



ROTHERHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT

OCTOBER 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2021

Contents

Introduction	3
Governance and Effectiveness	4
Independent Scrutiny from the Chair, Jenny Myers	5
Learning and Improvement	9
Update on RSCP Key Priorities	13
Stay at home	13
Safe in the community	17
Safe Safeguarding Systems	22
Listening to the views of children and their families	25

Introduction

Welcome to the second annual assurance report from the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP). This annual report is a summary of the assurance we have sought over the last year to keep children and families safe in Rotherham. In line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, it:

- gives an overview and provides transparency about the activity undertaken by safeguarding partners between October 2020 and September 2021.
- highlights how the safeguarding partners have committed to work together effectively in a multi-agency approach to identify where action can be taken to improve the services provided to children and their families.
- provides assurance as well as identified areas for further development including identifying learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews, rapid reviews and serious incidents.
- provides evidence of how the RSCP have worked together to deliver services to children and families effectively through the continued and unprecedented times of the COVID -19 pandemic.
- demonstrates that despite such adversity the challenges presented by the pandemic also provided an opportunity to work in new and innovative ways, embrace technology and use this to develop partnership relationships, communicate faster and be more productive.

The RSCP priorities set out in 2020 have continued to be themed under three key headings:

- **Safe at Home**
- **Safe in the Community**
- **Safe Safeguarding Systems**

The above priorities were also informed by key principles which underpinned all activity undertaken by the partnership to safeguard promote the welfare of children in Rotherham as follows:

Principle 1 Championing the interests and rights of children and young people

Principle 2 Involving all partners in Rotherham in a duty to cooperate on safeguarding matters

Principle 3 Receiving independent challenge and scrutiny, to ensure feedback, accountability, and learning

Principle 4 Change is led by measurable improvements in the safeguarding systems and outcomes for children and their families.

Chris Edwards, Chief Officer, NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group

Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Sarah Poolman, Assistant Chief Constable, South Yorkshire Police

Governance and Effectiveness

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership was established in September 2019 in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

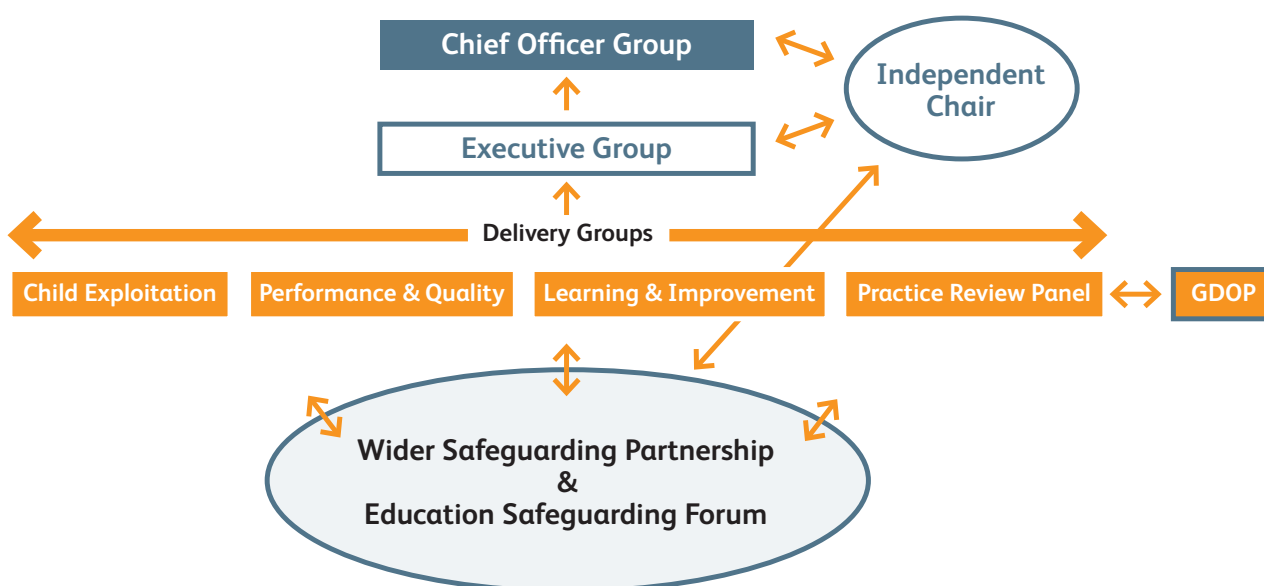
A review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements was written into the constitution and on the appointment of a permanent Director of Children's Services, a review of the Executive Group was undertaken to strengthen governance, accountability, and assurance.

The Executive Group, which includes Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children's Services, Stephen Chapman, Chief Superintendent District Commander for Rotherham, Sue Cassin, Chief Nurse, Executive Lead for Safeguarding, Rotherham Clinical was restructured to include Safeguarding Partners and the Independent Chair, providing a more focused

approach to decision making, challenge and assurance. They have undertaken significant review and activity to strengthen the partnership. They monitor and drive the partnership action plan, allocate resources, commission high quality services and monitor performance via subgroups, and through seeking assurance.

Joint meetings with the Chief Officer Group have provided clarity of decision making and accountability at the most senior level across the safeguarding children partnership. The Executive Group has evidenced robust challenge and assurance on some key aspects of safeguarding, including Elective Home Education and Babies born into vulnerable families during the pandemic. Broader issues have been supported and led by the Executive Group at the Wider Partnership meetings including Neglect and the effectiveness and challenges in relation to the Front Door MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub).

RSCP Structure October 2021



The partnership has concentrated on specific assurance areas to drive further child focussed, self-reflective practice with strong challenge within and across agencies, with a particular spotlight on:

- **Child Exploitation (CE)**
- **Neglect and Early Help**
- **Safeguarding vulnerable children during the pandemic**

Independent Scrutiny from the Chair, Jenny Myers

Independent scrutiny in Rotherham continues to be through the role of the RSCP chair, alongside external inspection, and peer review. This is my second year in the role where I have provided an element of assurance, monitoring & challenge to the quality of RSCP and their work. I have focused on:

- Providing assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard & promote the welfare of all children, including arrangements to identify & review serious child safeguarding cases
- Acting as a constructive critical friend, promoting a culture of reflection for continuous improvement
- Judging how effectively the arrangements are working for children & families as well as for practitioners; and how well the safeguarding partners are providing leadership.

The approach taken by me over the last 18 months has involved:

- Chairing the Executive Group of the RSCP
- Chairing the Wider Safeguarding Partnership Group
- Scrutinising the work of RSCP the serious child safeguarding case Practice Review Group to ensure the effectiveness of arrangements to identify & review serious child safeguarding cases
- Chairing the Chief Officer's group
- Scrutinising the work of the RSCP delivery groups, including their work plans and outputs
- Reviewing reports into multi agency audits, training and performance data

- Resolving partnership escalation and conflict resolution process including around capacity in the RSCP business unit and budget contributions, especially from the South Yorkshire OPCC.
- Ensuring that the partnership response to COVID -19 effectively safeguarded the most vulnerable children.

In addition to the above, I meet with the Lead Member for children, the Safeguarding Adults Board chair, chairs of other key strategic partnerships for Rotherham and the lead officer for NCA Operation Stovewood. As independent chair for Rotherham I have participated in national and regional safeguarding forums and government round table events to ensure that I can continue to bring challenge and learning to the role.

The RSCP has continued to evolve and increase confidence in its ability to challenge and scrutinise each other and hold each other to account. Examples of this has included:

- Developing the governance framework to revise membership and ensure that only the key statutory safeguarding partners are on the Executive Group, strengthening accountability.
- A joined-up approach to protecting vulnerable children during the COVID -19 pandemic both at a strategic and operational level.
- Strengthening the process of serious incident management and decision making around notification and local child safeguarding practice reviews.
- Revising and developing the work of the delivery groups to align better with the business priorities and strengthen leadership by the Executive.

- Holding agencies to account when they consider there are serious cross agency working issues that are not being managed well at operational level. An example of this was around the CQC inspection of The Rotherham Foundation Trust (TRFT) where Chief Officers and me, as Independent Chair, held assurance meetings with the Chief Executives of the hospital around their improvement plan. Another was around the availability of Tier 4 beds where children with severe eating disorders were being left waiting on wards at Rotherham Hospital for appropriate Tier 4 beds (this is a national issue).
- Development of a forward plan with regular assurance reports around key areas of concern. Over the last 12 months these have included reports on; Safeguarding vulnerable children in the pandemic, with a focus on safeguarding children in education, assurance around numbers of children home educated, CAMHS provision and waiting lists, the child criminal exploitation pilot (EVOLVE), child sexual exploitation.

Scrutiny of the RSCP work on ensuring vulnerable children are kept safe during the pandemic

This year has been unprecedented in the challenges arising from the COVID -19 pandemic, but in my view, agencies have pulled together and kept services to children running effectively including ensuring priority face to face visits to those most vulnerable. The RSCP continued to hold assurance meetings both at an operational and strategic level throughout 2020. I chaired the strategic meetings to ensure scrutiny and challenge. The RSCP agreed at the end of 2020 to cease additional meetings and brought the assurance within the business-as-usual work of the Executive. For example, in January 2021 we requested an assurance report from the responsible officer for Education on the actions taken to respond to the increase in children Electively Home Educated (EHE) and the response of the Council to ensure as far

as possible their support and safety. Other examples are provided in the report.

The other key area of my scrutiny has been around reducing serious harm and preventing deaths caused by abuse and neglect in under 1s. Rotherham was identified as a contributor to the national review published in September 2021, ***“The myth of invisible men”*** (Safeguarding Children Practice Review Panel Sept 2021) and played an active role in the review resulting in the national report.

A good example of innovative partnership work was the creation of a regular ‘baby clinic’ where practitioners in health could bring concerns about unborn babies to children’s social care services for discussion and planning. This resulted in an improvement in timeliness of notifications of pregnancies, leading to an improvement in the timeliness of referrals.

This in turn allows social care assessments to be completed in a timely manner ensuring clear safety and support plans / expectations for the families prior to the birth of the baby.

I presented to the Executive in July 2021 on key wider themes coming out of the Child Practice Review Panel’s work and asked some reflective questions of the Executive which need to be considered over the next year:

- How do safeguarding partners model personal leadership of, and accountability for, the dissemination and embedding of learning in their local area?
- How do they know that the local child practice reviews and rapid reviews are making an impact? What are the key barriers?
- How can RSCP make better use of national reviews to support learning and improvement
- How RSCP work together to give practitioners a sense of confidence, support and progress in addressing the stubborn challenges in child safeguarding?

Wider partnership meetings and learning

As independent chair of RSCP I have chaired three wider partnership meetings over the last year. These have a specific area of focus and are intended to provide a forum both for learning but also challenge and discussion. All meetings were held virtually and well attended across statutory, independent, and voluntary agencies.

My scrutiny comments about these issues are in the report:

- Nov 2020 - Thematic Spotlight on Child Exploitation (CE), adolescent neglect and Contextual Safeguarding
- June 2021 - Spotlight on Neglect and the launch of the Rotherham Neglect Strategy
- Oct 2021 - The remit and function of the Front Door

Joint Adult and Children Safeguarding

The two independent chairs meet quarterly to look at cross partnership issues and to ensure there is good joint working. They also meet annually with the RMBC Chief Officer. As part of the commitment to work together, provide independent scrutiny and to meet statutory guidance (for children around Section 11 safeguarding self-assessment) we facilitated two virtual self-assessment sessions as well as joint involvement in the Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW21).

Self-Assessment Challenge sessions

The sessions drilled down on two aspects of the Section 11 standards which had been broadened for use across the adult and child agenda. Both sessions were well attended, and the challenge conversations drew out areas for individual improvement alongside some cross agency areas for improvement and learning.

Summary

The RSCP has concentrated over the last year on embedding the changes to the partnership and evolving the three statutory partners' joint accountability and responsibility to work together more equitably. I am assured that the representation at all levels of meetings from strategic to operational is appropriate and that partners are committed to multi agency working. The response by agencies to safeguarding children during the first 18 months of the pandemic, as evidenced in this report and by Ofsted has been robust.

Last year I made comment on the need for more scrutiny of the Front Door, and I believe this has been achieved and that development plans are in place. The Section 11 self-assessment tried to capture how well the voice of children was represented in services and whilst there was some evidence of good practice there is still more to do on a wider partnership level to really achieve this.

Performance Monitoring & Assurance

As highlighted in this report there has been scrutiny of both single and multi-agency performance and assurance information and audit. Whilst multi agency training has been run virtually, it has continued and a successful Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW21) was held over a week in November 2021, 28 different events were attended by 386 attendees.

However, there is still much more to do. The past year has created challenge in capacity of the RSCP Business Unit to respond to demand following the previous year's reduction in staffing. This has been impacted further by staff sickness, retirement of the Safeguarding Education lead and maternity leave of the Policy and Quality Assurance Officer. As scrutineer I have challenged some of the decision making about the partnership budget restrictions and slowness to recruit or cover these

posts which has created additional pressure on the Partnership Manager and a lack of follow through on some actions and audits.

As part of our continuous assurance we will focus on:

- Embedding learning from national and local reviews better and ensuring that actions are followed through, and assurance gained as to the impact of such learning.
- More work with delivery groups, to consider a refresh to any membership, chairing and ensure increased communication and oversight by the Executive
- Ensuring that multi agency policy and procedures are kept up to date and that there is a planned programme to address changes.
- Transition from children to adults' services and a joint piece of work with adult safeguarding board around current practice improvements and assurance
- Assurance on how well the Neglect Strategy has been embedded and evidence of improvement.
- More assurance on the move to contextual safeguarding (CE), and the revision of CE strategy
- Ensuring the outcome of the RSCP Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) review (Jan-March 2022) addresses concerns raised in the Conservative briefing report to Council and the subsequent approved motion (Nov 2021).



Learning and Improvement

Learning and Improvement		
Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
Overview	Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership promotes a culture of continuous learning and improvement across all organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, to identify what works well, what promotes good practice and outcomes for children, and where changes need to be made to improve the effectiveness of practice and service delivery.	
Safeguarding Practice Review Group (SPRG)	<p>The Safeguarding Practice Review Group - SPRG (formerly the Serious Case Review subgroup) ensures that cases requiring a Child Safeguarding Practice Review or a local safeguarding review. Where a serious child safeguarding incident is identified and notified to the National Panel, an immediate Rapid Review is undertaken within the partnership to identify learning and establish whether a more comprehensive Child Safeguarding Practice Review is required.</p> <p>CR - 19</p> <p>A review of a case was commissioned by the RSCP in May 2020, and this was published in January 2021. There are 5 learning points contained within the report, alongside recommendations given. The main improvement actions sit with Social Care, Early Help and The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust. The report has been published on the RSCP website.</p> <p>Rapid Review</p> <p>In March 2021 a 10-month-old baby died, and a Rapid Review was conducted. The case was discussed at the SPRG and it was decided that a full safeguarding practice review was not required. The case was submitted to the National Panel who concurred with that decision and noted it as an exemplary Rapid Review. An improvement action plan was developed to provide assurance from the learning points and that the improvement actions identified are completed.</p>	SPRG monitors review action plans to ensure implementation of the learning and improvements identified.

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
<p>The Learning and Improvement Delivery Group</p>	<p>The Learning and Improvement Delivery Group is the lead delivery group for taking learning across the partnership forward. The learning and development prospectus for inter-agency safeguarding training and workforce development is published annually. Inter-agency training is mostly delivered from safeguarding leads within the partnership; however, some specialist training will be commissioned and from external provider where a need is identified, and this is a priority. Training is at no cost to any safeguarding partner organisation within Rotherham. Every participant is required to provide feedback in relation to the training course received and then as a follow up so that all learning activity can be monitored for impact on practice and outcomes for children.</p> <p>What's Worked Well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Links to CE Delivery Group and P&Q Delivery Group re learning ● Safeguarding Awareness Week – variety of sessions and topics covered ● Learning on a page from audit findings ● Recent Practitioner Event – Neglect, Trauma/impact on parenting ● Practitioner Event for National Panel – learning across the Partnership 	<p>The partnership has a valued learning and development offer, delivered free to all partner organisations, including schools and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Additionally, a termly Education Safeguarding Forum provides opportunities for all education providers to network and engage with other statutory partners on key initiatives.</p>
<p>Practice Standards Group</p> <p>Subgroup of Learning and Improvement Delivery Group</p>	<p>The Practice Standards Group (the Group) – with representatives from Education, Social Care, Early Help, Youth Offending Service, South Yorkshire Police, NHS Trusts (TRFT and RDaSH), and Voluntary Sector Agencies – monitors multiagency practice, reporting to the Learning and Improvement Delivery Group. Standards are upheld with reference to relevant safeguarding procedures and practice guidance, and the standards of conduct set out by professional bodies.</p> <p>The Group uses the Story on a Page model for reporting, and 7-Minute Briefings to disseminate learning; but will consider other methods on a case-by-case basis, including training events, whole service events, mentorship and work-based learning.</p>	<p>The Practice Standards Group provides the partnership with a mechanism to review, and learn from, individual cases which are not serious incidents.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
<p>“The Myth of Invisible Men”</p> <p>September 2021</p>	<p>The national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published a report to which Rotherham contributed. The report focusses on the circumstances of babies under 1 year old who have been harmed or killed by their fathers or other males in a caring role.</p>	<p>The themes from this report are being considered by the Child Death Overview Panel.</p>
<p>Performance and Quality Assurance Delivery Group</p>	<p>The Performance and Quality Assurance Delivery Group’s remit includes:</p> <p>Use key data from across the partnership to inform the Performance Assurance Framework (PAF) and use it to monitor the effectiveness of work undertaken by Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership and partners, in relation to the safeguarding of children from harm and promotion of their welfare.</p> <p>The commissioning of multi-agency audits against key priorities or emerging themes. These evaluate individual cases to identify effective practice and any learning for services individually and collectively across the partnership. Evidence of these audits are detailed elsewhere in this report.</p>	<p>The PAF is scrutinised to seek assurance of partnership performance and the effectiveness of the local safeguarding system and outcomes for children against RSCP priorities.</p>
<p>Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)</p>	<p>There have been improvements in the effectiveness of child death review process due to the role of lead nurse for child death in The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust. An audit of safe sleep, in children’s maternity and acute services was carried out and this was key in identifying further developments. The role of lead nurse for child death, and a keyworker role for families, has greatly improved the effectiveness of the child death review process</p>	<p>New processes are still being embedded and more consistency for Joint Agency Response (JAR) processes.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
Vulnerable Child Partnership Group	<p>The Vulnerable Children's meeting has been running since March 2020 in response to the COVID -19 outbreak, recognising the need for a partnership approach to best support our children. Includes representation from Children's Social Care, Early Help, Education, LAC Nurse, TRFT, RDaSH, CCG, Police, CGL (Change Growth, Live – drugs services), 0 -19 service.</p> <p><i>The areas of focus have included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnership updates recognising areas pressures ● Use of PPE when working with children ● Distribution of laptops to vulnerable children during school closures ● Sharing of direct work tools to assist children in understanding the changes the pandemic was bringing about. ● Review of teenage pregnancies – following a peak over a few months ● Impact of the pandemic on drug using parents, and what this means for children ● Hidden harm ● S85 Assessment for Children – where children are likely to be in hospital for longer than 12 weeks ● Eating disorders ● Single view of childhood ● Neglect – case study presentation from social worker ● Baby clinic – referred to elsewhere in this report 	<p>The Vulnerable Child Partnership Group has provided an invaluable forum for problem solving and planning for vulnerable groups of children during the pandemic and lockdown periods.</p>

Update on RSCP Key Priorities

Safe at home		
Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
Children at risk from FGM (FGM) October 2020	<p>A Multi-Agency Audit Report about Children at Risk from Female Genital Mutilation was finalised in October 2020. This was a re-audit using a dip sample to seek assurance from a similar audit conducted in 2018. At that time an Action Plan had been agreed and completed. This audit found there have been a lot of positive changes and positive information sharing, most notably within the referral information provided to MASH. A report was presented to the Executive Group and a new action plan agreed.</p>	<p>The Action plan was monitored through the Performance & Quality Assurance Delivery Group and all actions were signed off and completed by December 2021.</p>
Babies born into vulnerable families February 2021	<p>In October 2020, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families requested that Local Authorities undertake work alongside wider safeguarding partners to review circumstances of families who have historically caused significant concern, have recently 'turned a corner' but have had a new baby in the last 6 months. There had been several serious notifications/incidents involving injuries to babies in the last 2 years in Rotherham. An audit of 8 families was completed and action plan agreed.</p>	<p>Audit findings presented at Executive Group in February 2021 and action has been monitored through the Performance & Quality Assurance Delivery Group. Most actions have been completed.</p>
Teenage pregnancies March 2021	<p>The Named Midwife for TRFT flagged what was thought to be a spike in the number of teenage pregnancies during the first COVID -19 lockdown. A Task and Finish Group was convened, and a piece of work conducted to examine the issue.</p>	<p>Investigation of data proved otherwise, but this review allowed scrutiny of issues such as contraception and isolation for this cohort and changes made to working practice.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
Safeguarding in Education and Elective Home Education (EHE) March 2021	<p>During the Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in October 2020, it was noted that the number of children who are electively home-educated (EHE) has significantly increased. Assurance was sought by the Executive Group from the EHE service.</p>	<p>Assurance was provided to Executive Group: EHE has a multi-agency governance group that oversees EHE work, holds EHE Officers to account and has oversight of all children who are EHE.</p>
Baby Clinic April 2021	<p>Baby clinic was initiated as part of a local learning process which produced a published report overseen by Safeguarding Practice Review Group. Outcomes included improvement in timeliness of notifications of pregnancies, leading to an improvement in the timeliness of referrals and social care assessments.</p>	<p>There has been improved operational relationships between social care, midwifery, and early help with improved understanding of each other's roles.</p>
Launch of the Rotherham Neglect Strategy June 2021 Spotlight on Neglect and the launch of the Rotherham Neglect Strategy	<p>The Rotherham Neglect Strategy was launched in June 2021. The strategy was developed through a multiagency task and finish group process. Through participation in the process, partner agencies reviewed their procedures and training offers to ensure neglect is understood and acted upon through the workforce.</p> <p>The RSCP Independent Chair led a session for the wider partnership to assist in revising the Neglect Strategy. There was an overview of local data presented and how it relates to neglect, the local context and prevalence and a look at what systems and initiatives were in place to tackle it.</p>	<p>The Graded Care Profile 2 (assessment tool for use by all safeguarding partner practitioners) is being re-launched. Program of core training rolled out across the workforce. Police Officers are receiving a bespoke education package supported by the NSPCC. Future: Action plan needs to be monitored through the P&QA delivery group.</p>
Safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) July 2021	<p>Ofsted visited in July 2021 to conduct a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection. The inspection identified that the partnership had not fully implemented the national reforms although several strengths were identified across all aspects of Rotherham's SEND services.</p>	<p>Partner agencies responses are through a written plan of action to the SEND Improvement Board. The RSCP Executive will provide scrutiny of this process.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
Effectiveness of services for Early Help	<p>The Early Help offer in Rotherham forms part of a continuum of support, to respond to a range of needs in children and families. The responsibility for preventative and early help work lies across the multi-agency partnership, and the Early Help Service forms part of this wider system, providing targeted family support as well as outreach and engagement across the 0-19 age range. The partnership contributes to the early help offer by offering support and this is underpinned by an Early Help Assessment and Plan, to ensure shared visibility of concerns.</p>	<p>We know from extensive quality assurance, audit and performance data that the Early Help Service is well established and 'mature' in Rotherham. We know that early help improves the child and family situation and reduces escalation to Children's Social Care as CIN numbers have consistently dropped year on year from 2016 when the offer was launched.</p>
Early Help the wider system	<p>Extensive work has taken place during the period October 2020 to September 2021 to embed integrated early help pathway with Midwifery and work is also taking place to co-locate midwifery services into Children's Centres. Integrated Working Leads (IWLs) are responsible for supporting partners in completing Early Help Assessments and carrying out the Lead Professional role. This includes training and quality assurance support for partners.</p>	<p>The establishment of a partnership 'Baby Clinic' has enabled those vulnerable families where there is an unborn baby have their needs identified and Early Help support provided where appropriate.</p>
Scorecard	<p>October 2020 – September 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In September 2021 there were 1356 families (2902 children) open to the Early Help Service. ● Initial Engagement: 88.8% within three days ● Early Help Assessments: 93.9% completed in the 45-day timescale ● 10698 home visits completed within the period of Oct 20- September 21 ● 4993 virtual visits within the period of October 20- September 21 ● Re-referral rate to Early Help has decreased to 14.4% 	<p>During the period Oct 2020 - Sep 2021, partners completed 343 Early Help Assessments which was 24.2% of all EHAs completed in the timeframe. The current year to date performance is 28.7%.</p> <p>Whilst the number of Early Help Assessments completed by partners needs further commitment from across the partnership, there has been an increase year on year for the past 2 years.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
<p>Keeping Children Safe in Rotherham – South Yorkshire Police</p> <p>March 2021</p>	<p>Recognising the importance of always keeping children safe, with a real focus on child neglect SYP has developed (and delivered) a one-day training/awareness package for all its officers, regardless of rank and some of its Partners. This package looks at the indicators for child neglect such as poor health, poor living conditions, lack of parental engagement with children and poor school attendance. The training makes the links with children subject of neglect, being at increased risk of exploitation. This training has been supported with a central audit and scrutiny function to ensure officers /staff/ partners are doing the very best for our children. SYP now record many more offences of neglect, and ensure the supporting investigation is to the appropriate standard.</p>	<p>South Yorkshire Police provided assurances on keeping children safe in the home from their perspective.</p> <p>NSPCC referrals, non-crime, neglect, investigations over 2yrs. The work has identified improvements across Partnerships e.g., seeking timely strategy minutes and medical records/examinations, these improvements have been implemented across Rotherham. SYP work in this area is now informing policing nationally.</p>
<p>Effectiveness of services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers</p> <p>CYPS audits</p> <p>February 2021</p>	<p>Learning from audit: LAC Care Plans - Key themes from the audit sample</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In all the cases audited, it was felt the best outcome had been pursued through the child's care plan ● Auditors gave children, young people and families the opportunity to have a voice as part of the audit process. <p>These are highlighted as a reminder of the impact and outcomes Social Workers practice and approach has on lives.</p>	<p><i>I feel I can trust her; she was reliable and open and honest. She left us with "no doubts" or any unanswered questions. She is always available and responsive. She has been the consistent person in [child's] life; and [child] would give her 10 as well!</i></p> <p><i>She has kept me and [young person] informed on all aspects of the care plan. She will be coming out on the next visit to share a calendar with the young person of her family time with her mum and journey back home.</i></p>

Safe in the community		
Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
<p>Operation KeepSafe</p> <p>Prevention work</p>	<p>Operation Keepsafe is led by RMBC Early Help and South Yorkshire Police. It is an intelligence led, multi-agency initiative that enables a proactive response to safeguard children and young people in communities.</p>	<p>From April - November 2021 - Early Help and South Yorkshire Police led on 26 Operation KeepSafe interventions across the Borough. There has been 1602 young people engaged in KeepSafe operations since the start of April 2021.</p>
<p>Operation MakeSafe</p>	<p>It is rightly to be expected that South Yorkshire Police and its Partners across Rotherham prioritise any form of child exploitation, seeking to prevent it where possible, and should an offence be committed, give our children the very best care, while seeking to identify/bring to justice identified offenders. Operation MakeSafe has been running over the last 12 months, focussed on educating hotels and the staff within on the indicators for child exploitation. Providing guidance on what they can do to help prevent exploitation of our children e.g., challenge anyone who may be seeking a room with someone who appears to be a minor, what questions to ask and how best to contact the police/authorities</p>	<p>The Partnership has conducted assurance visits using couples who would fit this profile, establishing how well hotels have responded. Most of the visits went well, however, there remains some work still to do with some establishments, and this continues.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
<p>Children Missing from Home and Care</p> <p>April 2021</p>	<p>An audit was conducted by CYPS regarding children who go missing from home or care. Rotherham offers Return Home Interviews for all children that have had a missing from home episode, allowing independent (of the police/ social worker etc) exploration of the reasons for the child going missing, and working sensitively with young people (and carers) to prevent further episodes.</p>	<p>From April 2021- September 2021 - 197 children were reported missing from home: 42 had 3 or more episodes. 425 Return Home Interviews were conducted.</p>
<p>The Philomena Protocol - piloted in Rotherham by South Yorkshire Police</p>	<p>The Philomena Protocol clarifies expectations on placements of Looked After Children when they think a young person is missing, and the measures they should take before reporting that young person missing to avoid unnecessary Police involvement.</p>	<p>The Philomena Protocol - piloted in Rotherham by South Yorkshire Police in 2020 and is now being rolled out across the region.</p>
<p>Child Exploitation (CE) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Contextual Safeguarding</p>	<p>The Child Exploitation Delivery Group meet quarterly. The group is well represented across the partnership including South Yorkshire Police, Children's Social Care, National Crime Agency (NCA), Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group (RCCG), The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT), Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH), National Probation Service, Community Safety, Housing & Estates, Children, Young People and Families Consortium (CYPF) consortium.</p>	<p>The Child Exploitation Delivery Group brings together all the key stakeholders from across the Partnership. It oversees the implementation of the Child Exploitation Strategy and maintains a dynamic Delivery Plan and Scorecard to monitor progress.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
The Evolve Service	<p>The EVOLVE service is a multiagency team, with South Yorkshire Police (SYP), Health and Youth Offending Service (YOS) working together, co-located. Direct Support to individual young people and their parents, to identify, reduce and manage risk in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation. Other activities include mapping of connectivity, hot spots, venues, adults of concern, other children at risk. The hotel and licencing venues are engaged to report and disrupt activity; work with SYP to investigate and prosecute offenders, utilise trafficking laws and use of Abduction Orders.</p>	<p>EVOLVE have supported 99 young people in the last 12 months Social Care have completed 464 Child Exploitation Assessments resulting in a package of support and risk management in the last 12 months.</p>
Commissioned Services in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barnardo's Trusted Relationships (CE) and ReachOut services (CSE) deliver activities to reduce Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). ● Rotherham Rise – Provides help and support for survivors of Domestic Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation ● The Grow Project – A women's organisation supporting women and girls with a wide range of issues, often those who are in crisis and have experienced stress and trauma. ● Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service (Rothacs) Provides free therapeutic counselling for women, men and young people who have experienced abuse including rape, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, honour-based violence, and child sexual exploitation. 	<p>The contract is still in its infancy, to run from 1st January 2021 but began taking clients after this date, is a 3-year contract with option to extend for a further 2 years.</p> <p>A monthly contract meeting is held with providers to review referrals and contact and provide assurances.</p> <p>The first contract meeting was held in September 2021.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
Child Criminal Exploitation Pilot	Additional resources have been made available to the Evolve Team to incorporate working with children at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CE). The pilot will run for 6 months from July 2021: 4 social workers, a Youth Offending Service (YOS) worker, 2 missing advocates. In addition, there is a Health CSE nurse. SYP and YOS are also co-located in the office.	This will be reported on in the next annual report.
Nov 2020 Thematic Spotlight on Child Exploitation (CE), adolescent	The RSCPC Chair spotlighted the work of Bedfordshire University under Carlene Firmin at a wider partnership level. An overview was given by the police on progress and local data on CE within a Rotherham context – and evaluation as a partnership of views around effectiveness in this area of practice, and the move forward from child exploitation to more of a contextual safeguarding framework. The Chair presented the recommendations from National Review by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, <i>It was Hard to Escape</i> (2020).	The question was asked: What would help Rotherham take a more systemic approach to Contextual Safeguarding with adolescents? The Child Exploitation Delivery Group will be refreshing the Rotherham Child Exploitation Strategy in 2022.

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
<p>Neglect and Contextual Safeguarding</p>	<p>South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and its Partners</p> <p>There were over 75 investigations which were reviewed to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● correct identification/flagging ● victims/survivors appropriately safeguarded ● all opportunities to identify suspects maximised. <p>Except for some inaccuracies in the flagging and disposal, this review confirmed investigation were of the appropriate standard.</p>	<p>The final phase of this review is to ensure the voices of victim/survivors are heard, to ensure the Partnership is as good as it can be, and in being so, listening to our children. This review is ongoing with an independent organisation, with information obtained being overlayed with investigation findings, and recommendations progressed.</p> <p>South Yorkshire police recognise that there is a real opportunity for Rotherham/ South Yorkshire Police to lead the way nationally in this area of policing and are taking steps with Partners to move closer to this aim.</p>

ROTHERHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

Safe Safeguarding Systems		
Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
<p>Effective leadership across whole safeguarding system</p>	<p>Together We are Stronger - Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partners undertook a “what went well” exercise around COVID -19 resulting in the one-page “Together We Are Stronger” article with actions to be taken “Going Forward”.</p>	<p>RSCP Chair meets with Chairs of other key strategic partnerships (Safeguarding Adults Board, Safer Rotherham Partnership, Health & wellbeing Board) to ensure that any cross-cutting issues can be addressed collectively.</p>
<p>Effective Front Door and Early Help Services</p> <p>October 2020</p> <p>Front Door Health Check (FDHC)</p> <p>May 2021</p>	<p>Ofsted conducted an inspection in October 2020 under the Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) framework.</p> <p>There were no recommendations for changes in front door services. Their findings included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Early help services and children’s social care are integrated, promoting positive working relationships and a clear understanding of thresholds. This has been maintained during COVID -19. ● Effective multi-agency working in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and the wider partnership means that children and families receive an appropriate response to identified need. <p>A Front Door Health Check was completed in May 2021. Findings identified positives for both a safe front door and partnership working.</p> <p>Challenges relating to the RSCP:</p> <p>Holding partners to account for referral-in culture - too many contacts being sent through to the Front Door that may be dealt with effectively by partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safeguarding Partnership issue - would recommend that this issue is taken to the Children Safeguarding Partnership Board to be discussed 	<p>The Executive received a presentation in August 2021 and a themed discussion was held at the Wider Partnership Group. A task and finish group has been set up. The outcomes of this will be reported in the next annual report.</p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
Safeguarding Awareness Week November 2020	SAW21 Events included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocacy working with Children & Young People ● Launch of the People in Positions of Trust (PIPOT) ● Neurodiversity and the Criminal Justice System ● Spot the Signs – CSE ● CSE Video Launched (SYP) ● Thinking Family – Trauma Informed consultation - Stovewood Survivors - CYPS ● Contextualised Safeguarding 	There were 28 different events hosted with a total of 386 attendees over all the events. The week was held as a South Yorkshire initiative, and in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adults Boards, with local activity in each area.
Achieving Best and Timely Outcomes for Children & Young People December 2020	This audit requested by RSCP focused on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assure that appropriate organisational values and attitudes underpin the management and delivery of services across key agencies. ● Assure there is sufficient rigour in the system to demonstrate the interest of the child (as a victim or perpetrator) is pursued through robust approaches, appropriate safeguarding, and support to the child and to the criminal investigation, from any agency. 	The audit was presented to the RSCP Executive Group, and the resulting action plan continues to be monitored through the Performance and Quality Assurance Delivery Group.
Public health Pathways Inc 0 – 19 services July 2021	Assurance given through presentation by Director of Public Health - health and wellbeing strategy: Key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Best start portfolio priorities ● Recommission of 0-19 services & proposed timetable ● Community water fluoridation ● Child Death Overview Panel 	Presentation to Executive Group for scrutiny.
Care Quality Commission (CQC) Improvement Plan for TRFT Update September 2021	The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT) Improvement Plan completed on schedule. All 184 improvement actions have now been completed and closed. The CQC no longer request minutes of all executive meetings and is now business as usual.	Assurance was requested in relation to improvement plan. This was provided by a presentation by the Chief Nurse, The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust.

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress	Impact and future challenges
<p>Effective Workforce Development</p> <p>RSCP multi-agency training</p>	<p>As part of its Learning and Development Strategy, the RSCP provides partner-led, multi-agency safeguarding training workshops, e-learning, briefing / bite size sessions and conferences. A prospectus is published annually. The RSCP multi-agency safeguarding training is offered free to staff and volunteers from all partner agencies who encounter children, young people and / or their families within Rotherham in the course of their work.</p>	<p>The Learning and Development Offer is well received across the partnership inc vol sector. Key challenge - organisations should have their own core offer for their workforce, not solely rely on the RSCP offer.</p>

Listening to the views of children and their families

Listening to the views of children and their families	
Assurance Through	Actions and Progress
<p>Ofsted - Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)</p> <p>October 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and young people are encouraged to have a voice and influence the design and delivery of services. Senior leaders talked warmly of their input, and members of the Looked After Children Council regularly attend the corporate parenting board. The Looked After Children Council coordinator has been central in ensuring that laptops are available for members of the Looked After Children Council, and online sessions have been completed for approximately 50 children during COVID -19 restrictions. The focus of these sessions was mental health and well-being, getting children prepared for returning to school, and offering an opportunity to discuss any concerns.
<p>The Looked After Children's Council (LAC Council)</p>	<p>The Looked After Children's Council (LAC Council) and Lil' LAC Club enable children and young people to meet up in a safe and welcoming environment where they can talk about the issues that affect them whilst they are in the care of Rotherham Council. This gives the young people the chance to share their experiences, and gives our looked after children a voice, which also helps Rotherham Council to make important decisions that help improve the lives of young people in care. Activities over the past year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Big Ask - The LAC Council invited by the Children's Commissioner to engage in 'the Big Ask', the largest ever survey of children in England, designed to find out what their concerns and aspirations about the future are. LAC Council have given their views to be heard in a national consultation of children in care into the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. Neglect Strategy Consultation on LAC Nurses Trial Questions - The Looked After Children's Nurses are compiling a questionnaire to gain feedback regarding their involvement with LAC to ensure young people have an opportunity to share their thoughts with the team after their health assessments. <div> <p><i>Take time to build a positive relationship with me, hear my voice, my choice, my feelings & emotions, make me feel important & valued, recognise the power imbalances between us, get to know who I am not what my notes say, understand what is important to me as this will guide you to keep your promises to me. (Rotherham LAC COUNCIL members)</i></p> </div>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress
Right to Rights Service	<p>Children or young people who are, or have ever been, looked after can get support from the Right to Rights Service. The service provides information, advice and assistance to help put things right or to help the child or young person to understand what's happening and why. The services also include independent advocacy to make sure that their voice is heard and acted upon. Some feedback from young people:</p> <p><i>"I feel like you and my old PA help me and you are only 2 people that I can call. [PA] does care and you can tell and not just after the job for the money"</i></p>
Feedback from children and families about health professionals (TRFT)	<p><i>"My school nurse has been amazing with me. She has helped me get through everything and is one of the kindest people I have met. She has helped me turn everything from upside down to the right way round and positive. The more I saw her the more confident I became"</i></p> <p><i>"The school nurse just has this way of making you feel that you could talk to her about anything. She is so good at her job and we honestly can't thank her enough for the work she has done with me and my family. She will always have a place in my heart for the time and care she has given us"</i></p>
Barnardo's Child Protection Conference (CPC) Advocacy Service	<p>This service provides Advocates who are independent of CYPS to support children and young people who are attending an Initial or Review Child Protection Conference. All children aged above 8 years are given the opportunity to be supported.</p> <p>In November 2020 the service implemented Child Friendly Plans created by the Advocates following attendance at Conference or receipt of minutes. These plans are clarified with the Conference Chair and then shared with the child/young person in a child friendly age/need appropriate format. Feedback from children has been positive.</p> <p><i>"... the plan that you did helped me last time (Child Friendly Plan that the Advocate completes). It really helped and if it weren't for that I wouldn't have known anything or understood anything."</i></p>

Assurance Through	Actions and Progress
Rotherham Youth Cabinet	<p>Rotherham Youth Cabinet are a group of young people aged 11 to 18 from across Rotherham, who work on campaigns and help make decisions which have a positive difference to the lives of young people in Rotherham. Youth Cabinet members attended a RCPC Partnership Board Meeting and gave a presentation on their activities and campaigns. The Board offered their support to various elements of their work. The Youth Cabinet contributed to gathering feedback from young people in Rotherham in relation to the Neglect Strategy.</p>
COVID -19 Survey – Voice of Children & Young People June 2021	<p>Findings from consultation during May/June 2021, with children and young people in Rotherham to inform planning for emotional health and wellbeing support for young people. Public Health England recommended local authorities capture the views of children and young people to establish the state of their mental health and wellbeing during lockdown in March 2020. A second piece of consultation work was carried out in October 2020, to capture the views from young people around the impact of the pandemic and school closures and how these were affecting their health and wellbeing. It was agreed that Rotherham would carry out a third consultation with students. 4,118 young people participated in the June 2021 survey.</p>
Rotherham Young Inspectors	<p>The Rotherham Young Inspectors Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inspect services to make sure they are doing what they should be doing. ● Give feedback to services including what's good and what could be made better. ● Make sure that children, young people & families are listened to. ● Raise young people's confidence and self-esteem. ● Get young people engaged with the services. <p>During September 2020 to October 2021 the Young Inspectors were limited to the inspections and meetings that could be held due to the COVID -19 Pandemic and the restrictions and guidance.</p>



w: www.rscp.org.uk
e: cyps-safeguardingboard@rotherham.gov.uk