

Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2025-26



Executive Summary from HSSCP Lead Safeguarding Partners



It is a privilege, on behalf of the Lead Safeguarding Partners, to introduce the Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP) Annual Report for 2025-26.

This report sets out the significant progress, achievements and learning undertaken by the partnership over the last year. It demonstrates our continuing commitment to delivering effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children and supporting the national Families First Partnership reforms. Throughout the year, partners have worked collaboratively to strengthen safeguarding practice, improve outcomes for children and families, and ensure that children and young people remain at the heart of everything we do.

2025-26 has been a year of both innovation and implementation. Across Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees, partners have embraced opportunities presented through the Families First Partnership Programme, developing new approaches to Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection arrangements and Family Group Decision Making. These developments have been characterised by strong partnership ownership, shared responsibility and a collective determination to ensure that children and families receive the right support at the right time.

The report evidences the breadth and depth of work undertaken across the partnership and highlights progress against our strategic priorities:

- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Harm Outside of the Home
- Child Sexual Abuse (foundational work undertaken during 2025-26)
- Engagement with Children and Young People
- Strengthening Quality Assurance, Learning and Improvement

One of the most significant achievements during the year has been the development of our Trauma-Informed Partnership priority. Through extensive engagement with children, young people, practitioners and senior leaders, we have established a shared vision and framework that will support long-term cultural change across the safeguarding system. We have also continued to strengthen our response to Harm Outside of the Home through Tees-wide collaboration, ensuring greater consistency of practice and improved multi-agency responses for vulnerable children and young people.

The voice of children and young people has remained central to the work of HSSCP. Through School Safeguarding Councils, focus groups and the co-production of safeguarding resources and newsletters, young people have actively influenced partnership priorities, campaigns and communications. Their insight continues to shape our understanding of emerging risks and helps ensure that our safeguarding arrangements remain responsive to their lived experiences.

As a learning partnership, we have continued to strengthen our arrangements for audit, review and quality assurance. Multi-agency audits, rapid reviews, learning reviews and thematic deep dives have enabled us to identify strengths, challenge practice where required, and ensure that learning is translated into meaningful improvements. In particular, significant work has been undertaken to improve our understanding and response to Child Sexual Abuse, following the Independent Scrutineer's thematic review and national recommendations.

The Independent Scrutineer has again provided valuable challenge, support and assurance throughout the year. Their report highlights several areas of significant strength, including strong strategic leadership, effective governance arrangements, collaborative multi-agency working, meaningful engagement with children and young people, and a mature culture of learning and continuous improvement. The report also identifies opportunities to further strengthen our use of partnership data and evidence impact on outcomes for children and families, which will remain a focus for the partnership moving forward.

I would like to thank colleagues across all partner agencies, schools, voluntary and community organisations, and most importantly the children, young people and families who continue to contribute to and shape our work. Their commitment, professionalism and shared determination ensure that safeguarding remains everyone's responsibility.

Together, we remain committed to our vision that every child and young person in Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees feels safe, secure and protected from harm, enabling them to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Mike Greene Chair, Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership
On behalf of the Lead Safeguarding Partners

Wayne Fox Assistant Chief Constable, Cleveland Police 	Mike Greene Chief Executive, Stockton Borough Council 	Sam Allen Chief Executive North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board 	Matt Wilton Chief Executive Hartlepool Borough Council

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Section 1: Area Profile

Geographical Boundaries

The Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership covers the two local authority areas of Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Councils. These neighbouring local authorities are already closely aligned and have a willingness to work together; underpinned by a shared Children’s Hub which is the front door to Children’s Services across both local authorities.

Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees also share a co-terminus Integrated Care Board and Police force.



Section 1: Area Profile - About Hartlepool

HARTLEPOOL DEMOGRAPHICS



Hartlepool Context

There are **40 schools** in Hartlepool with 30 mainstream primary, 5 mainstream secondary, 2 special schools (one primary, one secondary), 2 Independent School and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. The **number of children who are home educated is 289** which, although small when compared to all children accessing school, is monitored and reviewed by the Partnership annually to ensure oversight of this cohort of children and young people. Based on **2026** January School Census, **24.6%** of the Hartlepool school age population were **SEND** (EHCP and SEN Support). The number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans or Statements of SEN issued by Hartlepool (January school census) is 756 (301 primary age, 377 secondary and 78 post 16).

The latest available data from End Child Poverty (June 2024) shows the proportion of **children living in poverty being 31.9%**, compared to an average of 31% in the North East and nationally. Living in an area of high deprivation, the children and young people of Hartlepool, their families and the professionals who work to support them, therefore face many challenges. There is a large body of evidence and research to show that **children who live in poverty are more likely to face additional traumatic experiences** or be exposed to a range of risks that can have a serious impact on their mental health and life chances. It is therefore important for the Safeguarding Partnership to be fully aware of this cohort of children and young people and ensure that these are considered within aspects of the partnerships work programme.

HARTLEPOOL SAFEGUARDING SNAPSHOT



Throughout 2024-25 there were approximately:
21,090 children & young people under 18

31.9% of children living in poverty

36.7% of primary school children in receipt of free school meals (the national average is 24.9%)

835 average contacts to the Children's Hub* per Month

2410 referrals to children's social care



27.8% were re-referrals

654 Early Help assessments completed

86 Early Help cases escalated to Social Care

1344 open Child in Need cases

160 children subject to a Child Protection Plan

3490 children and young people receiving services through Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support

28 children and young people identified as being at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation

53 children and young people identified as being at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation

853 missing episodes by 264 young people

359 missing episodes by 61 Hartlepool looked after young people

386 children and young people looked after



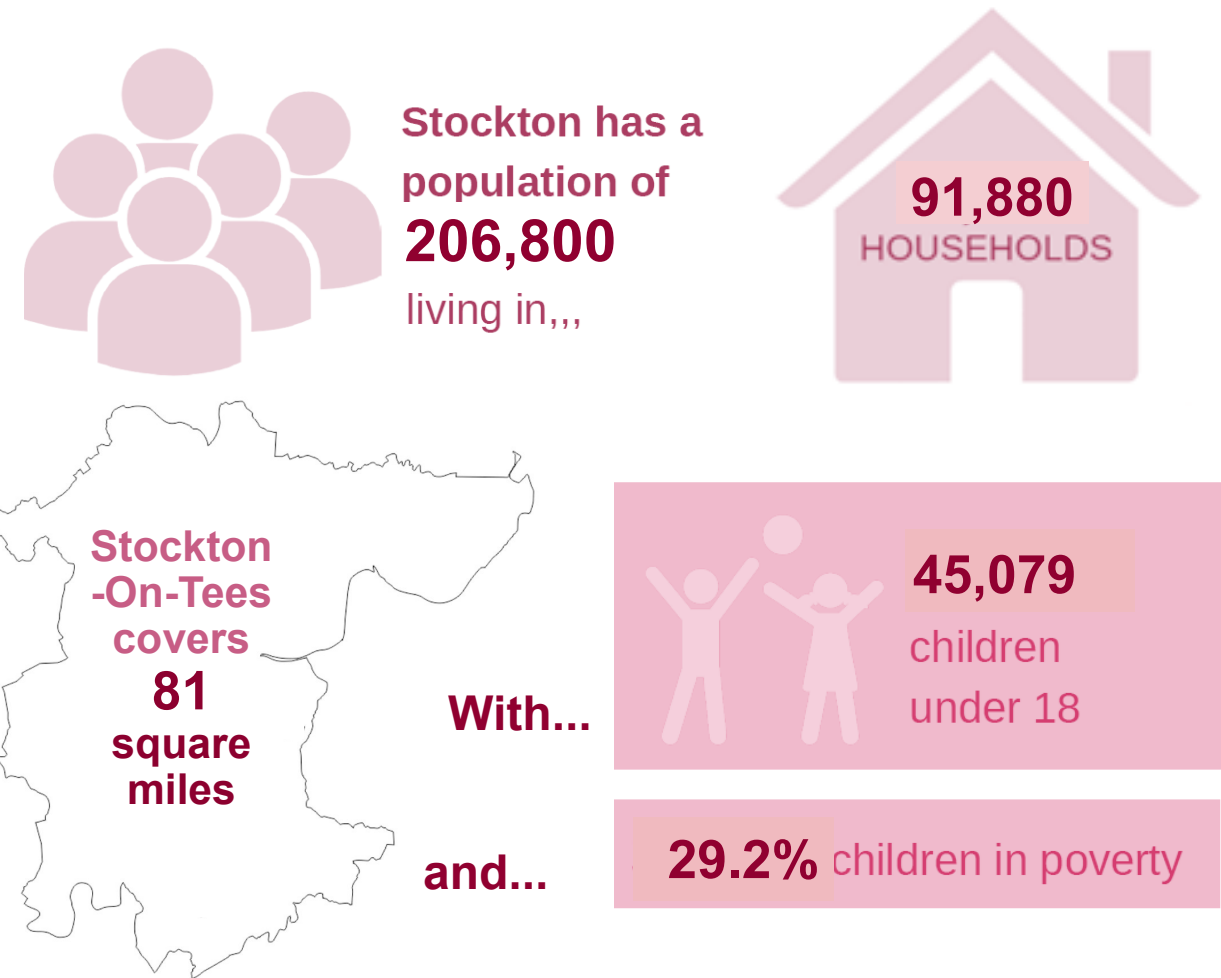
0 new Private Fostering arrangements reported



* NB: The Children's Hub is the multi-agency front door for referrals into Children's Social Care.

Section 1: Area Profile - About Stockton-on-Tees

STOCKTON-ON-TEES DEMOGRAPHICS



Stockton Context

There are 90 schools in Stockton with 68 primary (45 academy, 14 maintained, 6 special and 3 independent schools), 22 secondary (12 academy, 1 maintained, 6 special and 3 independent schools). 6 of the schools cover both primary and secondary provision (2 independent and 4 special). The **number of children who are home educated is 586** which, although small when compared to all children accessing school provision, is monitored and reviewed by the Partnership annually to ensure oversight of this cohort of children and young people. Based on the School Pupil Spring Census January 2025, **20.6% of the school population were SEND** (Special Education Needs and Disabilities). This figure includes those that had an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) /Statement and those that have SEN support. The number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans or statements of SEN in Stockton is **2884** (1249 primary age children, 1099 secondary, 536 post-16) .

The latest available data from End Child Poverty (June 2024) shows **29.2% of children are living in poverty in Stockton-on-Tees** (after housing costs are included), compared to an average of 31% in the North East and nationally. Living in an area of deprivation, the children and young people of Stockton-on-Tees, their families and the professionals who work to support them, therefore face many challenges. There is a large body of evidence and research to show that **children who live in poverty are more likely to face additional traumatic experiences** or be exposed to a range of risks that can have a serious impact on their mental health and life chances. It is therefore important for the Safeguarding Partnership to be fully aware of this cohort of children and young people and ensure that these are considered within aspects of the partnerships work programme.



STOCKTON-ON-TEES SAFEGUARDING SNAPSHOT



Throughout 2024-25 there were approximately:

45,079 children & young people under 18

Which equates to:

22% of the total population

29.2% of children living in poverty
(Source - End Child Poverty data May 2021)

29% of mainstream primary school children in receipt of free school meals (the national average is 26.5%)

1334 average contacts to the Children's Hub per month

4310 referrals to children's social care



34% were re-referrals

2256 new Early Help episodes

203 Early Help cases escalated to Social Care

2081 open Child in Need cases

310 children subject to a Child Protection Plan

4904 children and young people receiving services through Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support

18 children and young people identified as being at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation

37 children and young people identified as being at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation

1325 missing episodes by 433 young people

543 missing episodes by 108 Stockton looked after young people

612 children and young people looked after



2261 children present during a domestic abuse incident

302 cases discussed in MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

760 children involved in MARAC

151 referrals in relation to allegations against staff working with children and young people

8 new Private Fostering arrangements reported

Section 2: About HSSCP - Meeting the requirements set out in statutory guidance

Section 2: About HSSCP - Meeting the requirements set out in statutory guidance

'Working Together to Safeguard Children, a guide on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children' sets out the statutory guidance for what organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children must and should do to help, protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England. How Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership meet the requirements set out in the statutory guidance is set out in the partnerships [Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements \(MASA\)](#) document.

Reforms - Implementation of changes

In Hartlepool:

The Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP) has made strong progress across its key workstreams in Hartlepool, with clear implementation plans and milestones established through 2026 and 2027. A significant strength of the programme has been the active involvement of multi-agency partners, including children's social care, education, health, police (who were seconded into the programme to support implementation), substance misuse services, Harbour and the voluntary and community sector, who have contributed to service design, governance, workforce development and implementation planning across the MACPT workstream.

Within Family Help, pilot programmes for the Edge of Care, Reunification and Specialist Family Resource Teams are underway and are currently being evaluated. Alongside this, work continues to integrate the Family Help model within existing services and further strengthen the multi-agency front door. The development of the Family Help approach is now underway and will be informed through engagement with a wide range of partners, ensuring that services are designed around the needs of children, young people and families and that pathways between agencies are clear and effective. Good progress has been made in developing a single assessment process, with the draft assessment currently subject to multi-agency consultation and feedback. There is a new multi agency triage process in the Hartlepool front door which is supporting the right support at the right time and that earliest of help with the support of multi agency professionals.

The next phase of development will focus on establishing the Family Help Lead Practitioner role, designing a multi-disciplinary Family Help service model, and preparing for longer-term case management system changes anticipated from 2027. A key priority will be ensuring that workforce development, governance arrangements and performance frameworks are aligned across partner agencies to support successful implementation and sustainability of the Family Help model.

The Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) is now fully operational, with multi agency professionals and Lead Child Protection Practitioners in post and receiving positive feedback regarding their contribution to risk analysis, decision-making and oversight. Recruitment has been completed across most key partner agencies, including safeguarding. There is a strong commitment to shared responsibility for safeguarding children and further discussions are taking place around children's mental health and how this could fit more closely in this model.

The successful integration of some of the IRO service into the MACPT, alongside multi-agency workforce development sessions and practice workshops and consultation with families has created a strong foundation for the new model. Partners are working collaboratively to embed a shared understanding of risk, improve information sharing and strengthen decision-making.



Early feedback is positive regarding the approach Hartlepool has taken. The focus for Hartlepool is now shifting from implementation to quality assurance, performance monitoring and evaluation. Future work will concentrate on embedding consistent practice standards, strengthening multi-agency oversight and evidencing the positive impact of the model on outcomes for children and families. The Hartlepool Assistant Director has been leading the regional MACPT strategic group supporting reflection of learning and good practice across the North-East.

Strong foundations have also been established for Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), with consultation with families, governance arrangements, implementation plans, practice standards and workforce training now in place to build on existing good practice already in existence in the Local Authority. The development and implementation of the model is supporting a shared commitment to family-led planning and collaborative decision-making. The approach aims to engage family networks earlier, strengthen family resilience and support children to remain safely within their families wherever possible. Hartlepool has been piloting family network support packages which support this approach to practice and our kinship strategy.

Key priorities moving forward include embedding the FGDM approach consistently across children's services and partner agencies, improving the integration of family network plans into children's plans, increasing practitioner confidence and capability in family network-building, and demonstrating the impact of FGDM through measurable improvements in outcomes for children and families.

Overall, Hartlepool has established strong foundations across Family Help, Child Protection and Family Group Decision Making. The commitment and engagement of multi-agency partners has supported progress to date. As the programme progresses, increased focus will be on family help, it will shift from implementation to embedding practice, strengthening partnership working, evaluating impact and ensuring that the reforms deliver sustainable improvements and better outcomes for children, young people and families.

Reforms - Implementation of changes

In Stockton:

Stockton-on-Tees Council's implementation of the Families First Partnership (FFP) reforms has been underpinned by a strong and longstanding commitment to partnership working across statutory services, health partners, education, police and the voluntary and community sector. From the outset, key partners including Cleveland Police, the 0-19 Service, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Harbour, Change Grow Live (CGL), schools and wider voluntary sector organisations have worked alongside Children's Services to co-design the local Families First model and implementation plan. This collaborative approach has ensured that the programme reflects local need, builds on existing strengths and establishes shared ownership of the reforms across the partnership.

A particular strength of Stockton's approach has been the direct contribution of partners to the development phase. Both Cleveland Police and the 0-19 Service seconded experienced staff to work alongside Children's Services, providing dedicated capacity and expertise to develop the implementation plan, practice framework, workforce model and operating arrangements. This investment enabled partners to shape the future model collectively, strengthen relationships across agencies and establish a genuinely integrated approach from the outset.

The strength of these partnerships has continued throughout implementation and remains central to the success achieved to date. Stockton-on-Tees Council's work has focused on the development of a new integrated front door to services, known as the Family Help Point, alongside the delivery of test-and-learn approaches for both Family Help and the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) reforms. Family Group Decision Making principles have been embedded throughout all developments, ensuring that families are actively involved in identifying solutions, building on strengths and drawing on support networks within their wider family and community.

The Family Help Point represents a significant step forward in providing a coordinated and Integrated response to children and families. Designed as a multi-agency model, it brings together professionals from across partner organisations to improve information sharing, decision-making and the identification of support at the earliest opportunity. The model seeks to ensure that families receive the right support at the right time, avoiding unnecessary escalation wherever possible.

The Family Help Pilot operates on a locality basis and brings together social workers and alternatively qualified practitioners within unified, multi-disciplinary teams. The pilot is testing a new co-produced Family Help Assessment and Planning process, enabling families to access coordinated support through a single team while benefiting from the expertise of a range of partner agencies. The model is helping to build stronger relationships with families, improve consistency of support and strengthen multi-agency ownership of outcomes.



The MACPT pilot has adopted a thematic focus on the pre-birth and 0-1 age cohort, identified through local strategic needs assessment activity as a group often experiencing multiple and complex vulnerabilities. Through closer collaboration between agencies, the pilot is strengthening assessment, planning and intervention at the earliest stage of a child's life, supporting improved outcomes for babies and their families while ensuring risks are identified and addressed collectively.

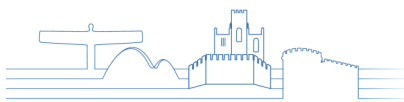
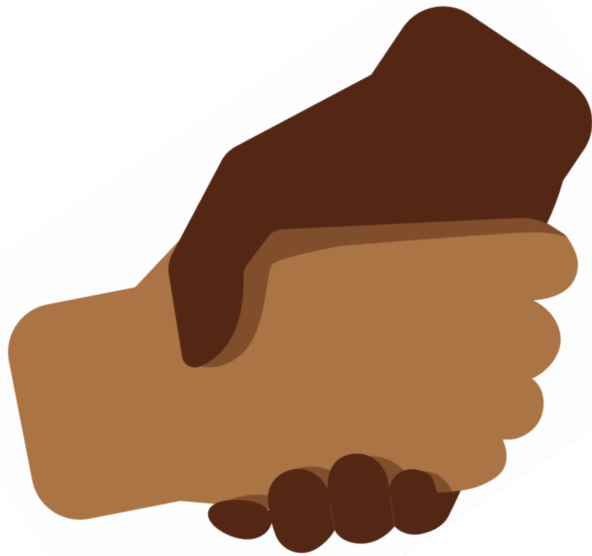
Both pilots became operational during spring/ summer 2026 and have already generated encouraging feedback from practitioners, partners and families. Early implementation is demonstrating a positive shift in practice, with partners increasingly identifying and responding to need at an earlier stage. This is enabling more children and families to access support through Family Help services before difficulties escalate, reducing reliance on statutory social work intervention where needs can be safely met through coordinated early help and targeted support. Practitioners report growing confidence in delivering Family Help approaches, alongside stronger multi-agency planning and greater use of Family Group Decision Making to support sustainable change within families.

The continued strength of partnership working has been critical to these early successes. The same agencies that helped design the reforms remain actively involved in delivery, ensuring that the Family Help Point, Family Help Pilot and MACPT Pilot operate as genuinely integrated, multi-agency models rather than isolated service developments. This shared commitment to prevention, early intervention and whole-family support is already contributing to a culture shift across the partnership and places Stockton-on-Tees Council in a strong position to successfully implement the full Families First Partnership programme by March 2027, in line with Department for Education expectations.

HSSCP Safeguarding Partners

HSSCP Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs)

Chief Constable, Cleveland Police
Chief Executive, Stockton Borough Council
Managing Director, Hartlepool Borough Council
Chief Executive North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board



The four lead safeguarding partners retain an equal and joint responsibility for their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASAs) in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. They set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively. The LSPs form the HSSCP Chief Executive group (See page 14).

The lead safeguarding partners have identified delegated safeguarding partners (DSPs) who have responsibility for the delivery of multi-agency safeguarding functions and processes. The LSPs selected Stockton Borough Council as the Partnership chair for 2025 -26, with the Stockton Borough Council LSP and DSP taking on the chairing role for the Chief Executive and Executive groups within the partnership arrangements. This is to be a yearly term and will be undertaken on a rota basis.

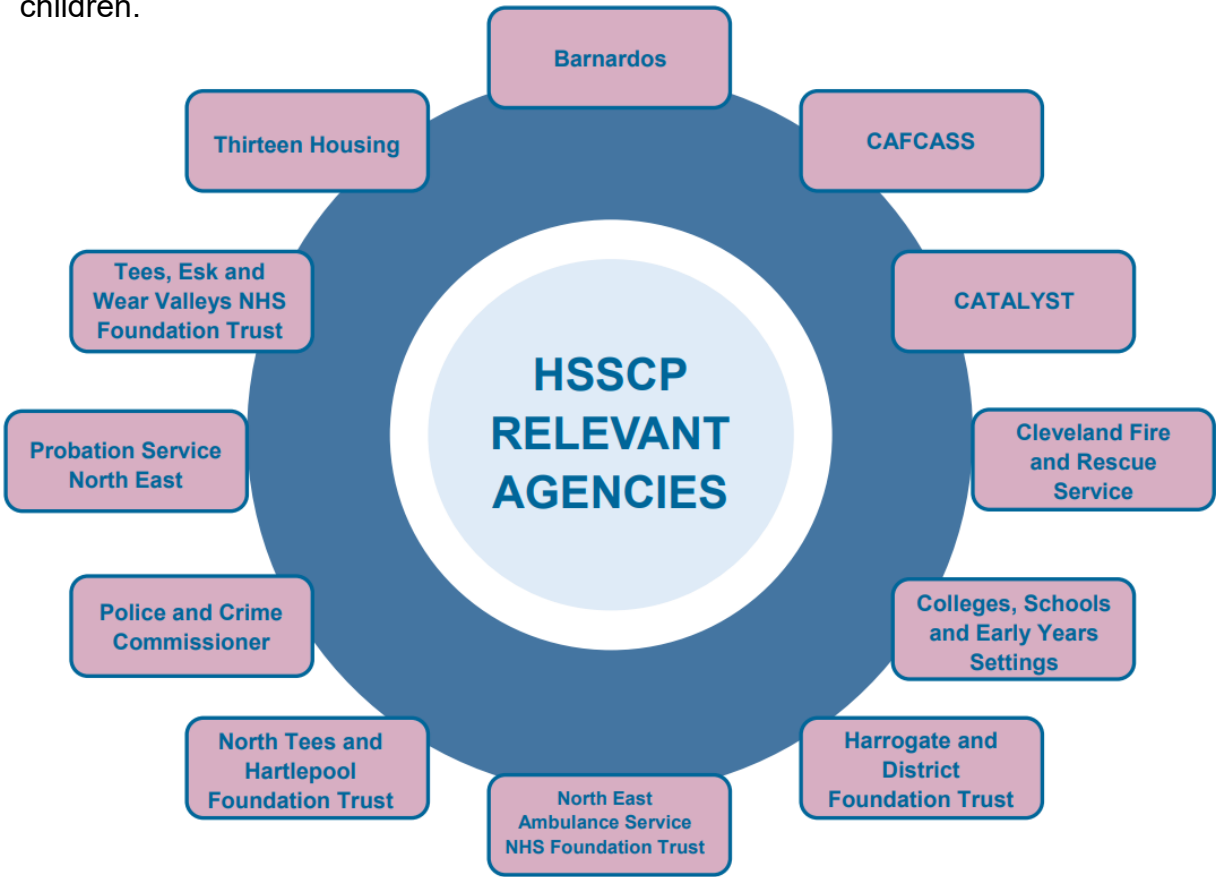
HSSCP Delegated Safeguarding Partners

Executive Director of Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services, Hartlepool Borough Council
Detective Superintendent, Cleveland Police
Director of Nursing, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Director of Children’s Services, Stockton Borough Council

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners form the HSSCP Executive group, which is made up of the DSP’s and lead representatives from relevant agencies, including schools and the VCS. (See page 14).

HSSCP Relevant Agencies

Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider are required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children.



NB: This is not an exhaustive list. Please refer to the MASA arrangements for more detail in relation to HSSCP relevant agencies.

HSSCP GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Chief Executives Group

The Chief Executives Group is made up of Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) and delegated safeguarding partners (DSPs). They meet quarterly to maintain strategic oversight and governance of the MASAs, to assure themselves that their local arrangements are effective and keep children safe and to undertake their core functions as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023.

The HSSCP Executive

The HSSCP Executive is made up of the DSPs from the four statutory agencies and selected strategic leaders from HSSCP relevant agencies, including education and the VCS. They meet bi-monthly to ensure delivery and monitoring of multi-agency priorities and procedures.

The Executive is accountable to the Chief Executives Group and is responsible for ensuring delivery of the agreed HSSCP business plan, as well as governance of Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs.

The HSSCP Sub-Groups

There are three core HSSCP sub-groups:

- HSSCP Engine Room
- HSSCP Priority Sub Group
- HSSCP Safeguarding in Education Sub-Group

These sub-groups undertake work to drive forward the partnerships business and priorities and are accountable to the HSSCP Executive.

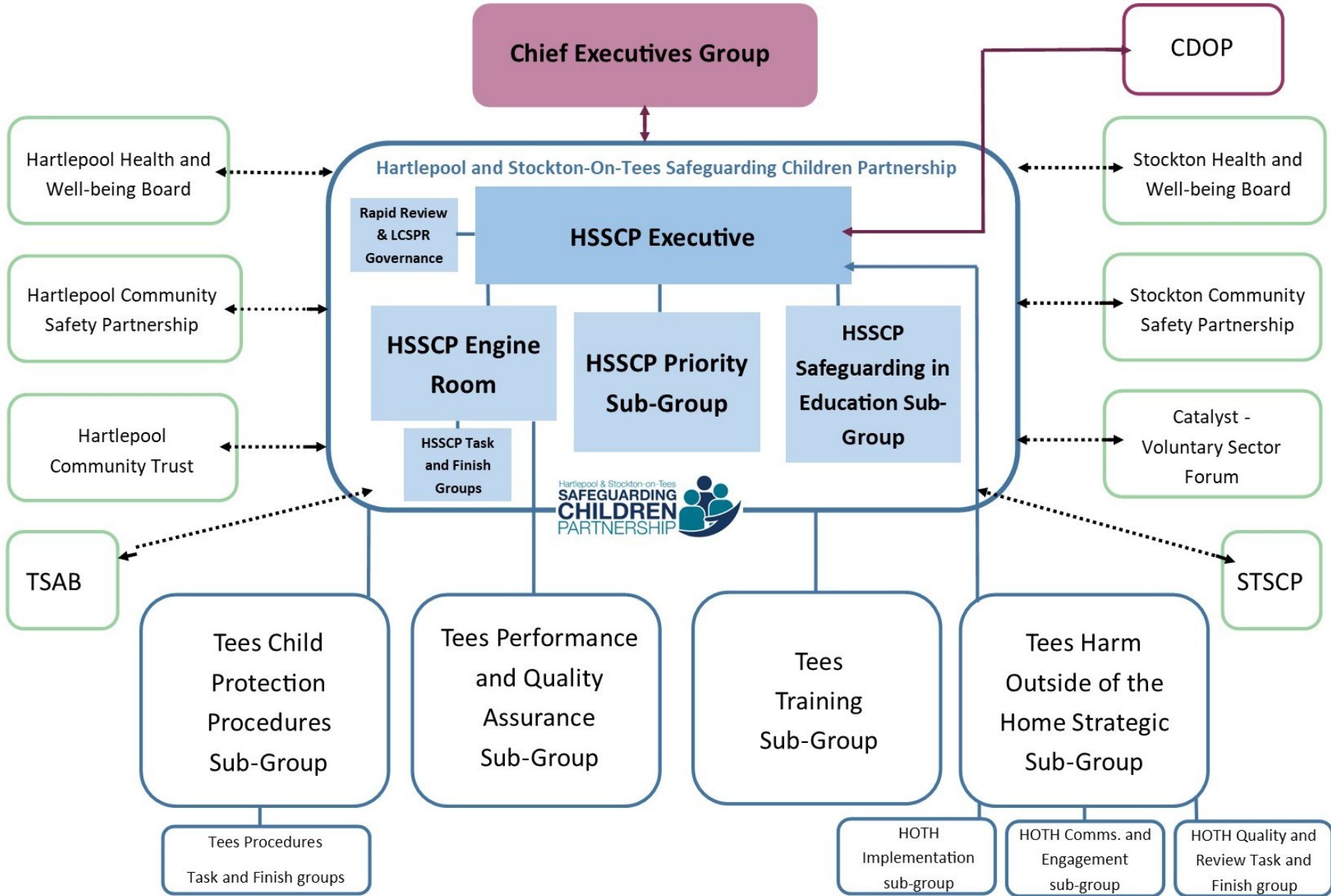
Tees-wide Groups

HSSCP share 4 subgroups with their neighbouring Safeguarding Children Partnership, STSCP. These are:

- Tees HOTH Strategic Sub-Group
- Tees Performance & QA Sub-Group
- Tees Procedures Sub-Group
- Tees Training Sub-Group

Other Partnerships and Boards

HSSCP have close relationships with other local partnerships and boards; with two way communications in place, shared agenda items where relevant and cross partnership representation.

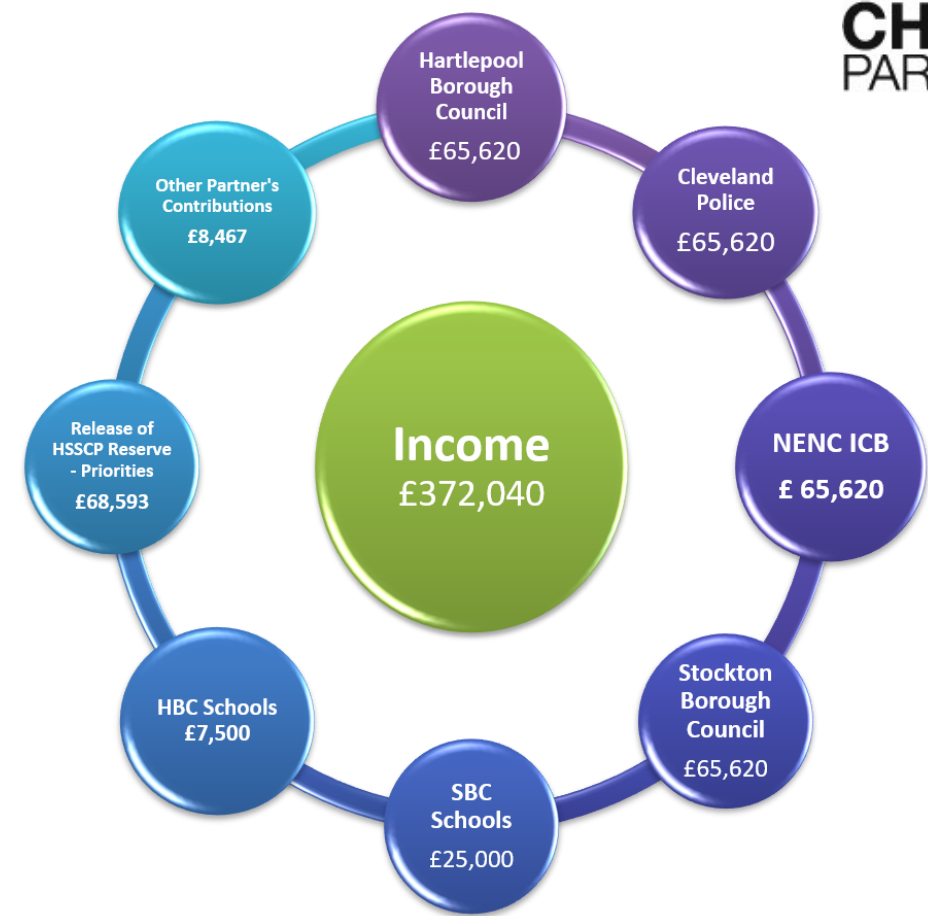


HSSCP FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Partner Contributions

LSPs agreed a standstill budget for 2025-26 with contributions for the four lead safeguarding partner agencies remaining equal, as follows:

Contributor	Value of Contribution
Lead Safeguarding Partner Agency Contributions:	
Hartlepool Borough Council	£65,620
Stockton Borough Council	£65,620
Cleveland Police	£65,620
North-East and North Cumbria ICB	£65,620
Relevant Agency Contributions	£8467
Hartlepool and Stockton Schools	£32,500
Total Contributions	£303,447
Release of HSSCP reserve	£68,593
Total Income 2024-25	£372,040



Section 3: Key Successes and Achievements in 2024-25

Engagement with Children and Young People

What we did:

- HSSCP have launched the Children and Young People's Newsletter, which is created by young people, for young people. The newsletter is produced on a termly basis, with the theme of each issue matching the theme of that term's school safeguarding council. The content of the newsletter is entirely led and written by young people through focus groups; discussing what current issues are facing young people and where there may be opportunities for learning around specific topics. The young people have produced 3 issues of the newsletter so far, which are distributed to schools, youth clubs, and to our partner organisations to give out to the young people in their settings.
- 34 focus groups have taken place across the year to complete tasks such as planning and writing content for the children and young people's newsletter, creating child-friendly documents for the HSSCP website, reviewing content for the HSSCP website, inputting into scripts for HSSCP conferences, and planning a campaign for young people around online safety following the feedback from the Spring Term School Safeguarding Council.
- Schools across the two local authorities have continued to participate in the School Safeguarding Councils and have given a combined total of over 180 responses from young people on 3 different themes: staying safe in the community; staying safe online; and mental wellbeing and Summer safety.
- HSSCP have maintained links with the Early Years sector with regular attendance at termly meetings to give input and support safeguarding practices across nurseries and childminders.
- Pol-Ed has continued to embed into school curriculums across Hartlepool and Stockton with 131 schools and settings now registered on the platform, and 46% of schools regularly using the resources to support their PSHE curriculum and raise awareness of risk, citizenship, and the law.



Impact and Evidence of Impact:

The children and young people's newsletter is distributed to over 120 school settings and youth organisations each term and is shared with students and young people through this channel to increase their knowledge of local and national safeguarding issues and to signpost them to places of support, useful online resources, and apps that can help them with their mental health and wellbeing, that have all been reviewed and recommended by young people.

The School Safeguarding Councils have been well responded to and have given the partnership over 180 inputs directly from young people, that have actively informed and shaped the work of the partnership, including co-designing a campaign for young people on the importance of online safety. The feedback is also shared directly with schools at the Safeguarding in Education meetings and discussed for further input, suggestions, and actions for the partnership.

The children and young people's webpages have been viewed over 1000 times in the last year, suggesting that young people have making use of the resources there and seeking support and information on topics that affect them.

Evidence of impact can be seen through the independent scrutiny review - see page 27-28.

Engagement with Professionals

HSSCP continued to engage with partners and professionals and share key messages across the multi-agency workforce. The partnership produced and circulated their monthly e-bulletins which provide a range of useful articles, resources and tools on key up-to-date safeguarding issues and themes. Quarterly newsletters, updating professionals on the work undertaken each quarter, were also shared.



- ➡ **8400** active users on the HSSCP website
- ➡ **28,470** page views on the HSSCP website
- ➡ **12** Monthly e-bulletins and **4** quarterly newsletters were circulated to **1597** partner representatives for wider distribution. These outlined key messages around pertinent safeguarding themes.
- ➡ **46,271** content views on social media channels, with the peak being our Christmas campaign around online safety that was shared in partnership with the Digital Resilience Networking Group.
- ➡ **7** campaigns sharing key messages, tools and resources on a range of themes.
- ➡ **17** consultation and engagement events held with professionals across the partnership, including schools, colleges, EYFS providers, SEND services, GP's, VCSE organisations.

Engagement with Schools and VCSE Organisations

The Safeguarding in Education Sub-group brings together schools, colleges and key partner agencies across Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees to strengthen safeguarding practice, share learning, identify emerging risks, and ensure that children and young people remain at the centre of safeguarding activity. Throughout 2025/26, the sub-group focused on strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, enhancing information sharing, improving awareness of emerging safeguarding risks, and increasing opportunities for young people to influence safeguarding priorities through direct engagement and co-production.

What we did:

- Delivered safeguarding updates and awareness sessions on key issues including PREVENT, private fostering, trauma-informed practice, information sharing and sexual harms.
- Facilitated presentations from Cleveland Police on Partnership Information Sharing Forms and promoted improved multi-agency information sharing practices.
- Hosted presentations from the Cleveland Sexual Harms Network to improve awareness and understanding of sexual harms and safeguarding responses in educational settings.
- Supported schools to engage with safeguarding audits and self-assessment processes, encouraging schools to review and strengthen their safeguarding arrangements.
- Promoted the use of Pol-Ed resources across Hartlepool and Stockton, ensuring schools had access to high-quality safeguarding materials and preventative education resources.
- Maintained strong engagement with education settings through regular safeguarding meetings involving schools, colleges and partner agencies from across both local authority areas.
- Established and delivered termly School Safeguarding Council activity, providing children and young people with opportunities to influence safeguarding priorities and share their views on issues affecting them, and shared the feedback with education settings during these meetings.
- Received over 180 responses from schools across Hartlepool and Stockton through School Safeguarding Council activity.
- Co-produced the Safeguarding Times newsletter with young people and distributed child-friendly safeguarding information to schools across both boroughs. Topics included 'Staying Safe in the Community' and 'Keeping Safe Online'.
- Delivered learning and discussion sessions on children who are not receiving full-time education, including children on part-time timetables, those in alternative provision, children missing education, elective home education, suspensions and exclusions, helping schools better understand safeguarding risks associated with reduced educational engagement.
- Received updates from the Children's Hub (CHUB) and social care partners to strengthen schools' understanding of referral pathways, thresholds and the role of education information in safeguarding decision-making, and supported to launch of the new Stockton Family Help Point.



Impact and Evidence of Impact:

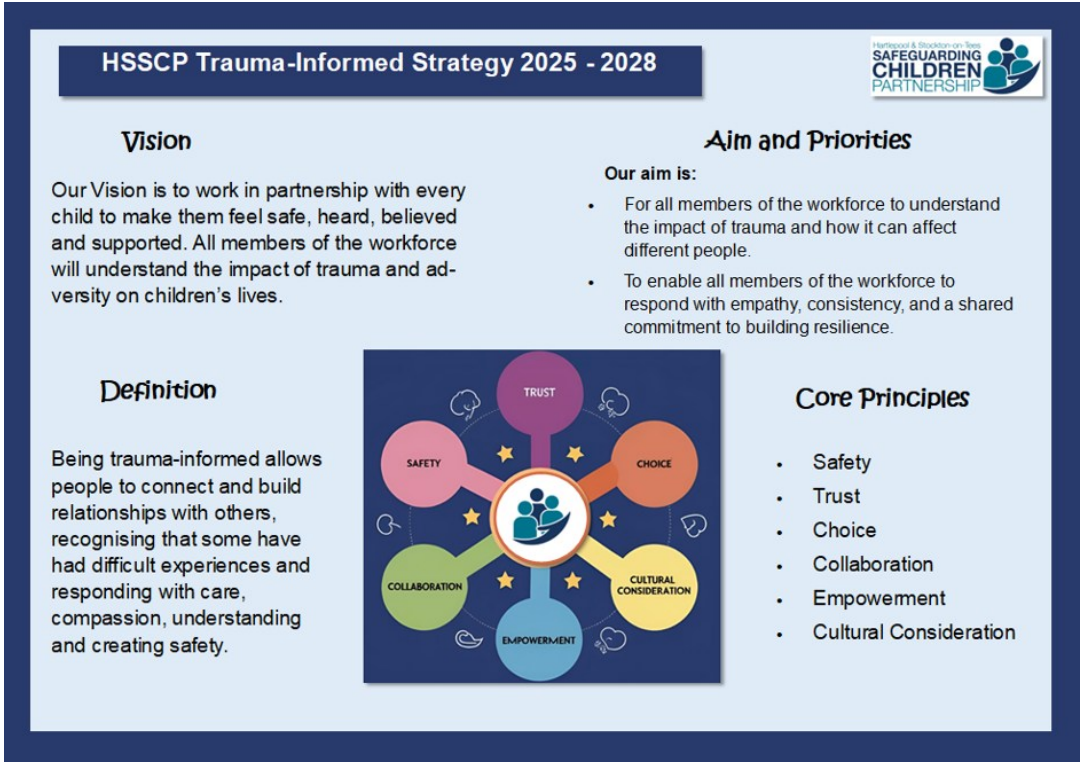
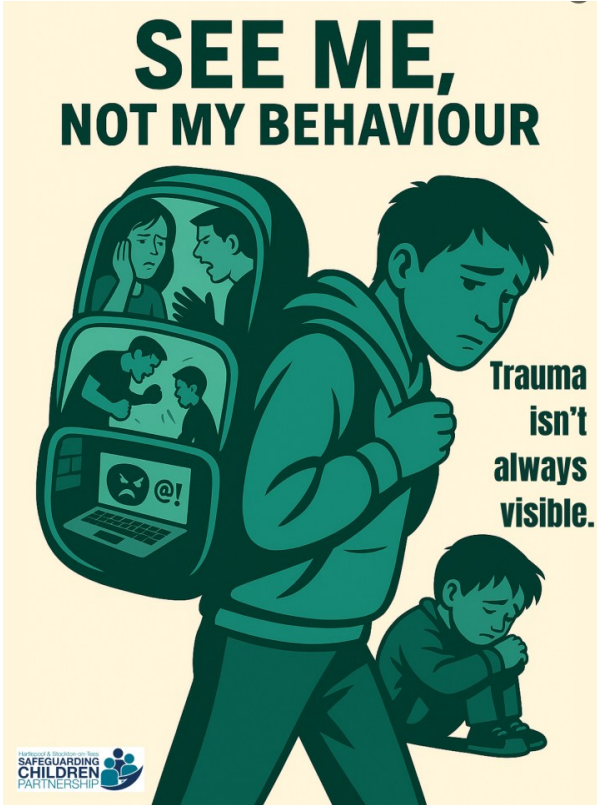
- Improved safeguarding knowledge and practice through updates, specialist presentations and resources, increasing awareness of safeguarding issues and vulnerable groups, including children in alternative provision, on part-time timetables and with poor attendance.
- Strengthened multi-agency working by improving information sharing, partnership discussions and collaborative responses to safeguarding concerns, supported by increased attendance and engagement at sub-group meetings.
- Increased young people's influence on safeguarding activity through focus groups, safeguarding councils and newsletter co-production, helping shape priorities, resources, future topics and safeguarding campaigns.
- Improved awareness among children and young people through accessible safeguarding information on local risks, support services and how to seek help, evidenced through feedback from School Safeguarding Councils.
- Enhanced understanding of risks affecting children outside full-time education, including those on part-time timetables, in alternative provision, electively home educated or missing education.
- Strengthened safeguarding assurance and self-evaluation by supporting schools to review safeguarding arrangements through audits, self-assessments and quality assurance discussions.
- Maintained strong multi-agency engagement between schools, local authorities, police, health and safeguarding partners to share intelligence, identify emerging risks and coordinate responses.

HSSCP Priorities - Trauma

The Trauma-Informed Partnership priority was established as one of the key priorities within the HSSCP Business Plan 2025-2028, with the aim of developing and embedding a trauma-informed culture across the partnership that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. The HSSCP Priorities Sub-Group was formed, and held its first meeting in May 2025 to begin the development of this workstream. The group focused on creating a shared understanding of trauma-informed practice, establishing a common set of values and principles, and laying the foundations for long-term culture change across partner agencies.

What we did:

- Established the multi-agency HSSCP Priorities Sub-Group in May 2025 to lead and oversee delivery of the trauma-informed priority.
- Reviewed national trauma-informed frameworks and agreed to use the Government's Working Definition of Trauma-Informed Practice as the basis for developing a local trauma-informed definition, values and principles for Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees.
- Undertook partnership discussions, reflective learning sessions, a workforce survey (which had over 300 responses), and a children and young people's survey to explore existing trauma-informed practice across agencies and the experiences of young people when accessing services.
- Developed a Trauma-Informed Strategy to provide a shared framework and direction for the partnership.
- Created and launched a multi-agency workforce survey to establish a baseline understanding of workforce knowledge, confidence and organisational readiness.
- Planned and delivered a strategic trauma-informed active learning event that took place in March 2026. 64 senior leaders from across the partnership were in attendance and made a commitment to supporting this work within their own agencies.
- Agreed a partnership trauma-informed strapline to promote consistent messaging across agencies, including use within campaigns and communication materials.
- Selected and developed campaign resources, including promotion of the BBC Children in Need "Heaviest Backpack" video and the creation of supporting promotional materials and posters. Young people were also engaged in producing a youth-focused version of the campaign poster.
- Began development of a Trauma Toolkit to support practitioners in understanding and responding to the impact of trauma.



Impact and Evidence of Impact:

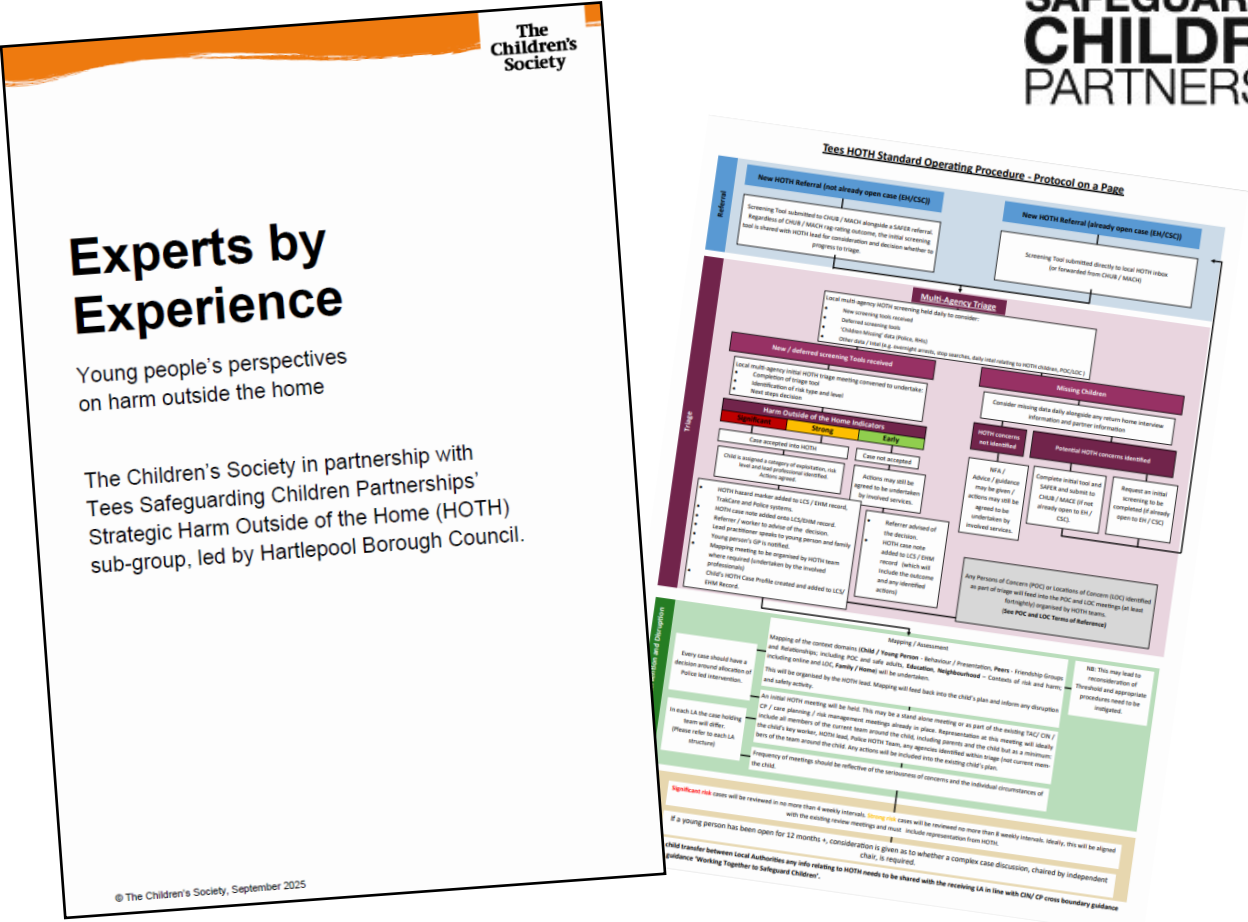
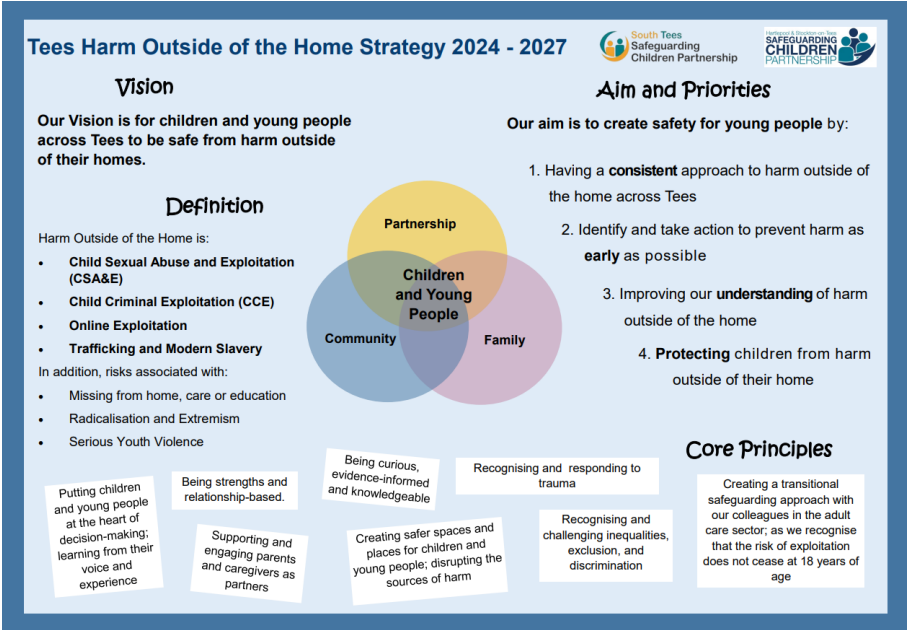
Although 2025-26 was primarily a developmental year, the work completed has already delivered important foundations for culture change across the partnership. The priority has created a shared multi-agency commitment to becoming trauma-informed, bringing together partners from children's social care, education, health, police, and the voluntary and community sector around a common vision and set of values. This has helped build consistency in understanding and approach across agencies. Evidence of this can be seen through the agreed trauma-informed strategy, shared principles, vision and ongoing multi-agency engagement within the subgroup. The development and completion of the trauma survey has provided the partnership with its first baseline assessment of trauma-informed awareness, confidence and development needs. This intelligence has enabled future training, active learning and workforce development activity to be targeted according to identified need, increasing the likelihood of meaningful practice improvement. The work has also increased organisational readiness for implementing trauma-informed approaches by developing practical resources, communication campaigns and practitioner tools. The agreed strapline, campaign materials, posters, promotional video and trauma toolkit will provide a platform for embedding trauma-informed principles consistently across the workforce. Strong levels of engagement from partners demonstrate continued commitment to the priority. Attendance at subgroup meetings has been consistently strong, with active contributions from a wide range of agencies. This provides assurance that there is broad ownership of the priority and capacity to support implementation across the partnership.

HSSCP Priorities - Harm Outside of the Home

Harm Outside of the Home (HOTH) has been a shared priority with HSSCP’s neighbouring Safeguarding Children Partnership, STSCP, throughout 2025-26.

What we did:

- Undertook audit and evaluation of the development and implementation phases of the new Harm Outside of the Home Strategy and Action plan.
- Held a development event with representation from across the partnerships to reflect upon the work completed across 2024-25 as well as the output from audits and expert by experience consultation to develop the next phase of priority work.
- Established new task and finish groups to lead upon phase 2 of the HOTH action plan.
- Reviewed and revised the Tees screening and assessment tool to include context and sources of harm based on multi agency practice and partnership working.
- Reviewed and developed the Tees Harm outside of the home guidance pages available on the Tees Procedures website.
- Delivered briefings and a conference to raise awareness on the HOTH strategy and local processes and changes.



Impact and Evidence of Impact:

- The work undertaken throughout 2025-26 has provided consistency of approach to children and families across Tees as well as to professionals working across the four local authority areas.
- The evaluation audit evidenced:
 - ⇒ SOP consistently applied
 - ⇒ Screening tools consistently completed
 - ⇒ Timely referrals
 - ⇒ Daily triage discussions embedded and working well
 - ⇒ Multi-agency contribution to planning
 - ⇒ Direct work and child voice embedded
 - ⇒ Clear emphasis on building relationships with young people
 - ⇒ Engagement of parents and families
 - ⇒ Appropriate threshold decisions

Audit and Review - Serious Incidents, Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs

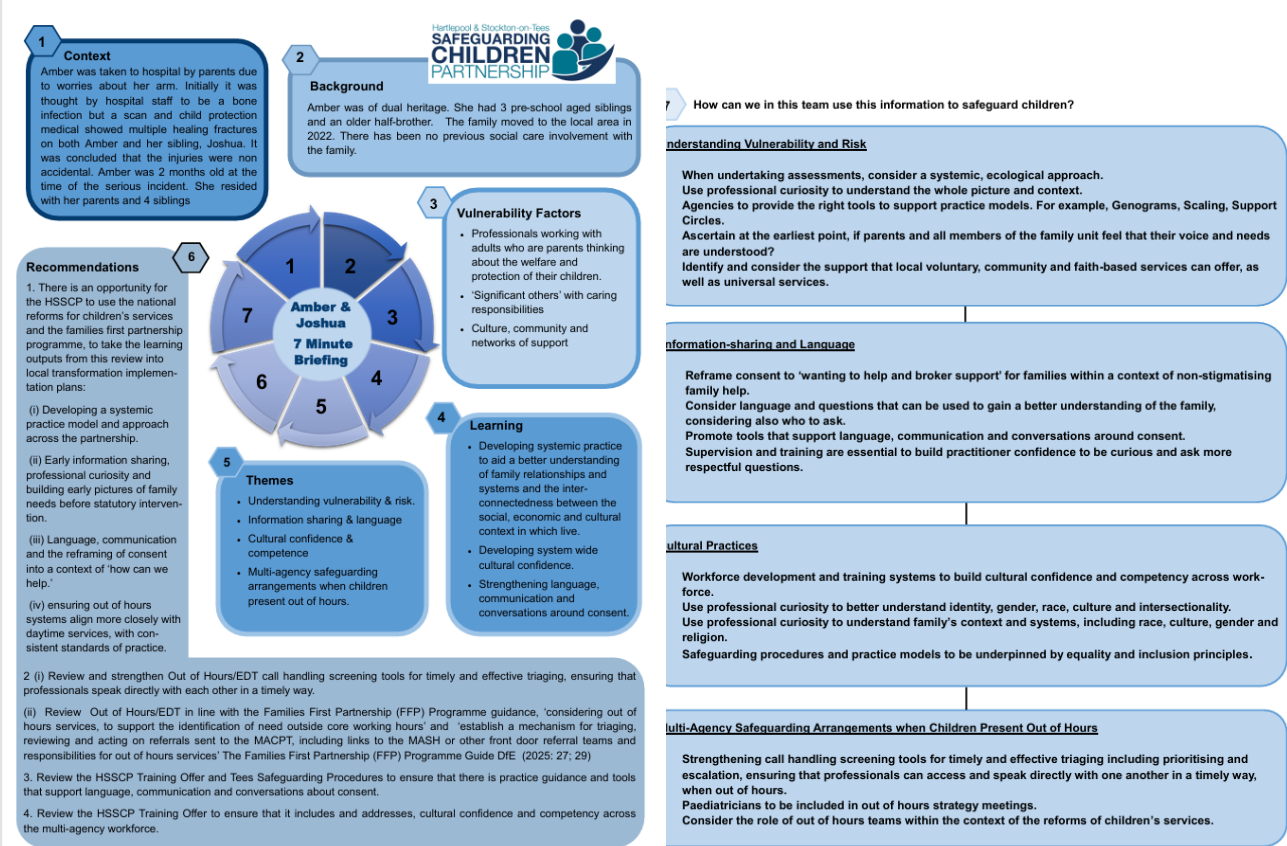
The HSSCP Engine Room have responsibility for audit and review activity on behalf of the partnership.

What we did:

- ➡ The Engine Room have undertaken **five Rapid Reviews** for the five cases put forward by partners across Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees as Serious Incident Notifications. The learning, recommendation and actions from these five cases have been taken forward and monitored by the partnership's Engine Room.
- ➡ The Engine Room has undertaken **one Learning Review** for a 'near-miss' case. The learning, recommendations and actions from this cases have been taken forward and monitored by the Engine Room.
- ➡ The DSP's via the HSSCP Executive have collective responsibility for governance of reviews. **Five** governance meetings were held to make a decision on whether the Rapid Reviews should progress to Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- ➡ HSSCP had one LCSPR that commenced at year end 2025-26. This was published in September 2026. There were a further 9 governance meetings held in respect of the three LCSPRs undertaken and published during the year.

What we did about the learning and recommendations:

- The learning was shared with multi-agency practitioners via a series of 'Learning from Reviews' briefings. And 7-minute briefings.
- Reviewed the HSSCP Training Offer and Tees Safeguarding Procedures to ensure that there is practice guidance and tools that support language, communication and conversations about consent.
- Developed a e-learning resource that can be accessed via the partnerships e-learning portal on information-sharing and consent.
- Review the HSSCP Training Offer to ensure that it includes and addresses, cultural confidence and competency across the multi-agency workforce.
- Reviewed Out of Hours/EDT in line with the Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme guidance,



Impact and Evidence of Impact:

- Evaluations from the briefings delivered demonstrate increased knowledge and confidence of the multi-agency workforce.
- Independent scrutiny acknowledges that:
 - ➔ Rapid Review meetings evidence strongly, a culture of system wide learning.
 - ➔ Rapid Review minutes and reports are completed to a high standard, evidencing open, reflective and system wide, child centred learning.
 - ➔ Governance arrangements for Serious Incident Notifications remain strong with evidence of a 'shared responsibility' at a strategic level.
 - ➔ All Rapid Review recommendations are considered by the HSSCP Rapid Review Executive, with oversight provided by the Independent Scrutineer for independence.

Audit and Review - Multi-Agency Audit

What we did:

The Engine Room have undertaken three multi-agency audits throughout 2025-26.

The first, carried out in June 2025 was on the theme of 'Domestic Abuse'. This theme was selected for audit due to domestic abuse being highlighted as a recurring theme Via the partnership's Engine Room 'Learning from Review' tracker.

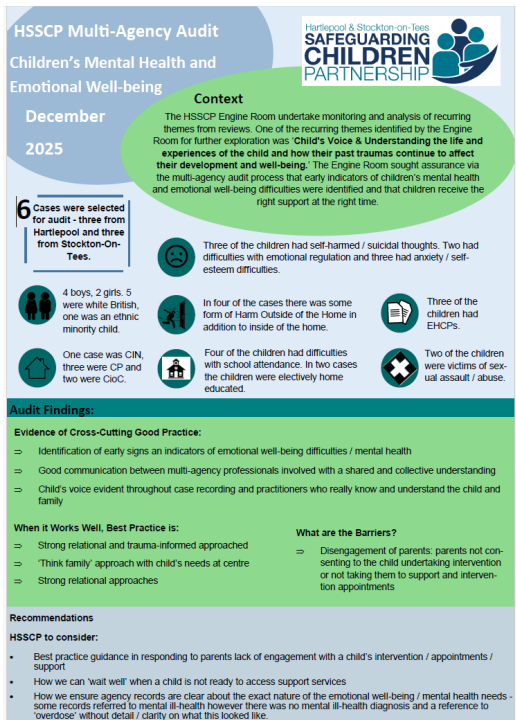
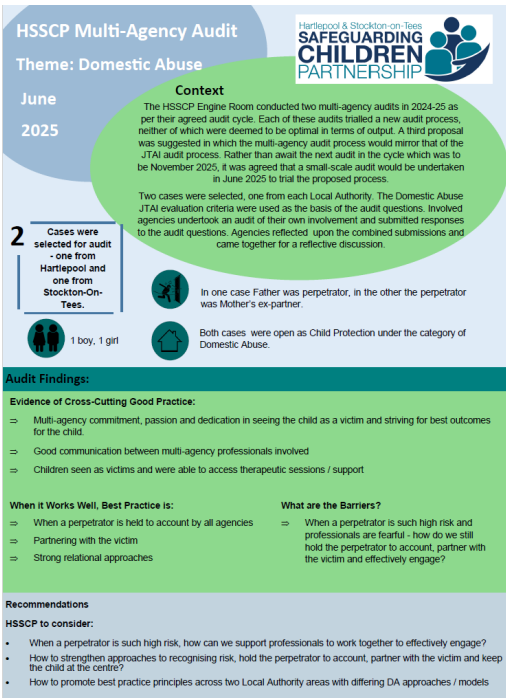
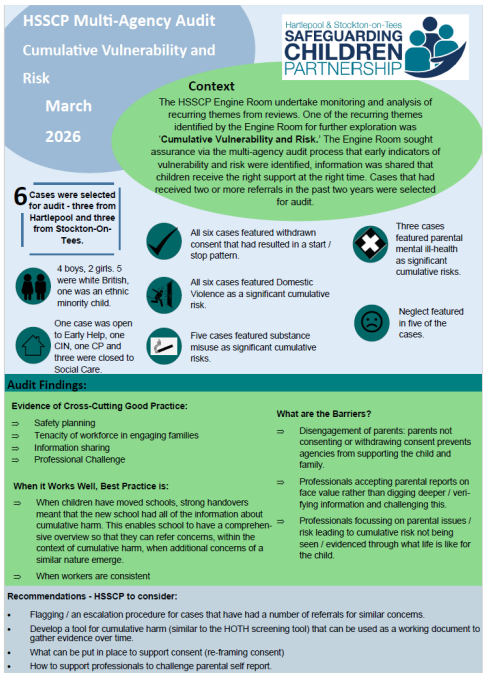
The second multi-agency audit, carried out in December 2025, was on the theme of 'Children's Wellbeing and Mental Health'. One of the recurring themes identified by the Engine Room for further exploration was 'Child's Voice & Understanding the life and experiences of the child and how their past traumas continue to affect their development and well-being.' The Engine Room sought assurance via the multi-agency audit process that early indicators of children's mental health and emotional well-being difficulties were identified and that children receive the right support at the right time.

The third was on the theme of 'Cumulative Vulnerability and Risk', which again had been a recurring theme. The Engine Room sought assurance via the multi-agency audit process that early indicators of vulnerability and risk were identified, information was shared that children receive the right support at the right time. Cases that had received two or more referrals in the past two years were selected for audit.

The learning, recommendation and actions from these audit were taken forward and monitored by the Engine Room.

Impact and Evidence of Impact:

- The learning from all three audits was shared with **218** professionals in the partnership's 'Learning from Reviews' briefings. This briefing is also available on the e-learning
- Learning from the audit fed into the Tees-wide perpetration strategy and plan, as well as the two respective Domestic Abuse partnerships.
- The partnership explored how we can support professionals to work together to effectively engage perpetrators when risk is high and how to strengthen approaches to recognising risk, hold the perpetrator to account, partner with the victim and keep the child at the centre.
- The existing Domestic Abuse training was reviewed and amended in light of the learning from this audit.
- We have explored how we can 'wait well' when a child is not ready to access support services and developed a best practice guidance in responding to lack of engagement with a child's intervention / appointments / support.
- We have explored flagging / an escalation procedure for cases that have had a number of referrals for similar concerns.
- A tool for cumulative harm, that can be used as a working document to gather evidence over time, has been developed alongside a guidance document for practitioners.
- We have explored how to support professionals to challenge parental self report and a process in under development.



Audit and Review - Deep Dives and Benchmarking

Child Sexual Abuse

Context and Background

In 2024-25, HSSCP considered the findings of the national review into Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment (CSAFE), "I Wanted Them All to Notice". In response to the review's recommendations for safeguarding partnerships, HSSCP undertook a multi-agency skills and knowledge survey and completed an Independent Scrutineer-led deep dive into local practice. The workforce survey, completed by workforce development leads and frontline practitioners across partner agencies, sought assurance regarding professional knowledge, confidence and skills in identifying and responding to child sexual abuse. Alongside this, the Independent Scrutineer's deep dive reviewed local reporting data, policies and procedures, audited practice and facilitated practitioner learning events to assess how effectively local arrangements aligned with the findings and recommendations of the national review. The findings from this work provided a comprehensive understanding of local strengths and areas for development and established the foundation for an ongoing programme of improvement during 2025-26.

What We Did in 2025-26

The Independent Scrutineer's Deep Dive concluded in May 2025 and identified ten recommendations for the partnership designed to strengthen local responses to child sexual abuse, particularly abuse occurring within the family environment. To oversee delivery of these recommendations, HSSCP established a multi-agency Child Sexual Abuse Steering Group. The group developed and implemented a partnership action plan, providing strategic oversight and driving improvements across policy, practice, workforce development and performance monitoring.

Key achievements during 2025-26 included:

- Reviewing and rewriting local child sexual abuse procedures and guidance to reflect current evidence and best practice, including the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA Centre) response pathway, tools and resources.
- Commissioning and delivering training on child sexual abuse within the family environment, informed by both national learning and local findings, to increase practitioner knowledge, confidence and professional curiosity.
- Exploring and promoting practice approaches for working safely with uncertainty in cases involving adults who access indecent images of children online and assessing potential risks posed to children within their own families, adopting guidance developed by the CSA Centre.
- Mapping assessment and intervention pathways for children and young people who have experienced sexual harm and trauma, as well as those who display sexually harmful behaviour. These pathways have now been incorporated into local procedures and guidance to support more consistent practice.
- Establishing baseline performance information to support ongoing monitoring of implementation and impact, with plans to repeat data collection at the end of the implementation period.
- Reviewing Children's Social Care case management systems to improve recording and identification of intra-familial sexual abuse, enabling Hartlepool and Stockton to distinguish and monitor these cases more effectively.

The partnership has worked jointly with South-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (STSCP) throughout this programme of activity, ensuring a consistent approach across both areas.

Impact and Evidence of Impact:

While much of the work undertaken during 2025-26 has focused on strengthening the foundations for effective practice, there is already evidence of significant system-wide improvement.

The deep dive provided the partnership with a robust evidence base and clear recommendations for development, resulting in the establishment of dedicated governance arrangements through the Child Sexual Abuse Steering Group. This has ensured sustained multi-agency focus, ownership and accountability for improvement activity.

The review and revision of procedures and guidance have strengthened local practice frameworks by aligning them with national evidence and recognised best practice. Practitioners now have access to clearer pathways, resources and guidance to support the identification, assessment and response to child sexual abuse, including intra-familial abuse.

Investment in workforce development has increased opportunities for practitioners to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in recognising and responding to child sexual abuse, in speaking directly with children and in understanding the purpose and value in forensic medicals. The training programme has been informed directly by local learning and identified workforce needs, helping to ensure that development activity is targeted and relevant.

The introduction of mapped assessment and intervention pathways has improved clarity regarding available support and responses for children affected by sexual harm, trauma and harmful sexual behaviour, supporting more joined-up and consistent practice across agencies.

Improvements to Children's Social Care recording systems represent a significant step forward in understanding the prevalence and nature of intra-familial sexual abuse locally. For the first time, Hartlepool and Stockton are able to identify and monitor these cases separately, providing a stronger evidence base to inform future service planning, quality assurance and performance reporting.

Baseline measures have been established to enable the partnership to assess the longer-term impact of this programme of work. Further evaluation will take place as implementation progresses, allowing HSSCP to measure improvements in professional confidence, practice quality and outcomes for children.

Reflecting both the findings from the deep dive and the progress made during 2025-26, Child Sexual Abuse has been adopted as a shared strategic priority for HSSCP and STSCP in 2026-27. This will ensure continued focus on strengthening partnership responses, improving practice and achieving better outcomes for children and families.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Safeguarding Children Training Snapshot:



**62 multi-
agency training
sessions
delivered,
covering 24
different
subject areas**



**8,575 e-learning
sessions
completed**

1,383 people attended multi-agency training and a further 1407 practitioners attended the Tees-wide multi-agency safeguarding children training events.



218 practitioners attended the Learning from Reviews Briefings

Two Active Learning Events were delivered to 214 professionals

Impact and Evidence of Impact

I learnt from this training how important it is to recognise the impact caused on children around domestic abuse. I have learnt there is more to the picture and to use my professional curiosity to be able to ask the questions when gathering more information.

This training has helped me look at trauma and tools that can be used whilst working with vulnerable children.

I feel the whole event will have an impact on my work with young people

Increased my knowledge, confidence, and awareness in key areas relevant to my role. Gained more of a clear insight to procedures and were to go for help and advice

The training has improved my ability to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns within my clinical work. I have developed a clear understanding of the early indicator risk, which has supported me to identify concerns more proactively rather than reactively. It has also strengthened my confidence in asking sensitive questions, applying professionals' curiosity and making appropriate referrals in line with safeguarding procedures. As a result, my documentation has become clearer and more structured, I feel more confident contributing to multi-agency discussions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.



Section 4: Independent Scrutiny

Independent Scrutiny

During the reporting period, 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026 the Independent Scrutineer conducted the following scrutiny activities:

- Scrutiny of all reports and attendance at HSSCP Executive Meetings
- Scrutiny of all reports and attendance at HSSCP Chief Executive Meeting
- Scrutiny of all Serious Incident Notifications; Rapid Review Reports and LCSPR's
- Observational front-line visits to service areas and case file audit meetings with the Chief Executive (LSP) and Director of Children's Service (DSP) Stockton-On-Tees Council.
- Jointly facilitated with the Independent Scrutineer (STSCP) a Tees wide S11 Challenge Event, 14th May 2025
- Scrutiny of all reports and attendance at HSSCP Assurance Meeting of Annual Reports for 2024-25 on 18th Sept 2025
- Delivered an Independent Scrutineer's Thematic Deep Dive into Child Sexual Abuse within the Family Environment.
- Observed a live HSSCP Multi-Agency Audit Event - Cumulative Vulnerability and Risk, 31/03/2026

The HSSCP Executive experienced some key changes in strategic leadership during 2025 to 2026, including changes in Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP) and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs).

However leadership, governance and a 'shared responsibility' for the HSSCP remains an area of significant strength.

The HSSCP Chief Executive (LSP) Group nominated the Director of Children's Service (DCS) Stockton-on-Tees to chair the HSSCP Executive upon the former chair leaving the Partnership. Since that time, stability and continuity have been provided by the DCS Stockton-on-Tees, who has continued to chair the Partnership, in light of changes across the DSPs during 2025/26.

Equally, there have been changes in LSPs across the HSSCP; however, the LSP/Chief Executive for Stockton-on-Tees has provided leadership and continuity across the LSP Chief Executives Group.

The multi-agency safeguarding governance structures set out clear and understood lines of accountability.

Leaders model an open, learning culture across the Partnership, whereby respectful challenge, including by the Independent Scrutineer, is encouraged and responded to.

The professional challenge and escalation policy has been actively promoted and encouraged across the Partnership.

The strategic vision and priorities of the Partnership are clear and accessible, informed by the professional expertise of the wider partnership, including relevant agencies and the lived experience of children and young people. This includes the Trauma-Informed Partnership priority which was established as one of the key priorities for the HSSCP during 2025/26.



Members of the wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are engaged in the safeguarding children partnership arrangements, actively contributing to the HSSCP priorities, as set out under the HSSCP Business Plan.

Collaborative, multi-agency partnership working is an area of strength.

Multi agency working is aligned to the Partnership's vision of embedding trauma informed practice across the partnership that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children.

Information sharing is robust and the multi-agency workforce is supported by a strong training and development offer delivered by the HSSCP.

The Business Support for the HSSCP is outstanding.

There are mature and well embedded arrangements for managing learning from national and local child safeguarding practice reviews, quality assurance and scrutiny activity.

Leaders have a strong line of sight to any Serious Incident Notification, the Rapid Review and Local Children Safeguarding Practice Review process, alongside the implementation of learning, which informs HSSCP strategy, policy, and workforce development.

HSSCP has provided SCIE training to members of the HSSCP (Oct 2025), to support members of HSSCP to undertake LCSPR's.

HSSCP have significantly strengthened engagement with children and young people across the 2 local areas, and it is extremely positive to see young people designing safeguarding communications and materials, by and for young people, across Hartlepool and Stockton.

Independent Scrutiny

The Independent Scrutineer undertook a Thematic Deep Dive into Child Sexual Abuse within the Family Environment for the HSSCP, 23/05/2025 in response to the national child safeguarding practice review, 'I wanted them all to notice' on protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (November 2024).

This thematic deep dive provided assurance that local partnership arrangements are broadly effective in identifying, responding to and safeguarding children where there are concerns about child sexual abuse within the family environment. The review found timely referrals, effective multi-agency information sharing, appropriate strategy discussions in most cases, clear safeguarding plans and strong examples of trauma-informed practice that considered children's lived experiences, family relationships, identity and support needs.

The review also identified areas for continuous improvement. Current recording systems did not reliably distinguish intra-familial sexual abuse from other forms of sexual harm, limiting the partnership's ability to understand prevalence and monitor responses. Although threshold guidance and procedures are generally clear, the review identified a need for more specific local guidance, training and pathways relating to child sexual abuse within the family environment, including consistent consideration and recording of child protection medical examinations and access to suitably specialist health advice.

The HSSCP Executive accepted the learning and recommendations from the review.

The observational front-line visits to service areas and case file audit meetings by the Independent Scrutineer with the Chief Executive (LSP), Director of Children's Service (DSP) Stockton-On-Tees Council and practitioners, have provided strong assurance of safeguarding arrangements and practice. This includes strong supervision, management oversight and support; practitioners reporting that they feel safe to practice; significant improvement in workforce recruitment and retention which support consistent relationships for and with children and families; evidence of practice models, i.e. systemic practice being implemented; an open, reflective learning culture.

The HSSCP has a programme of Multi-Agency Audit and Review, with 3 multi-agency audits undertaken in 2025-26. The Independent Scrutineers observation (March 2026) provided assurance of strong system wide and trauma informed reflection and learning.

Both Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Local Authorities have each respectively led, with partners, the implementation of national reforms, i.e. the Families First Programme, setting up their own governance boards.

Aligned to this, both Local Authorities have successfully implemented their own Front Door arrangements.

In response to continuous challenge by the Independent Scrutineer, in 2024 the Hartlepool & Stockton-On-Tees and South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnerships' agreed and published a new Performance and Quality Framework. This set out the Partnerships approach to the robust analysis of performance information and quality assurance across the children's safeguarding system, both on a single and multi-agency basis, bringing together in one place, a wealth of quantitative and qualitative information on the local arrangements for safeguarding children.

Whilst the Independent Scrutineer does not doubt that single agencies, i.e. the LA's and Police, monitor their own data, it is disappointing that the Performance and Quality Framework has not been implemented, leaving the HSSCP without a partnership safeguarding data set. This is an area of scrutiny and challenge that has been accepted but has not progressed.

Where data is presented, it is local authority heavy, without analysis. There is a significant absence of regular health data and safeguarding intelligence for children and young people.

A risk remains for the HSSCP that it has not developed and implemented, 'effective collection, sharing and analysis of data which enables early identification of new safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats, and joined-up responses across relevant agencies, including the identification of groups of children who may be disproportionately over- or under-represented in services, so that services are adapted to address these issues'. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

Areas of Strength

- Strategic Leadership and Governance Arrangements
- Accountability across Statutory and Relevant Agency Partners
- Collaboration, Partnership and Working Together
- Voice and Influence
- Managing and Integrating Learning from Review, Research and Scrutiny
- Workforce Development, Training and Continuous Improvement

Opportunities for Continuous Development

- Implement an integrated, safeguarding data set for the HSSCP, strengthening the system's understanding of emerging needs across the partnership and the links between data trends and strategic priorities.
- Strengthen further, through the use of data and quality assurance triangulation, evidence of the impact that the Partnership is having, with the outcomes for children – What is the difference for Children?
- Whilst the Families First Programme (FFP) sits under the governance of each Local Authority, the HSSCP has a key assurance role in the effective delivery of the joint multi agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) under the FFP. The Independent Scrutineer recommends that the HSSCP consider how it is assuring itself of the MASA through the lens of the FFP's objectives and expectations.
- Strengthen further co-production with children, young people and in particular, parents and carers who have experienced statutory safeguarding services.
- Strengthen further the Partnerships collective understanding and response to the full range of characteristics and circumstances that contribute to unequal experience, access, inclusion and outcomes for children and families.

Mel John-Ross MBE Independent Scrutineer

Next Steps

NEXT STEPS

HSSCP Priorities for 2026-27

HSSCP priorities are:

1. **Trauma-Informed Partnership**
2. **Harm Outside of the Home**
3. **Child Sexual Abuse**



Priority 1: Trauma

The 'Trauma-Informed' priority is a three year priority that commenced in 2025 and runs until 2028. The 'Priorities' sub-group will continue to lead the implementation of this workstream against the Business Plan throughout 2026-27.

Priority 2: Harm Outside of the Home

This is a Tees-wide priority shared with the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Tees Harm Outside of the Home sub-group will continue to lead on the strategy and action plan throughout 2026-27 with a focus on implementing the recommendations of the Experts by Experience report and 25-26 evaluation audit.

Priority 3: Child Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) has been adopted as a joint strategic priority for HSSCP and STSCP during 2026-27, building on the findings of the Independent Scrutineer's CSA Deep Dive and the significant improvement activity undertaken during 2025-26. The Child Sexual Abuse Steering Group will continue to lead the implementation and evaluation of the action plan, with a focus on embedding revised procedures and pathways, strengthening workforce knowledge and confidence, improving identification and recording of intra-familial sexual abuse, and evidencing the impact of these changes on outcomes for children and young people.





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