation and good practice by both TfC and NTW NHS Foundation Trust and the other practitioners involved with the young people. The Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) have been asked to investigate trends and analysis in relation to the increase and severity in the number of assaults.



The level of demand for both Children and Young People Service (CYPS) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) remain high. Referral rates for both services have remained stable and the number of children and young people receiving CYPS rose by 63.8% in 2018 / 2019. However, the waiting times for CYPS service continues to be over 100 days.

In quarter 3 and 4 of 2018 / 2019 there was a significant reduction in the waiting times for the CAMHS Service to 14 days. The number of children receiving a CAMHS service increased by 19%. The improvement in service delivery is the result of recruitment to a number of key posts and new service offers in place such as online counselling.

Multi-agency Audits

The Performance & Quality Assurance Programme Board (P& QA PB) received updates on several formal audit processes in addition to looking to partners and other Boards for assurance across the SSCB priorities. This enables the Board to identify where improvements can be made, to identify good practice and to be assured about safeguarding across the city.

The SSCB partially implemented its Multi-Agency Audit Cycle 2018-2019 completing 5 Multi-Agency Audits:

- Section 175 / 157 (of the Education Act 2002) Audit
- SSCB Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Operational Group (MSET) Minutes
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Mystery Shopper – Serious Case Review
- Mystery Shopper – Guide to our Thresholds

2018 - 2019 also saw the further development of the Single Agency Audit Plan which has enabled the SSCB Audit Cycle to align with single agency plans, avoid duplication and enable multi-agency themes to be brought to the Programme Board's attention. In 2018 - 2019 reports from Together for Children were discussed in relation to the following audits:

- Step up - step down procedures between Children's Social Care and Early Help
- Re-referrals to Children's Social Care

The Emotional Resilience Audit found examples of good practice by both TfC Children's Social Care and NTW NHS Foundation Trust but also the other practitioners involved with the young people

In fulfilling their Statutory function, the Board is required to ensure that schools, about their duty under either Section 157 / 175 of the Education Act 2002, are meeting their statutory obligations regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. One of the methods by which this task is executed is by asking schools to self-evaluate under a framework of benchmarks and then sharing results with the Board – commonly known as the “Section 157/175 Audit”. This audit provides schools with an opportunity to reflect upon their own safeguarding practice and procedures.

The Section 175 / 157 audit conducted in 2018/19 saw 108 / 118 schools made a return of the self-assessment audit tool equating to a 92% return rate.

The self-assessment rates made by the schools in November 2018 were;

- 25% fully compliant
- 63% partially compliant
- 11% partially compliant with some non-met categories
- 1% schools submitted audits completed by external companies

The learning from the 2018 Audit will be fed into the 2019-2020 Section 157/175 Audit which will be undertaken across the North and South of Tyne LSCB Areas

8. Learning and Improvement

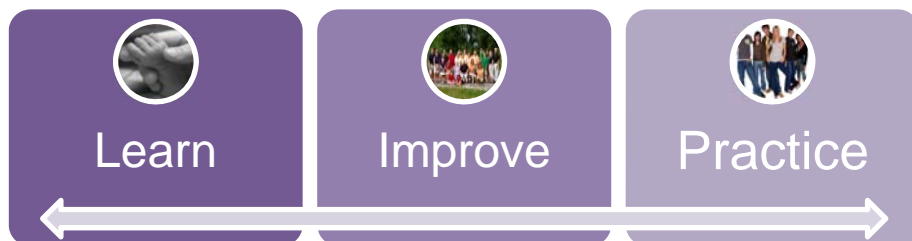
In 2018-2019 3 cases were brought to the attention of the SSCB, where children died or were seriously harmed. The Board is undertaking a serious case review for one of these cases and undertook a learning review for another. One case is being progressed through the Child Death Review Process.

The Board developed its own hybrid model for serious case reviews which has a clear focus on the involvement of staff and families in the process. The process is challenging but supportive of staff and agencies to facilitate the most effective learning and improvement process.

Learning from local SCRs has led to the development of guidance for bruising in immobile babies, a neglect toolkit, and training delivered to support staff working with resistant, hostile and uncooperative parents. Because of learning reviews and audits, work is planned to review and update conference report templates and develop a neglect strategy. The SSCB also worked with regional colleagues to develop learning materials regarding babies.

The SSCB has also identified audit work that is required in 2019-2020 following a complaint from a family in respect of how a child protection conference was conducted.

Further evidence of the outcomes of Learning and Improvement activity can be found [here](#).



The SSCB collates the findings from learning and improvement activity into a Learning and Improvement Matrix to ensure an overarching record and response to the findings. Repeat learning/findings are monitored to ensure that if one approach to addressing findings is not successful an alternative approach can be made. This allows for a streamlined model for learning activity and measuring impact and ensures that improvements can be appropriately collated and evidenced.

Learning and Improvement Matrix

- The Learning and Improvement Matrix is a document comprising the key learning / recommendations from SSCB Multi Agency Audits, Serious Case Reviews (SCR), Learning Reviews (LR) and relevant multi-agency inspections and / or peer reviews.
- The Learning Improvement Matrix includes for each recommendation: Source of recommendation i.e. SCR, lead Programme Board / Project Groups and Lead Officer and timescale for completion
- The Matrix allows for each programme Board / Project Group to 'own' the learning recommendations specific to the Programme Board / Group. Each action is cross referenced as appropriate to the SSCB Business Plan 2017 – 2019 and the Children's Strategic Partnership (CSP) Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2017 – 2020. This will aid with cross partnership working and reduce duplication on cross cutting issues.

9. SSCB Policy and Procedures



Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead LSCBs adopted a sub-regional approach consortium for producing safeguarding procedures for children in 2016 resulting in a strengthened, more consistent approach to safeguarding across the sub region as well as to promote a more efficient and succinct approach in terms of the procedures.

The sub regional procedures are web-enabled ensuring that they are a highly accessible tool for use by practitioners. Information to highlight the profile and use of the on-line procedures and the local resources to support front line practitioners was disseminated across all three Local Authorities. They are also highlighted within SSCB training, SSCB member induction etc.

The LSCB Business Managers across the region have made considerable progress on securing robust integrated and collaborative arrangements developing Pan Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures ready to go live in 2019. This will ensure improved consistency across the region in terms of practice and provide some level of efficiency in relation to costs, maintenance and review.

The current SSCB procedures can be found at - <http://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/>

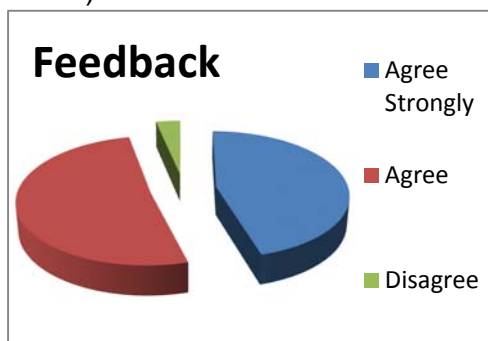
New and updated SSCB procedures and guidance in 2018 - 2019

- Dangerous Dogs and Safeguarding Children
- Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment
- Modern Day Slavery
- Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) Operational Group Escalation Procedure
- Forced Marriage
- E-Safety
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Domestic Abuse Pathways

10. Training and Workforce Development

SSCB offered 9 core courses in 2018- 2019 including SSCB Guide to Our Thresholds of Need Workshop, Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) Workshop and Modern-Day Slavery training. A total of **37 courses** were delivered in 2018/19. The courses were attended by a total of **832 staff**.

The training courses received very positive feedback with **95% of attendees** agreeing or strongly agreeing that the training improved their understanding and knowledge of the subject (see Graph 1 below).



The SSCB training was supplemented with a 'Think Family' Conference held in March 2019 at Rainton Meadows, attended by **102 partners** from Sunderland. The photograph above is of the event.

Impact – “I will use the thresholds document in family support meetings as sometimes there are conflicting opinions, so this will be useful”

E-learning Courses

SSCB provide access to a full range of e-learning courses through the Virtual College.



E learning courses available include:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation
- Awareness of Domestic Abuse and Violence
- Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities

During 2018-2019:

- **1,312** new e-Learning accounts added
- **5,193** e-Learning modules completed
- **97%** of those completing evaluations stated they would recommend the course to other people

Impact – “I liked the fact that it was multi-agency and we were expected to move around so that we could work with partner agencies we may not have worked with before. I liked using the scenarios which generated discussion”

11. Marketing, Communication and Raising Awareness

The SSCB developed a new website that went live in August 2018. The website was custom built for the LSCB and future proofed for the move to a new multi-agency safeguarding arrangement by September 2019.

The [SSCB website](#) is the main access point for safeguarding information and materials.

Since its launch the new SSCB Website has seen a significantly improved usage compared to the previous website – up 37%:

- 2,064 Individuals visited the website
- 14,374 pages were viewed in total
- 1 minute 45 seconds was the average time spent on the pages viewed
- Twitter and Facebook were the main social media channels users accessed the webpage from
- Users used the following websites to access the SSCB website:
 - Google – 444 / Bing – 110
 - Together for Children - 100
- The website is accessed mainly via desktop (72.5%) and mobile (24.6%) with tablet used the least (2.9%)
- Top ten most viewed pages within the period were:
 - Home Page – 7636 views
 - Workforce Development – 1068 views
 - E-Learning – 826 views
 - About us – 678 views
 - Training Offer – 630 views
 - How to make a referral – 494 views
 - Children and Young People's page – 422 Views
 - Publication of Reports – 340 views
 - Serious Case Reviews – 294 views
 - Contact us – 128 views

Campaigns we supported in 2018/19

- National Child Sexual Exploitation Day - March 18th 2019
- Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation (IICSA)
- Child Safety week
- Safer Internet Day
- Young Carers Awareness Day



Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

Sunderland SCB has supported the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), providing the project with information on how we protect children and young people in Sunderland.

We have also promoted the Truth Project which by hearing from victims and survivors of sexual abuse as children, who were let down by organisations that should have protected them, we can help to understand how and why children were failed and find better ways to protect children in the future.

Social Media

- **Twitter:** @SunderlandSCB
- **Joined:** 29.05.2018
- **Followers:** 142 (as of 08.07.19)
- **Tweets:** 216 (as of 08.07.19)
- **Impressions** (number of times users saw a tweet): over 25k
- **Engagements** (number of times users interacted with a tweet; liked, retweeted, commented): 470



12. Engagement with Children and Young People

In October 2018 SSCB also delivered a Young Persons Conference at Bede Tower, attended by **46 young people** aged 11-18 years of age from the city. The Conference was supported by several partner agencies including Barnardo's, NSPCC and MIND. There was representation from 8 schools and education settings covering a mixed range of young people

The conference was a participation and engagement event to ensure that young people's views are at the core of shaping the agenda and determining outcomes in relation to present and future issues that directly impact on our young people.

4 Workshops were delivered by experts on – Online Safety, Emotional Resilience, Alcohol and Substance Misuse and Healthy Relationships.

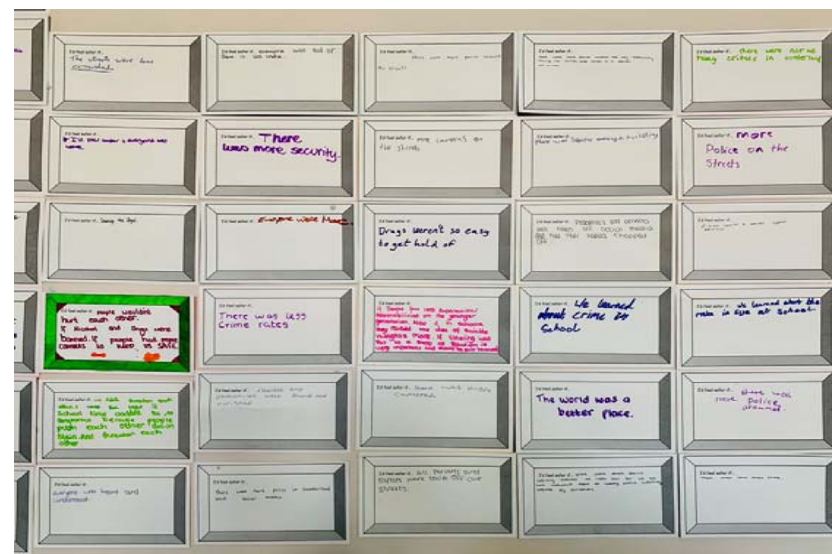
What our young people⁴ said –

Impact –

- 35 out of 38 said they would like to see more events like this
- 23 out of 25 said they felt safer after attending the Conference
- 35 out of 44 said they were more confident after attending this Conference that they would know where to go for support if they felt unsafe



A Graffiti Wall was set up for young people to add their views about why they feel safe and how they could feel safer.



⁴ Please note the number of young people varied through the day as some arrived later or had to leave earlier due to other commitments

13. Future Service Priorities

The Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board agreed the following priorities and priority actions on when to build the first MASA Business Plan for 2019 - 2020:

Vulnerable Adolescents

- CSE
- Risk Taking Behaviours such as Substance Abuse
- CAHMS/Self-harm and suicide
- Missing
- CSE online and cyber bullying

Neglect & Poverty

- Early Help
- Parenting support and the best start in life
- Access to advice and support
- Identification

Compromised Parenting

- Domestic Abuse
- Substance Abuse
- Mental ill health

14. Professional Challenge

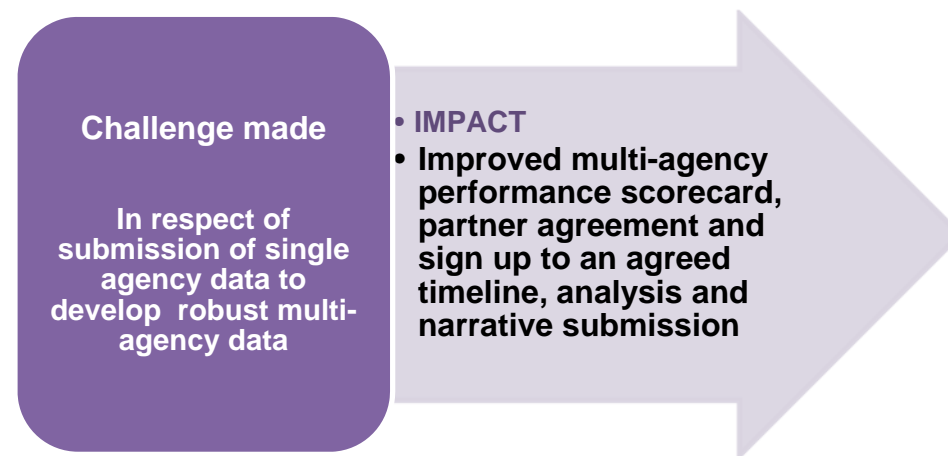
Safeguarding children is the responsibility of all professionals and volunteers working with children, young people and their families. This includes making and acting on appropriate professional challenge. The SSCB also has a responsibility to ensure that it acts as a critical friend to agencies and relevant partnerships in respect of their work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and their families.

There has been an improved response to undertaking professional challenge across the partnership over the last year as the SSCB Resolution of Professional Differences process is being followed. Agencies report that partners are more receptive to professional challenge and there has been limited recourse to using the Board's process for professional challenge on operational activity.

The SSCB Chair uses the SSCB Mission of “high support and high challenge” to support and enable partners to take accountability and responsibility for their work and actions. The Chair's influence is demonstrated both within and outside of formal meetings and has included changes in frontline delivery, engagement with children and improved multi-agency working.

Examples of Professional Challenge

Partners have robustly challenged each other and debated about whether the criteria are met when considering cases for serious case reviews. This includes debating whether there were issues about how partners worked together.



15. How safe are children and young people in Sunderland?

It is never possible to say categorically that all children are safe. However, we can reach some conclusions through examining what external scrutiny of our services within Sunderland tells us, what public health data tells us of the overall health and wellbeing of Sunderland's children, what our own multi-agency performance data tells us, what we learn from the reviews and consultations we undertake, and what children and young people themselves tell us.

We know that 90% of Sunderland's schools are still rated good or outstanding, better than the average for local authorities, and this plays an important part in keeping children safe. Good schools are normally safe schools, and schools play a vital role in helping children learn how to keep themselves safe, as well as providing us with a great opportunity to check on how children are doing.

We know too that many of the child health indicators in Sunderland remain worrying; our rates of childhood obesity and early death are high. We have seen real reductions in rates of smoking in children, and smoking amongst expectant mothers, but the figures remain much too high. Child poverty rates remain higher than average, and the introduction of Universal Credit during the year provided new challenges to many families.

Sunderland City Hospital is rated as "good" by the Care Quality Commission; the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Mental Health Trust (NTWMHT) is rated "outstanding"; the community child health services provided by South Tyneside Foundation Trust were rated as "good".

Northumbria Police have been subject to various inspections; overall their services in support of children and young people are well considered.

Children's Social Care Services have been provided by the new company, "Together for Children" (TFC), since April 2017. Ofsted's re-inspection of TFC reported in July 2018. That report showed improvement in 3 out of 5 of the areas monitored – adoption performance in particular was graded as "good". However, the overall grading just failed to lift children's services over the bar, and the overall grading remained as "inadequate". Separate more recent inspections of fostering services and adoption services have both been rated as good. Two of TFC's children's homes have been rated as outstanding, and the other is rated as good. The Quality Improvement Committee for TFC, on which I sit, continues to monitor all aspects of the safety of the children of Sunderland, and can point to real progress being achieved in many areas.

The safeguarding data in this report paints a complex picture. Last year I reported that all areas of child protection activity were showing rapid rises. This year we are seeing some changes. Improvements to the operation of the front door is resulting in reductions in contacts and referrals, though these are both still too high, and further work is necessary – especially with the police – to improve processes. Our rates of child protection cases, and children in care, remain very high, but the gap between ourselves and our statistical neighbours seems to be narrowing.

The new Early Help programme is bedding in, with increased support from partners. In a world where statutory budgets continue to decrease for all agencies, effective joint working is ever more necessary to reduce the flow of children and families who enter crisis. This service is now proving its worth, and partners are increasingly recognising its value.

Health data has shown a reduction in the previously exceptionally high rates of A&E attendance for injuries, but there has been a large increase in rates of self-harm, which are being investigated. Mental health data shows a significant increase in the numbers of children receiving mental health services, and a welcome reduction in waiting times.

We believe that our systems for monitoring children at risk of CSE, or missing, are increasingly robust, and the small reduction in the numbers of children identified at risk of CSE is likely now to indicate our improvements in safety, rather than simply changes in reporting.

Overall, we are seeing steady but gradual improvement in the quality of the range of child protection services – the front door, assessments, area teams and specialist services. Health services are improving too. We remain concerned about the numbers of children with mental health issues, and the time it can take for them to access effective services. The rates of domestic abuse remain high within Sunderland, though there have been important improvements made to the services available. We know that nationally there is concern about increases in Child Criminal Exploitation – whilst we have not seen firm evidence of this within Sunderland as yet, we need to ramp up our preparation.

I am required in this report to identify any areas of weakness regarding safeguarding practice within the partnership and identify the causes of such weaknesses. In common with many of my fellow Independent Chairs across the country, I conclude that the most significant safeguarding risks are due to the budget decisions of the Government. All partners have faced deep reductions in their budgets - particularly the council, but the impact on all agencies remains relentless. Government policies have made it increasingly hard for agencies to prioritise early intervention, despite the knowledge of practitioners and academics that this is the most effective way forward. The expectation of Government

that services can continue to operate at the same level as in the past, on up to 50% less funding, is naive. I give credit to partner agencies for the efforts they are all displaying in responding to these pressures, and the willingness of the partnership to work together in these challenging times.

The children and families of Sunderland are fortunate in the staff who work for the agencies who seek to keep them safe. No-one can say that children are all safe, but I can say that the partnership is doing its level best to give them all the best chance possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Ennals', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Sir Paul Ennals

Appendix 1 – SSCB Board Membership

DESIGNATION	AGENCY
SSCB Independent Chair	SSCB
Chief Executive	Sunderland City Council
Director of Children's Services	Sunderland City Council
Council Lead Member	Sunderland City Council
Chief Executive	Together for Children – Sunderland (The organisation to whom the local authority has delegated children's social care functions)
Chief Executive	Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group
Chief Superintendent	Northumbria Police
Director of Nursing, Midwifery and AHPs	South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
Executive Director of Nursing & Patient Experience	Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
Group Nurse Director	Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
Executive Director	Gentoo