

SOUTH TEES
**Safeguarding Children
Partnership Yearly Report**
2024/2025



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Preface

Keeping children and young people safe is everyone's responsibility and is a priority for all partners. Being the chair for the STSCP Chief Officers group (Lead Safeguarding Partners Group) allows me the unique position of having an overview of our whole safeguarding system.

We have many challenges in South Tees and it is critical that Chief Officers of all statutory organisations are fully aware of the effectiveness of our system to keep children safe and can make changes as required. We do this through our quality assurance processes which includes learning from reviews, analysis of our performance data, scrutiny, audit and feedback from children and families.

Our shared work with North Tees has progressed significantly over the last year which gives us an opportunity to learn from each other and reduce duplication. I am looking forward to seeing our partnership between South and North Tees further develop.

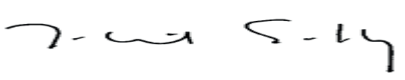
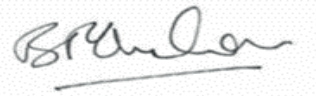
It is pleasing to see that we have reviewed our Performance Management Framework, and it will be a focus of the forthcoming year to ensure that we fully understand what is working well and what we need to improve.

I would like to thank Helen Barker from Cleveland Police for chairing the Partnership for the last year and thank all partners who are working tirelessly to improve the lives of our children and young people in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland.

Thank you,

John Sampson
Managing Director
(Head of Paid Service)
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

Key Partners Signatures

Middlesbrough Council	Redcar & Cleveland Council	Cleveland Police	NENC Integrated Care Board
Erik Scollay Chief Executive	Brian Archer Managing Director	Victoria Fuller Chief Constable	Sam Allen Chief Executive
			

Foreword by the STSCP Chair

It is with great pleasure that I present the foreword as Chair of the South Tees Safeguarding Children's partnership for the 2024-25 yearly report.

This is my first year as chair, and over the last year we have seen the partnership grow, develop and begin a transformation towards maturity under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

This Annual Report covering the year 2024-2025 is published by the four statutory partners (Middlesbrough Council, Redcar & Cleveland Council, Cleveland Police and North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board) who are responsible for putting in place effective arrangements to support the co-ordination, quality assurance and continuous improvement of activity to safeguard children and young people.

The report captures the key work, achievements and challenges faced by the partnership, as well as providing assurance around progress made towards our priorities of neglect and exploitation.

Among our notable achievements are; a Teeswide strategy, referral and risk management process being developed and launched to tackle Harm Outside the Home (HOTH), in response to our priority of child Exploitation. Continuing our work to tackle neglect, including activity to support the launch of the Neglect Strategy in May/June 2025. Improved collaboration across Tees to make best use of resources and free up capacity to further improve our response to children and families, this includes Tees HOTH, Tees training Group, Tees Procedures and the Tees PMF.

In addition, we have carried out a maturity check, to understand the strengths of the partnership as well as our areas for development. As a result, there is a need to focus on greater understanding of the diversity within our communities and how differing cultures are properly represented in the work of the partnership. An opportunity still exists for, 'The Voice of the Child' to be consistently used to inform and shape the work of the partnership. Both areas will be taken forward in 2025-26.

None of this would be possible without the hard work, dedication and commitment of staff and leaders across the partnership including the voluntary sector, to work collaboratively to improve outcomes for Children and families in Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to maturing as a partnership, looking for further opportunities to collaborate and innovate. 2025/2026 will see the development of the Families First project, providing an opportunity to support children and families at the earliest opportunity, focussed on effective multi-agency working and decision making, in line with need.

Thank you

DSI Helen Barker
Cleveland Police

A partnership committed to keeping children safe and working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families.

SECTION 1: The Statutory Guidance & What We Have Done to Adhere to it

Safeguarding children and young people across South Tees is our duty and should be treated with the gravity it deserves. The STSCP Arrangements 2024, outline the revised multi-agency safeguarding arrangements that were adopted from 1st December 2024. They explain how, we as the Safeguarding Partners in the area, will fulfil our duties under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and adhere to the guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

During 2024 the STSCP reviewed the arrangements through a series of events designed to obtain a wide range of views from individuals and agencies reaching those agencies which might have less direct contact with safeguarding. This included two workshops where participants were asked to describe what they think effective safeguarding arrangements look like, and to evidence their experience of safeguarding in South Tees. The event for school leaders attracted over 90 representatives. Other events focused on hearing what life is like for children and families in the area.

Our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will continue to be known as the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (STSCP) and are built on the substantial improvements already made to the function, structure, and effectiveness of the joint partnership.

The Safeguarding Statutory Partners are:

- Middlesbrough Council
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- Cleveland Police.

As the Safeguarding Statutory Partners, we share equal responsibility for execution and oversight of the STSCP, enabling a common purpose and agreed behavioural values to reinforce shared priorities. We recognise to be strong and effective; the Partnership must engage the right people and work collaboratively across South Tees to identify the organisations and agencies which need to be involved to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people across the South Tees.

The South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership will continue to promote and embed appropriate support and challenge between partners; ensuring that leaders and staff within every organisation are held to account. We will work to create the conditions to develop a transparent learning culture, aiming for the best collaborative practice to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people.

Our ambition is that all our work will be underpinned by a consideration of the views and experiences of the children, young people, and families across our diverse communities. We acknowledge that the new arrangements will only be effective if they make a difference to the outcomes for children and young people and ask for help from professional partners, the 3rd sector and the community to make this a reality.

Who are the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership and what does it do?

Middlesbrough Council, Redcar & Cleveland Council, Cleveland Police and North East, North Cumbria Integrated Care Board have a statutory duty to put in place multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to protect and safeguard vulnerable children. This responsibility is driven by the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership, which is funded, equally, by the four partners.

Membership of the partnership executive is drawn from:

- Middlesbrough Council
- Redcar & Cleveland Council
- North East & North Cumbria ICB
- Cleveland Police
- Public Health
- Middlesbrough Education
- Redcar & Cleveland Education



How the STSCP carries out its role, is as important as what it does to shape delivery of its statutory responsibilities, the STSCP has adopted the following principles and values:

Partners across South Tees have agreed the following vision:

“A partnership committed to keeping children safe and working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families”.

This local arrangement supports and enables local organisations and agencies to work together in a system which places the child at the heart of the process and aims to ensure that:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

The partnership is chaired by a statutory partner on a two-year rotational basis agreed by the four statutory partners. As part of our arrangements for external challenge, the Chair presents the board's annual report to both the Council's Scrutiny Panels for Children and Families and the South Tees Live Well Board. To drive delivery of the STSCP's objectives, the partnership has a series of sub-groups.

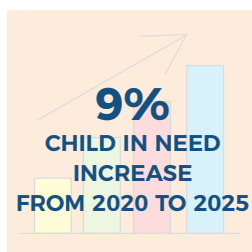
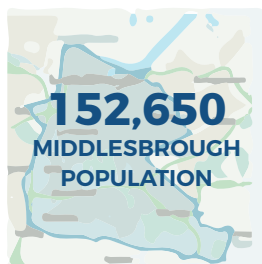
SECTION 2: Area Profile - South Tees the place

The geographic area covered by the South Tees Safeguarding Partnership is varied, Middlesbrough a densely populated town whilst Redcar & Cleveland covers a seaside and rural landscapes.

The 2021 Census estimated the population of the South Tees to be **280,400 people**. Approximately **23% (62,491 people)** are aged 0 to 19. From the 2011 to 2021 Census, the South Tees's overall population increased by **3%**. Many people who have come to live in the area have been attracted by the value for money housing offer, our schools, growing economy and our connectivity via road and rail into the Tees Valley conurbation and beyond.

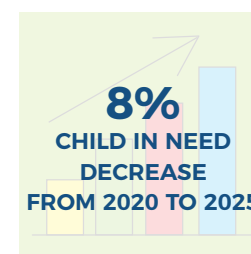
"The Social Gradient in English Child Welfare Services", a study by Kingston University academics and Ofsted analysts, said that children from the poorest neighbourhoods in England were almost fourteen times more likely to be referred to social care services than those from the richest areas. This impact can be seen on the demand for support from children social care across South Tees:

Middlesbrough



- **370 children on a child protection plan, an increase on the previous year of 17% with a rate of per 10,000 population of 106.3 (March 2025) compared to the England rate of 41.6/10,000**
- **506 looked after children a decrease on the previous year of 4%, with a rate of per 10,000 population of 153.8 (March 2025) compared to the England rate of 70/10,000.**
- **Over a thousand contacts for support each month, with 1970 recorded in March 2025 a 22% increase on 2024.**

Redcar & Cleveland



- **195 children on a child protection plan a decrease of 22% on the previous year with a rate of per 10,000 population of 71.1 (March 2025) compared to the England rate of 41.6/10,000.**
- **400 looked after children, a decrease of 5% with a rate of per 10,000 population of 145.8 (March 2025) compared to the England rate of 70/10,000.**
- **Over a thousand contacts for support each month with 1183 recorded in March 2025 a 3.5% increase on 2024.**

The South Tees is a very diverse area, which includes many nationalities with a minority ethnic population of 20%. The largest minority ethnic groups in the area are the Indian and Pakistani communities, but more recently there has also been a significant increase in economic migration, mainly from Eastern Europe.

The STSCP policies and procedures recognise diversity but there is more work to do to ensure this is reflected in practice. Tees Training packages both online and e-learning include diversity to upskill the workforce, which doesn't currently reflect our communities. The South Tees JSNA contains relevant information on diversity and highlights that as South Tees we have Teesport and this gives rise to the number of unaccompanied asylum seekers, it also highlights the relatively high proportion of asylum seekers in general in the area. This brings additional complexity for frontline services such as schools and health services.

Both Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland local authorities have high aspirations for their children and young people. Equally, both areas have significant challenges to address, as can be seen from the following information.

Demand on Social Care

Demand for Children's Social Care is strongly associated with key drivers which include deprivation, poor housing, high levels of unemployment, which are prevalent in the North East, and particularly Teesside.

- The North East has the highest rate of social care demand in the country, for instance the Child Protection rate for the North East is 67.20 per 10,000 compared to an England rate of 41.6 per 10,000.
- Within the North East, Teesside has the highest rate of demand, and within Teesside, both Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland have a high rate of demand for social care.
- The latest DfE Children in Need census shows Middlesbrough has the highest level of need for social care in the country and Redcar & Cleveland are ranked 5th.

In response to this the STSCP have provided revised Threshold training, and the SAFER referral form has also been reviewed and updated to ensure consistent application across Tees. The STSCP continues to monitor and understand demand via the update reports from the MACH and the Quality & Performance monitoring of the Tees dataset.

Inspections

All 4 statutory partners are subject to regular inspection, in 2024-25 a number of inspections took place relevant to the safeguarding of Children. Cleveland Police were inspected under the new National Child Protection Inspection (NCPI).

[Cleveland Police: National child protection inspection - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)

The force was graded as adequate in how it works with partners and positive comments around the commitment to working jointly, and since the inspection there are now Tees-wide arrangements to tackle exploitation which was highlighted as a concern.

Cleveland police was further inspected as part of the PEEL inspection cycle, where all 43 forces of England and Wales are inspected: [Link to Cleveland PEEL Assessment 2023-2025](#)

The findings were reported to the STSCP executive, regular updates are provided to the executive on the improvement plan including a presentation to the joint partnership meeting with the HSSCP.

Focused visit to Middlesbrough children's services - [Link to report](#)

The findings of the focused visit to Middlesbrough children's services on 31 July and 1 August 2024 was as follows:

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for care leavers aged 18 to 25. This visit was conducted in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. This visit was conducted entirely on site. Inspectors considered a broad range of evidence, including care leavers' individual records, and undertook case discussions with personal advisers and managers. Inspectors also spoke to care leavers. Inspectors reviewed relevant local authority performance and quality assurance information.

Headline findings

Since the last inspection, where the experience and progress of care leavers was judged as requires improvement to be good, the new leadership team and elected members have demonstrated a tangible commitment to radically improve outcomes for care-experienced young people in the scope of this visit.

The new leadership team is bringing much-needed stability and focus and has plans that are realistic, ambitious, and starting to gain traction. Leaders have ensured that there is now sufficient staffing resource to meet demand. They have welcomed external scrutiny and challenge. Performance management and quality assurance processes have been strengthened but have yet to lead to consistent improvements in frontline management, supervision and training. The findings were reported to the STSCP executive, the executive are given updates on the improvement plan and via the performance management process and training evaluation.

If Middlesbrough were a village of 100 children

33

A third live in live in income Deprived Households

2

Open Case living in 5 most Deprived Wards

48

Pupil Premium

47

Access Free School Meals

SECONDARY SCHOOL

16

Access SEN Support

6

Have an Education, Health & Care Plan

There are more boys than girls

51 boys
49 girls

Boys 0-4	13
Boys 5-12	24
Boys 13-17	14
Girls 0-4	13
Girls 5-12	23
Girls 13-17	13

20

School Children have English as additional language

34

School Children from Ethnic Minorities

1

Children looked after

1

CP

3

CIN (all)

6

Early Help

9

Children will not attend school today

Primary 1 or more suspensions	1
Secondary 1 or more suspensions	14
Special school 1 or more suspensions	5

1

Elective home education

8

Children are in Nursery

52

Children are in Primary School

36

Children are in Secondary School

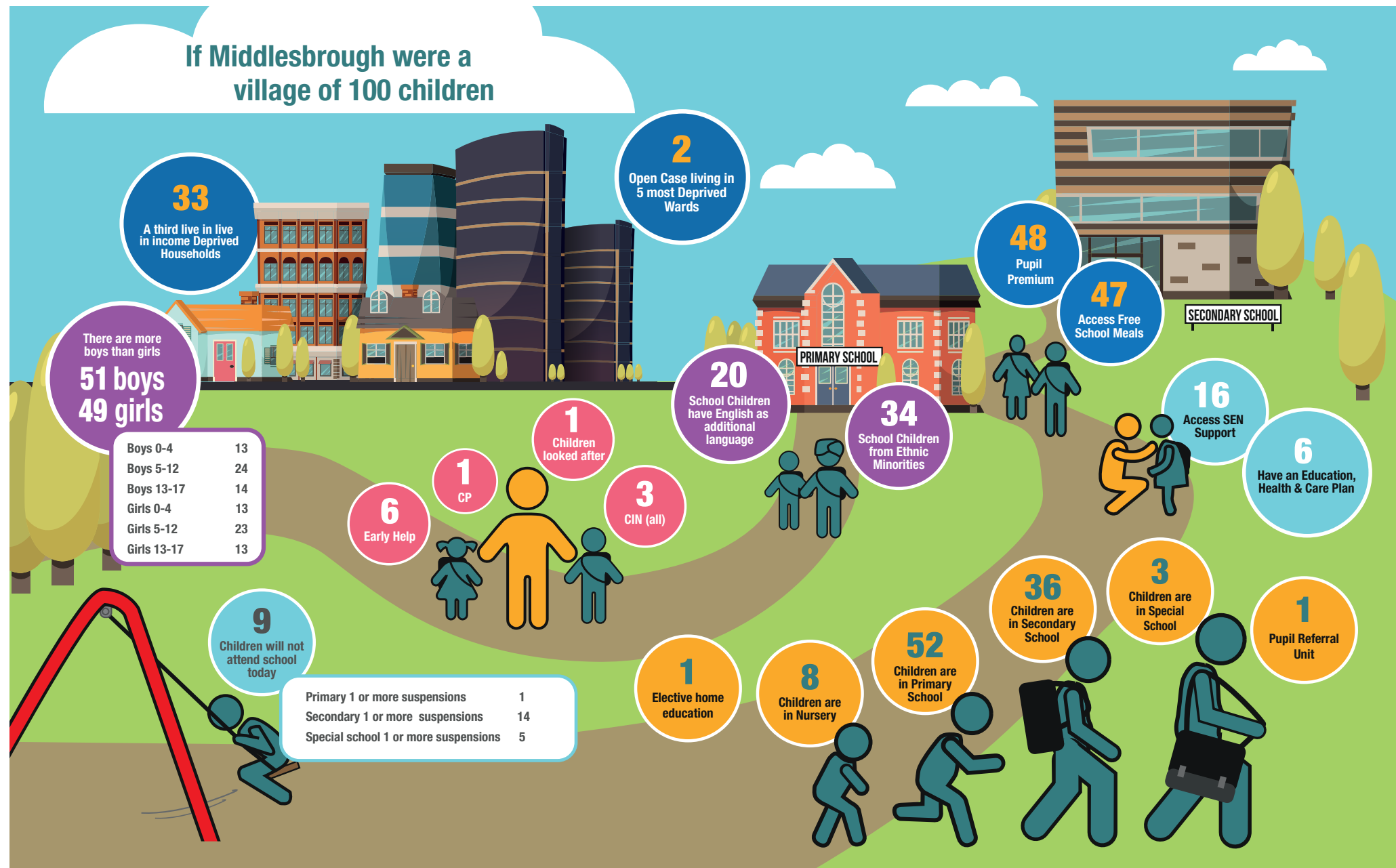
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Children are in Special School

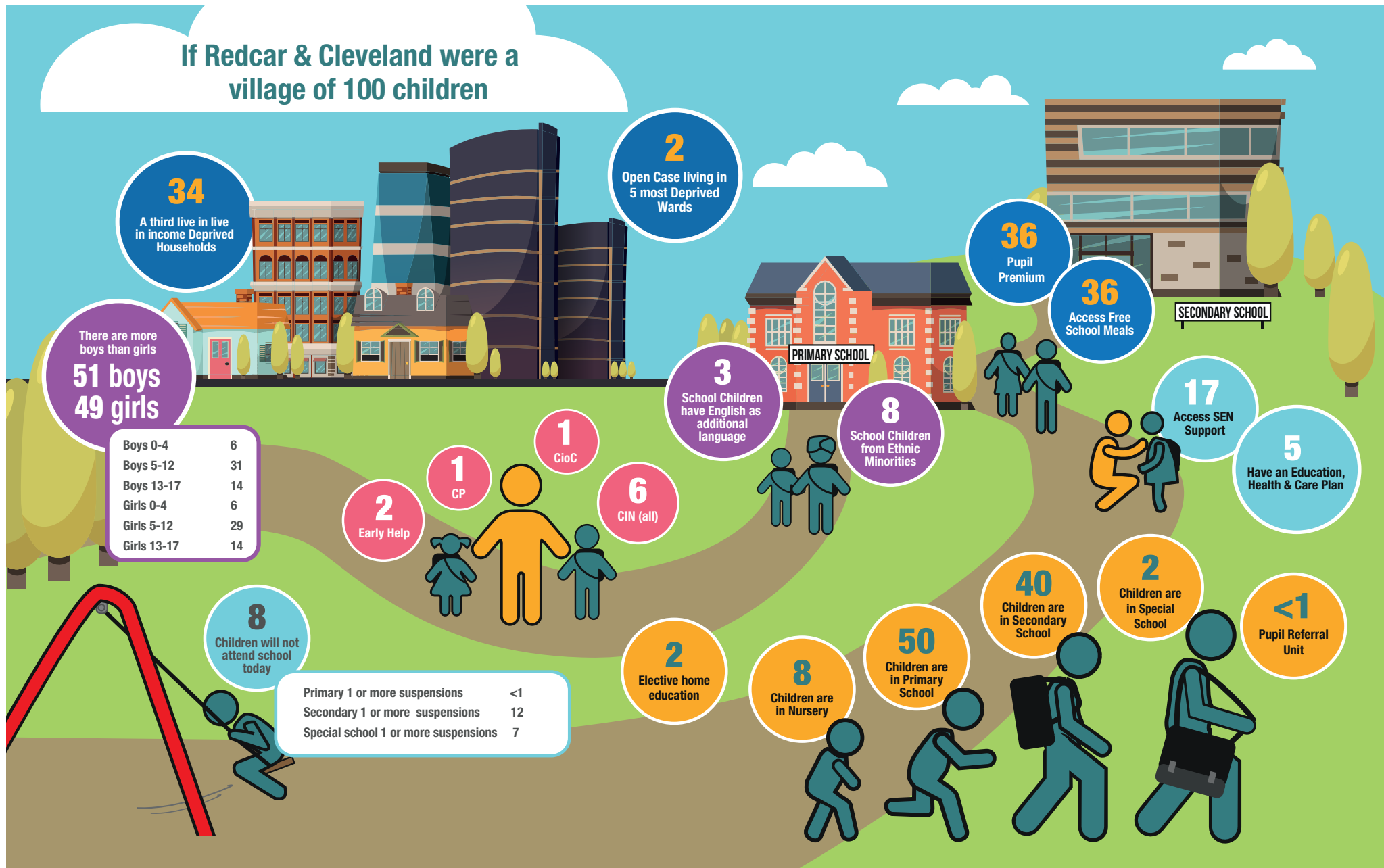
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Pupil Referral Unit

PRIMARY SCHOOL



If Redcar & Cleveland were a village of 100 children



STSCP PRIORITY OBJECTIVES 2023-24



Neglect

The aim is to reduce neglect, reduce the impact of neglect and ensure help & support is provided at the earliest opportunity

Exploitation

The aim is for children/young people to be free from the risk and harm of exploitation, going missing or being trafficked

Empowering Young People

The aim is to create a clear focus on the needs and experience of young people

Working Together

The aim is to achieve excellent partnership working across all areas

The STSCP plans to review the priorities in a future STSCP development session in September 2025 and incorporate learning from the April 2025 JTAI on the impact of domestic abuse children, which highlighted the issue of sequential priorities but will be part of the next yearly report.

SECTION 3: Progress against statutory guidance

1. Implementation of any changes set out in statutory guidance:

Partnership review - Maturity Health Check

As part of the process of ongoing review ensuring that local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective, a review of safeguarding arrangements was carried out in 2024 – this work was supported by the Department for Education Health Check Tool and ongoing policy development by Government. The findings of the Maturity Health Check were reported to the June 2024 STSCP exec meeting.

The first multi-agency Partnership Maturity Health Check session using the Department of Education process tool was held on the 7th May. The purpose of which was to check compliance with Working Together 2023 (WT2023) by the STSCP and seek the views and inputs of the relevant partners / stakeholders. The STSCP gained ideas on how to take the partnership forward, which included reviewing our priorities and to give the STSCP a wide range of ideas. There were 25 partner agencies attending the session, which included representation of the voluntary and community sector.

Health Check Session 2 was held with relevant partners to review the understanding of the work of the STSCP by the wider partnership. Following the analysis of the May session responses and grades given by partners and the November responses and grades, we were then able to determine an overall grading for the 10 themes giving the partnership the indication or maturity.

Theme	Core	Maturity 7th May 2024 Session	Maturity 7th November 2024 Session
1.	A shared responsibility	Emerging/Developed	Emerging
2.	MA safeguarding arrangements	Developed	Emerging
3.	Help, Support and Protection	Developed	Emerging/Developed
4.	Decisive Multi Agency Child Protection	Developed	Emerging/Developed
5.	Learning Culture	Developed	Developed
	Cross Cutting Themes	Maturity	Maturity
6.	Voice and Influence	Emerging	Emerging
7.	Communication & information sharing	Developed	Emerging
8.	Working in Partnership	Developed	Developed
9.	Leadership	Developed	Emerging
10.	Governance (inc scrutiny)	Developed	Developed
11.	Impact and Outcomes	Developed	Emerging

The sessions agreed the same gradings on three themes, these were learning and culture, working in partnership and governance. The findings show an average grade of Emerging (See table above) for the partnership and we are using this learning in our forward planning and future development.



Safeguarding impact: The STSCP Arrangements were developed and strengthened by the findings of the Health Check work, allowing the development of a more robust governance structure, that will enable the delivery of the STSCP priorities. This included strengthening the education representation on the executive. Sessions of this type are vital to ensure that safeguarding practice within South Tees is continually evolving to provide independent feedback and challenge to ensure protection is in place for children and young people alongside support for their parents/carers.

Evidence of the impact: The STSCP was able to identify areas for improvement which included a review of including membership with a view to strengthening the way we do business and prepare for the changes introduced in Working Together 2023. Following the sessions the new arrangements were refined and agreed ready for publication in December 2024.

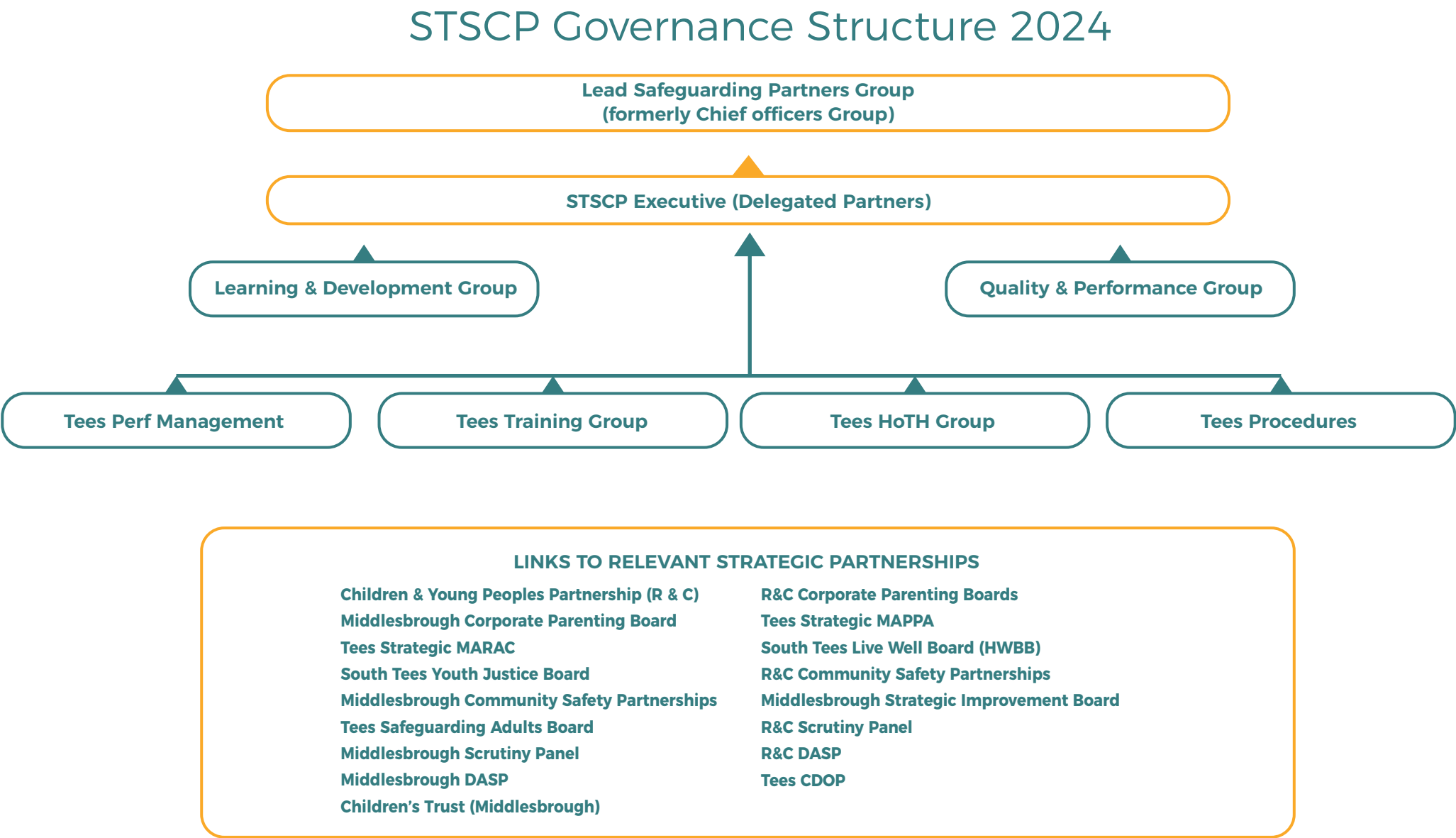
Next Steps/Further Development: STSCP Executive Development session: A further development session was held on 18th November 2024 in order to review and finalise the STSCP new arrangements in line with Working Together 2023.

Yearly Report 2023-24

The STSCP Yearly Report 2023/2024 was finalised and sent to the National Panel in line with the Working Together 2023 guidance, the report was received positively by the STSCP Lead Safeguarding Partners and the Delegated Safeguarding Partners. The independent scrutineer agreed the Annual Report accurately covered the partnership activity for that period.

Safeguarding impact: The report highlights the impact the STSCP is having on Safeguarding practice across Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland and holds the STSCP Executive and Business Unit to scrutiny and account by highlighting the work achieved during the year.

2. The functioning and structure to the contributions of each safeguarding partner.



STSCP Lead Safeguarding Partners

The functional responsibility for the STSCP Lead Safeguarding Partners is shared by the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs). All LSPs have equal and joint responsibility for the arrangements and will meet formally annually to review how the safeguarding arrangements are progressing. Chairing arrangements are agreed amongst LSPs on a two-year rotational basis, the LSP is currently chaired by The Chief Executive of Middlesbrough Council, however for the period of this report 2024-2025 was chaired by the Head of Paid Service for Redcar & Cleveland.

STSCP Executive/Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP's)

Functional responsibility for the STSCP Executive is shared by the DSPs. All DSPs have equal and joint responsibility for the arrangements and will meet formally bi-monthly to review how the safeguarding arrangements are progressing. Chairing arrangements are agreed amongst LSPs on a rotational basis. The STSCP executive is currently chaired by Cleveland Police.

STSCP Arrangements 2024 – click to link to full arrangements [STSCP arrangements - revised November 2024](#)

3. Aggregated scrutiny: Aggregated methods of scrutiny, such as reviews, scrutineer activities, and multi-agency audits.

The use of Independent Scrutineers

The independent consultants provide a rigorous and effective independent scrutiny function providing challenge to the safeguarding partners.

Throughout the past year, Independent Scrutiny has been used as follows:

- To complete Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- To complete learning reviews.
- To complete Challenge events on historic reviews.
- To provide a report to the Chief Officers meeting on the safeguarding arrangements.
- Provide a report on the local arrangements for managing exploitation.
- Attend meetings with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review National Panel.
- To chair development/review of arrangements meetings of the Executive.
- Audit specific cases.
- Review the 2024 Section 11.
- Provide reports to the STSCP Executive and attend the meetings.
- Attend joint meetings between STSCP and HSSCP.



Challenge Events Chaired by the Independent Scrutineer

The CSPR Fred Challenge event: This CSPR was in respect of Fred, a young person, who was found unconscious in the street. Following admittance to hospital, tests undertaken were positive for a combination of alcohol, and drugs which could have had serious consequences; fortunately, Fred made a full recovery. The significant learning from this review was that the impact of domestic abuse and/or adult substance misuse on children of all ages should always be considered, especially when a child is directly affected. Where there are several incidents, these need to be considered cumulatively as well as in isolation, and any contradictions between the child's expressed wishes and their lived experience fully explored. Emotional abuse and neglect of adolescents tends to be less readily recognised than that of younger children.

CSPR Charley Challenge Event: This CSPR was commissioned by the STSCP after Charley was found unconscious and not breathing at home and despite receiving treatment Charley sadly passed away.

The review had highlighted some learning themes such as:

- Challenging disengagement / disguised non-compliance.
- Information-sharing – particularly in relation to:
 - o Historic domestic abuse.
 - o Hidden Males.
 - o Accurate address information required in all cases.
- Over optimism of professionals.
- Understanding root causes of neglectful parenting.
- Professional curiosity (in relation to making links between abusive relationships and neglectful parenting).
- The cumulative impact of historic domestic abuse was not recognised or acted on. It would seem at this early point that incidents were viewed in isolation and not considered as part of a wider pattern in the case.

The challenge event was well attended and progress against the actions was positive and thorough.

Safeguarding impact: The challenge events ensure the results of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are followed up and actions are fully implemented and monitored, while reinforcing the review recommendations and learning. The session demonstrated that agencies were making changes to practice because of the review and the impact on front line practice will continue to be monitored by the STSCP.

Evidence of the impact: All agencies attended that were involved with the case and feedback from the session was very good. Further training was scheduled to raise the profile and quality of PPN.

Next Steps/Further Development: STSCP will plan further sessions in line with the more recent Child Safeguarding Practice Review's and learning reviews recognising reoccurring themes and if appropriate strategic prioritisation of identified themes within the South Tees..

STSCP Audits

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The section 11 Audit was completed on a Teeswide basis this year working with the Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership, this included Key Safeguarding Partners, all local Health trusts, Housing providers and Probation.

Key Findings from the Section 11 Audit 2024

Section 1 Leadership and Accountability

Themes: No formal supervision in place in schools. Strategic plans need to reflect safeguarding priorities with links to multi-agency partners required. Inter-agency work at a strategic level are being reviewed. Strengthening strategic oversight on complex work.

Section 2 Policies & Procedures

Themes: Strengthening of strategic policy documents in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Reviewing of child protection and inter-agency procedures are taking place.

Section 3 Safer recruitment, staff roles & responsibilities

Themes: Review of fit for purpose test with health, need to review to understand if there is compliance of the annual self-declaration process re DBSs. Need to monitor safer recruitment training. Embedding working together and promoting training available via the safeguarding children's partnerships.

Section 4 Staff- Induction, Training & Development

Themes: Seeking assurance on induction training and effectiveness; strengthening safeguarding supervision offer; developing familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and the procedures to be followed. Developing training tracker and monitoring & using this in supervision; monitoring training attendance. Lack of robust oversight of compliance and a process in place to remind staff of refresher training when required. Strengthening safeguarding supervision and reflection.

Section 5 Complaints, Allegations & Whistleblowing

Themes: Managing allegations policy is currently being reviewed by Tees Procedures; further work is needed via training regarding the role of the LADO and the processes to follow. Reviewing attendance of the training.

Section 6 Information Sharing, Communication & Confidentiality

Themes: Changes in the workforce require assurance that staff have access to the policies and procedures and are familiar with them.

Section 7 Listening to Children & Young People

Themes: Need to continue to promote the voice and influence of children via forums; reviewing forum approach with children; wider PPN work is underway to capture and ensure children are safeguarded capturing their voices. TEWW are strengthening the assessment and recording of children's voices to affect the impact they receive. Understanding the impact within assessments for children for children's services. Stockton LA needs to further embed within the case files the Think Family approach, supported by their practice standards & QA framework. Further audit work around risk assessment tools, compliance and ensuring use of these aides.

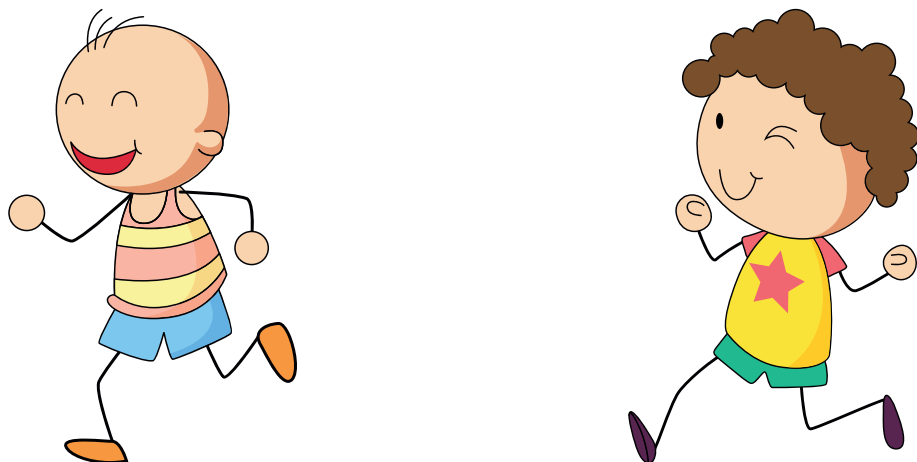
Voice of the child

STSCP members recognise the importance of hearing about what it is like to be a child growing up in South Tees. At the annual education event with schools, a group of children did a presentation on episodes from their own lives. This was so much more powerful coming directly from them and in their own words. It prompted a strengthening of the relationship with the Corporate Parenting groups and other young people groups.

Safeguarding impact: The Section 11 audit gathered information and highlight gaps and areas of safeguarding practice across key partners and other relevant partners. The partnership is planning an Assurance Session in May 2025 to galvanise the learning from the audit.

Evidence of the impact: The S11 Audit provided strong assurance of single agency compliance and the impact of collaborative efforts and arrangements, under the safeguarding children's partnership arrangements. The child's voice from review learning feeds into the training scope of works and has led to changes made to existing training as well as new training being put in place. What has been learnt / identified through reviews re child's voice has fed into existing and new training for the multi-agency workforce.

Next Steps/Further Development: Assurance sessions have been planned for May 2025 with all those who completed the audit and findings fed back to the Exec by the independent scrutineers across Tees.



JTAI Preparation Audit

In December 2024 the focus on the **impact of parental domestic abuse on children** preparation for an multi agency audit aligned with the new Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) theme began. 6 cases were selected with 3 from Middlesbrough and 3 from Redcar & Cleveland. This audit allowed partners to evaluate their services that are provided to vulnerable children and young people and address any areas requiring action, the audit findings were shared with the STSCP executive.

The STSCP also sought reassurance from the Middlesbrough DASP and the Redcar & Cleveland DASP on how the **Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Partnership's (DASP)** contributes to the priorities of Children and Young People in South Tees. Future assurance will require completion of a report covering specific 'look fors' in relation to the safeguarding and well-being of children

Safeguarding impact: Proactive approach to undertaking our own JTAI style joint audit ahead of any inspection by Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) has allowed for early learning around how the local authority, police, health, probation services are working together to identify, support and protect vulnerable children and young people impacted by domestic abuse at a practitioner level.

Evidence of the impact: Probation changed practice model and engaged with the work of the STSCP due to the audit findings. Police changed their criteria for sharing information in relation to perpetrators of abuse with the front doors.

Next Steps/Further Development: Future JTAI themes will be tested with a similar audit and learning approach. However, strategic direction as well as frontline practice will be considered in deciding effectiveness of the multi-agency arrangements.

JTAI - Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children notification was received for Redcar & Cleveland, 24th March 2025. Inspectors were on site 7th April to 11th April and the findings will be addressed in the 2025-2026 Yearly report.

Domestic Abuse through Assessment to Child Protection – dip sample audit – Feb 2024 – April 2024

To determine if children's assessment cases with Domestic Abuse (DA) flagged are lost if they progress to Child Protection. Dip sampling took place across both Redcar & Cleveland children services and Middlesbrough children services.

Child and Family Assessment (C&FA) flagged with DA, may then move into Child Protection Plans (CPPs) and Section 47. The audit confirmed that we are not losing these categories of DA as this is not a category within CPP. The categories are Emotional, Physical, Sexual and Neglect.

The quality and performance subgroup were reassured by this investigation into this topic of data relating to the data found within the Tees Performance Management Framework.

Quality & Appropriate of Contacts Made to the MACH Audit – August 2024 – September 2024

The largest submissions of contacts sent to both MACH teams were received from Cleveland Police, Health Partners, and Education, so there was a benefit to exploring and auditing these partners. For the audit a concern sent to the MACH teams is known as a "Contact" and if it progresses the output becomes a "Referral".

Safeguarding Impact: The time between a contact being recorded by any of the key partners and the contact being acted upon within the MACH are actioned in a timely manner. Good use of child focused language was used by professionals on the relevant cases. Responses within the audit demonstrate that wider support around the child is keeping children safe.

Evidence of the impact: Operation Encompass was activated in all cases from Cleveland Police, with only one from an outside force not being activated. A change to Cleveland Police processes has since taken place to prevent this from happening.

Improvements on the demographics being completed, and the concerns and the impact on the child clearly laid out in the contact can be improved upon and this is being addressed by Cleveland Police.

Next Steps/Further Development: Learning from the audit process to be carried forward to the next multi-agency audit, such as more time to be allocated for the audits to allow full discussion and thorough auditing.

4. Analysis of areas with limited progress:

The DoE Health check process and Section 11 found that the Voice of child is not embedded consistently across all agencies.

The impact of parental Domestic Abuse on children although assurances were sought from the DASP groups more work is required to ensure the strategic approach to safeguarding children within households experiencing domestic abuse is clear and this translates to frontline practice.

Tees Performance Management Framework - it has been recognised that the progress on the review and implementation of this work has been slow and prolonged and the lack of a combined dataset makes the setting of priorities more difficult.

Further scrutiny is required across the partnership in relation to agencies understanding and recording of diversity and how this impacts on decision making and outcomes in multi-agency safeguarding.

Evidence of the impact: The JTAI audit process highlighted some short falls in quality assurance processes but also showed an improvement in the continued completion of multi-agency audits and feedback to the STSCP Exec of the findings. Action planning from the audits is showing improvements in services and links to the DASP co-ordinators who are now part of the STSCP subgroups.

Next Steps/Further Development: Strengthen links to wider partnerships such as the CSP and DASP's for both Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland.

5. Learning from serious incidents:

Rapid Reviews

Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews which had been carried out during the previous year had identified that neglect is still a significant issue, and this has led to the finalising of the South Tees Neglect Strategy. This followed the rapid review of the Child Aiden case, a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR), a case of cumulative neglect which sadly ended in a young person taking their own life.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR)

The exploitation themed Child Safeguarding Practice Review was signed off by the STSCP Executive, this had been commissioned to consider the multi-agency safeguarding response to child criminal exploitation (CCE) where serious youth violence featured. The review considered the systems and practice across the partnership with regards to CCE as a learning process.

Safeguarding impact: A 5-point learning brief has been developed and circulated following the thematic Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) considering several young people who were subject to CCE. Its aim was to support professionals in identifying, responding, and managing situations where it is suspected or known that child criminal exploitation is happening and there are worries about extra-familial harm. There were two learning sessions held which were attended by over 100 professionals and the feedback from the sessions was very good.

The Exploitation themed CSPR identified the “the risk and impact of criminal exploitation” which is now covered in all relevant multi-agency training. The STSCP have commissioned multi-agency training which includes criminal exploitation, and clarity about what professionals should do if they suspect this is happening.

CSPR Aiden regarding cumulative neglect was commissioned to consider systems and practice within and between partner agencies regarding the multi-agency responses following the death of a young person. The death of a child is tragic and traumatic for families, communities, and professionals to understand and process. By exploring Aiden's lived experiences and the services and systems that supported the family, this work can help the Partnership reflect and learn about what helped and what could be improved when working with children and families in similar circumstances.

The STSCP held an extra ordinary meeting to sign off the CSPR Aiden highlighting the following learning:

- Cumulative Neglect understanding is strengthened.
- Step-up and Step-down decision-making.
- Appreciating family history.
- Understanding self-harm and suicidal thinking.
- Learning into practice.
- Thresholds for neglect.
- Clear pathways for help, support and protecting adolescents with identified risk factors.
- Professional challenge is strengthened.
- Cross-boundary working.
- Safety Planning.
- Family collaboration CAMHS and STSCP.

Safeguarding impact: The review will improve and support effective multi-agency working, ensure cross-boundary responsibilities are better understood. The action plan activities will take place in 2025/2026. Homelessness and poor living conditions –through the child’s eyes, ensuring their needs are not lost in the continuing challenge/misunderstanding about the legal process and financial responsibilities. Thresholds for neglect –professionals appreciating the nature of cumulative neglect and how decisions and thresholds are applied.

Evidence of the impact: The take up and interest in the Neglect posters, leaflets and the training has shown that staff recognise there is a gap, and they are keen to improve understanding.

Next Steps/Further Development: Deliver Neglect sessions on the Neglect Strategy and increase the availability of the training on Neglect. Face to face Neglect Strategy launches were held on: 15th May, 5th June, 16th June, 1st July. In addition to maximise reach to Early years professionals including day nurseries and child minder a twilight shortened version was also ran on 24th June 2025.

6. Key decisions and actions taken:

To support emerging local themes and to reinforce consistent professional curiosity, joint partnership meetings continue to be held between the STSCP (South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership) and the HSSCP (Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership) to drive the implementation of the Tees Exploitation arrangements, the Tees Training function and the broader Tees work strands. This also supports the recommendation in CSPR Aiden around improved cross boundary working.

Safeguarding impact: Professionals are better equipped to identify those children at greater risk and intervene at a much earlier stage to safeguard against neglect and be more professionally curious around hidden harm and neglect in and around the households of young families. The South Tees Neglect strategy and action planning continue to support the work of the Neglect task and finish group into the reviewing of training and tools for professionals to support relevant families.

Evidence of the impact: Through joint partnership working we have been able to drive the development and implementation of the new HoTH processes Teesside with a significant increase in the number of children/young people being reviewed at the new meetings. The HoTH launch was attended by over 200 staff. We have also raised the profile of Neglect across the area with over 300 staff attending sessions and all children workforce receiving email containing posters and leaflets.

Next Steps/Further Development: Continue to develop joint working with the HSSCP with a view to creating more opportunities to increase effectiveness and efficiencies, which will allow the partnership to do more. Scope the formation of a Tees Business Unit to look at increasing capacity though economies of scale.

Thresholds

A key part of the work of the partnership is the continued promotion and understanding of the thresholds to services.

Safeguarding impact: The Threshold document allows multi-agency partners that have a wider geographical footprint to work to one set of guidelines for Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Stockton.

Next Steps/Further Development: Threshold understanding and cross boundary issues are a recurring area of concern in the South Tees. We have been requested to provide additional training on these areas. Professionals need to focus on families that move across boundaries often and share information as these families can be especially vulnerable. Ensure health visitors are included in assessments and planning for the unborn babies.

Prioritising Child Sexual Abuse

The Tees partnerships (STSCP, HSSCP and TSAB) in association with the Centre of Expertise of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA Centre) held the Prioritising Child Sexual Abuse event an engaging day of talks and workshops exploring child sexual abuse. This roadshow event was designed to help professionals identify and respond to child sexual abuse and confidently support children and families. To discuss the scale of child sexual abuse, both locally and nationally; the contexts in which sexual abuse takes place; the characteristics of those affected; and who it is who perpetrates abuse. The event explored the key challenges professionals face in the identification and response to child. The event was attended by over 100 professionals from across the Tees area.

Safeguarding impact: Professionals were signposted to helpful advice and guidance to support them in giving victims, survivors and families effected by child sexual abuse the support they need.

Evidence of the impact: Whilst the sessions have raised the issue of the under-reporting of sexual abuse and aimed to support professionals in identifying signs of abuse, at this time the data is showing low reporting outside of policing which suggests more work is needed or the impact is yet to embed.

Next Steps/Further Development: Planned audit activity on cases involving CSA. Carry out work in line with the national recommendations around CSAE to ensure effective support to child victims.

Neglect

Work has continued on the **Neglect Strategy** for the South Tees, which has been aligned with the Tees Neglect Framework. The strategy was published in early of 2025. **The Neglect Strategy task and finish group** has overseen this work and is now overseeing the action plan that accompanies the strategy.

The Neglect Strategy task and finish group supports the functions and responsibilities of the Partnership in respect of Working Together 2023 and Neglect.

Safeguarding Impact: To strengthen the understanding of Neglect across South Tees 1,000 A5 flyers were produced aimed at professionals and members of the public, highlighting both what and who to contact if you have a concern regarding a child being neglected. In addition, 100 A3 poster were produced. In the South Tees neglect training was fully booked on 14th January 2025 and 12th February 2025.

By the end of the financial year all A3 posters had been distributed to schools, GP practices and family hubs. 329 A5 flyers were distributed to organisations such as the voluntary and community agencies in the South Tees. In addition, 152 electronic versions of the A3 and A5 neglect information was shared with schools across Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland also with the Redcar & Cleveland 0-19 health service and Middlesbrough 0-19 HDFT, which includes school nurses and health visitors. The workforce is highly motivated and proactive in trying to recognise and act upon concerns for children and young people, and this will be further developed in the next financial year. The posters and leaflets were produced in response to requests from third sector feedback on how best to connect with some of our minority communities.



2024/2027 NEGLECT STRATEGY

Background

The impact of Neglect on children and young people is profound; it causes significant and long-lasting distress to children and often leads to poor health, educational and social outcomes. In some cases, it can prove fatal.

The number of recorded cruelty and neglect offences in England and North Ireland are the highest they have been for a decade.

STSCP Vision is: To reduce the incidence & impact of Neglect and offer the right support to children & their families as soon as difficulties are identified.

Strategic Aims

We aim to have effective interventions to reduce the impact of Neglect and achieve better outcomes for children.

- Recognise:** Staff have the necessary skills & understanding to identify & address the Neglect of Children
- Respond:** Detect Neglect & intervene early enough to prevent harm
- Quantify:** Effective interventions to reduce the impact of neglect & achieve better outcomes for children
- Evaluate:** Help families build their resilience and ability to sustain their own improvement to prevent future harm

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.

Once, born, Neglect may involve a parent/carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Neglect differs from other forms of abuse because it is:

- Frequently passive.
- Not always intentional.
- More likely to be a chronic condition rather than crisis led and therefore impacts on how we respond as agencies.

Responding to Neglect

If you think Neglect is occurring in a family, household or for an individual child or young person your next course of action.

Good Practice

- Record concerns, conversations and interactions.
- Use a chronology.
- Assess and review.
- Discuss concerns with the child, parent/carer and family members as appropriate.
- Think Family, Work Family.

Contact Us

Early Help (universal and targeted support)

Discuss concerns with either Redcar & Cleveland or Middlesbrough's Early Help Teams.

Redcar & Cleveland Early Help Assessment Team contact: 01642 130678.

All completed partner-led Early Help Assessment (EHA) forms should be returned to: EarlyHelp@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Middlesbrough Early Help Assessment Team contact: 01642 726004.

Middlesbrough email contact details: MiddlesbroughMACH@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Significant Harm

Discuss concerns with your relevant Safeguarding Lead.

Redcar & Cleveland Early Multi-Agency Children's Hub Tel: 01642 130700.

Email: RedcarMACH@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Middlesbrough Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH) Tel: 01642 726004.

Middlesbrough email: MiddlesbroughMACH@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Immediate Risk of Harm, phone the police on 999.

South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership

T: 01642 728704 E: stscp@middlesbrough.gov.uk www.stscp.co.uk

To view our full South Tees Neglect Strategy, please scan the QR code.

Neglect poster produced

Evidence of the impact: Feedback from professionals is that they feel better equipped to identify those children at greater risk and intervene at a much earlier stage to safeguard against neglect and be more curious of partners in and around the households of young families. The data from March 2024 shows the number of child protection cases for the category of neglect has decreased for South Tees from 370 to 361. There has been a slight decrease in CP cases for neglect which could be indicative that intervention is occurring earlier, as overall referrals have increased.

Next Steps/Further Development: The South Tees Neglect Strategy launch is planned for May/June 2025.

The South Tees Neglect strategy and action planning will continue to support the work of the Neglect task and finish group into the review of training and tools for professional to support relevant families.

7. Financial Arrangements

The financial contributions from Key partners has remained the same for the last 4 years, this is to be reviewed in 2025.

Budget 2024/2025

The financial contributions from partner agencies are as follows:

Funding Agency	2024-2025
Middlesbrough Council	65,000
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	65,000
Cleveland Police	65,000
NE&NE Cumbria Integrated Care Board	65,000
Probation Service	1,158
South Tees Youth Justice Service	6,300
	267,458

The STSCP acknowledges, in addition to financial contributions, there is a significant amount of 'in kind' contributions that partners provide through the support they give to the work of the standing groups and leading on task and finish groups, other pieces of priority work and the delivery of training.

The expenditure for the STSCP was as follows:

Staffing	196,070
Non-staffing budget requirements	
Training including Core Training (& Update)	25,192
Tees Performance Management Framework	10,000
E-learning (Tees wide *4)	4,750
Tees Procedures website	400
STSCP Website Maintenance/security	2,000
Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	0
TSAB membership	850
Independent Scrutiny	12,325
HoTH Independent Chair	16,200
TOTAL	71,717
TOTAL Staffing and Expenditure Costs	267,787

8. Representation of education sector:

Working Together 2023 emphasises the importance of representation from schools at strategic level meetings. The STSCP Executive already benefits from the presence and contribution of the Assistant Directors of Education. The plan in 2025-26 is to include a Primary school representative and a secondary school representative. The findings of the annual Section 175/157 surveys for schools have had response rates of over 90%. The Executive has recognised school as a protective factor for most children.

The partnership also benefits from network groups such as the Redcar & Cleveland Safeguarding in Education Network (SiEN) and the Middlesbrough Safeguarding Network (MSN).

Safeguarding impact: The STSCP is linked strongly to education networks and can respond and react to schools and young people's feedback and therefore has an impact on children/young people's lived experience.

Evidence of the impact: The annual Section 175 surveys for schools have had response rates of over 90% across South Tees with a 100% response from Redcar & Cleveland schools. This shows a marked commitment by schools to engage with the safeguarding agenda.

Next Steps/Further Development: The STSCP will continue with the s175/157 September/October 2025 and refine the audit form.

The safeguarding leads will present the s175/157 audit reports to the STSCP executive. The STSCP will continue to:

- Encourage schools to provide supervision for all staff involved in safeguarding and promote peer group learning and other support networks for reflection and support.
- Continue to support schools to have an appropriate strategy that seeks the views of service users more regularly with specific regard to safeguarding and to inform how the information has been used.
- Support schools to evidence that all staff are aware and can access policies to support their decision making.

Safeguarding Beyond the School Gate

The **Safeguarding Beyond the School Gate** project started across South Tees and is an education focussed series of webinars to provide information on what the children of South Tees are experiencing from the harm outside of their home. This focused on the areas of child exploitation (criminal and sexual), harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence considering how the wider community issues are entwined with children's school experience. This was underpinned by the requirements of the latest 'Working Together' updates and local safeguarding procedures, including police intelligence sharing.

Safeguarding impact: The schools across the South Tees were able to engage with the exploitation and safeguarding agenda enabling them to be more aware and up to date on the subject.

Evidence of the impact: All schools engaged in the project and feedback was positive.

Next Steps/Further Development: Look at developing more projects with schools and young people.

STSCP Annual Education event 2024

The focus of the **STSCP Annual Education event 2024** was on mental health and inclusive practice for our children and young people.

“

**Encouraging dialogue -
Inclusion for all including
the quietest voices**

”

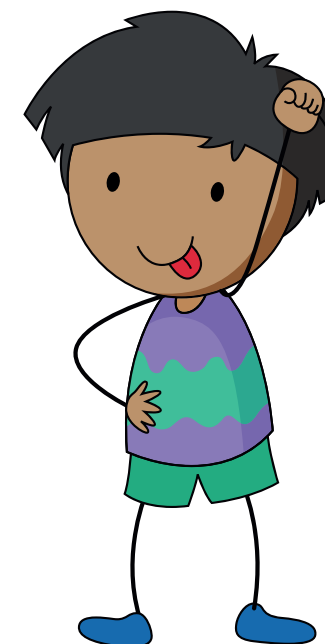
The session included presentations by Redcar and Cleveland's 'Have Your Say' Group and Middlesbrough's 'We Matter' and the 'Voice, Influence and Change' group. from Care experienced young people and Young carers who talked about their lived experience and "What makes a difference". The following is what they said:

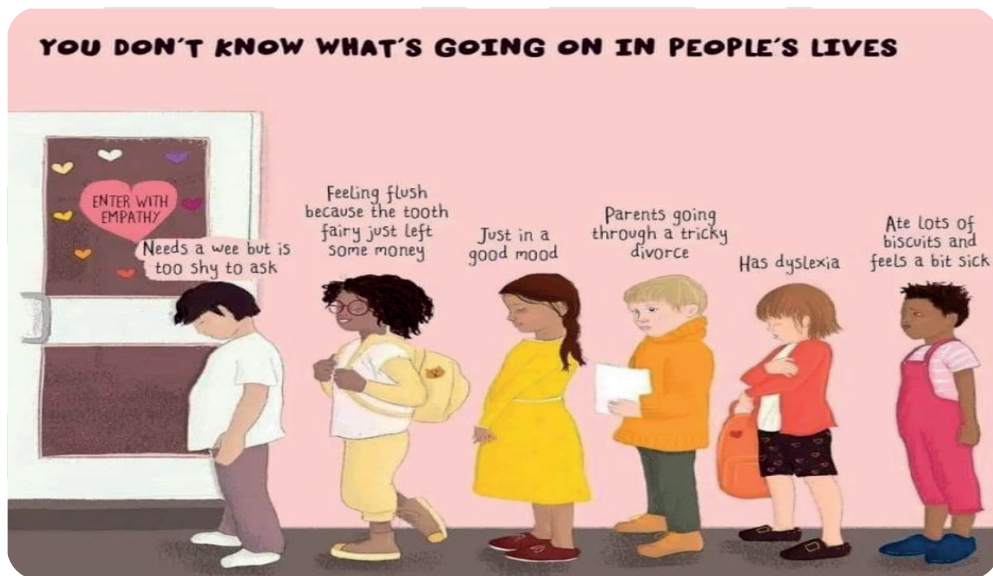
Positives

- 1:1 worker.
- Having a teacher who supports me.
- Having a caring school.
- Like being different – have different opportunities.
- Don't mind having my meetings in school.
- Don't single me out.

Negatives

- Not having support for being care experienced.
- Being bullied.
- Language that people use.
- Getting taken out of favourite lessons.
- When taken out of lessons people ask where I am going and what for.
- Time not given to those who are doing well.
- Having to change schools when I moved from my cared for home.





Safeguarding impact: Closer links between agencies and the children, young people and families they work with embraces true partnership working to fully understand and respond to issues as they arise across the area. This creates a safeguarding culture which strives for improvement through cooperation and learning rather than enforcement. Constantly evolving training ensures professionals are equipped to respond to an ever-changing society and new risks.



Dr Sarah Martin-Denham presented the **Project 2999-Increasing the visibility of exclusion from school**. The blanket represented a section for each young person who had been excluded this year.

Safeguarding impact: Following on from the event, the profile of mental health and inclusive practice was raised, all professionals who attended were provided with a resource pack. Additionally, the experience gained from continuing to engage directly with education professionals will be used to plan future events. This will include engagement with them in respect of the changes emanating from Working Together 2023.

The event was a huge success with over 80 attendees. An example of the feedback was as follows:

Excellent event with great speakers who share experiences which will help my practice moving forward. Thank you all who arranged and made the learning possible.

I have found this event extremely useful and interesting and makes you think carefully about those vulnerable children in school.

Opener by Jonny Utterly from The Education Alliance - inspiring, honest and affirming - lead with love. Information on young carers very useful. Men's mental health - emotional and thought provoking.

All sessions have been really informative and thought provoking. I have made lots of notes that I will share with colleagues back at school.

Evidence of the impact: As above feedback from the event was very good and attendance of more than 100 school and education professionals.

Next Steps/Further Development: Develop more school orientated events involving children and young people on relevant up to date themes.

9. Use of data and information sharing:

The Tees Performance Management Framework review continued with scrutiny of all the data collected across the Tees, including quantitative and qualitative data. The review group developed a multi-agency Performance and Management Framework, and data collection activity undertaken against performance indicators will enable agencies to make intelligence led decisions and focus resources in areas that are emerging as potential issues.

Safeguarding impact: The review was completed in the first quarter of 2024/25 and is allowing partners to jointly assess performance, highlight areas of good practice alongside identifying areas which need more robust work to be undertaken. This is enabling the partners to identify areas of work to investigate and seek out assurance to safeguard our children and young people. The review has enabled the STSCP and HSSCP to agree to form a Tees Performance Group starting in early 2025.

Evidence of the impact: The Performance & Quality Assurance Group have identified a need to recognise new national reviews and new datasets which now reflect safeguarding assurances we require that are required with Working Together 2023 and the Children's social care reforms.

Next Steps/Further Development: Further develop the Tees Performance & Quality Assurance Group.

Redcar & Cleveland LA have agreed to be the new data provider collating, amalgamating and providing this group with the necessary dataset for the Tees to carry out safeguarding assurances and the necessary work required following analysis of quarterly data.

STSCP Website Access

1st April - 31st March STSCP website data there was **9,421 total views**
The following table highlights the top ten most accessed pages.

STSCP Web Page	Number of Hits	STSCP Web Page	Number of Hits
Homepage	1,718	Working together	519
STSCP eLearning	1,579	Make a safeguarding report	404
Training	962	Key documents (main page)	346
Information for professionals	783	About us	319
Taught Courses	519	Working together	256

Safeguarding Impact: The website is still attracting a significant number of hits which means the communication with professionals and the community is relatively high which highlights the STSCP impact is strong and influential. The figures also show a high level of interest (Over 3,000 hits) in the eLearning, training and taught courses pages indicating the impact of professionals' interest and access to the STSCP training.

Evidence of the impact: Although small decrease of 215 between 2023/2024 (9,636) and 2024/2025 (9,421) the access to the website and information has been good increasing the communication with professionals and the public.

Next Steps/Further Development: Continue to develop the STSCP website and use of technology by the partnership to enhance communication to professionals and the public.

10. Independent scrutiny: A review of the impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements to ensure strong leadership and that the arrangements achieve the desired impact.

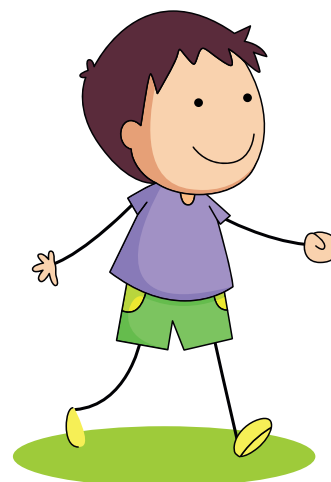
Independent Scrutineer

The Partnership has an Independent Scrutineer and Partnership Chair who both provide leadership, vision and support and are responsible for ensuring that all organisations contribute effectively to the work of the STSCP. This role in line with the guidance set out in Working Together 2023.

The scrutineer provides a rigorous and effective independent scrutiny function providing challenge to the safeguarding partners.

The South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (STSCP) has agreed "Six Steps to Independent Scrutiny" as the model on which the scrutiny programme is based.

The Independent Scrutineer has provided accountability for the work undertaken by the STSCP by way of challenge within meetings, reports to relevant strategic committees and boards. Effective communication between the Business Manager and Independent Scrutineer ensures that there is a clear link between the subgroups and executive group, enabling risks, themes, and opportunities to be highlighted at an executive level, and challenge, direction and opportunities to be shared into subgroups.



Function of Independent Scrutiny Role

- Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- Provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- Ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- Ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- Be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- Provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- Evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

11. Updates to published arrangements:

See previous section on arrangements, no further updates are planned at this point.

12. Implementation of national reforms: Evidence of national reforms being implemented.

The STSCP has focused on the following National reports:

National Review on Child Sexual Abuse Within The Family Environment - I Wanted Them All to Notice - November 2024

Link to website document - [The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel - I wanted them all to notice](#)

What have we Done?

- We have circulated the documentation to the key partners.
- Placed on the STSCP Exec agenda.
- The STSCP L&D group to consider report.
- The STSCP L&D group to consider action plan report and identify implications for South Tees and report back to the STSCP in 2025

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Statutory Guidance

Link to website document - [Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Statutory Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

What have we Done?

- We have circulated the documentation to the key partners.
- Placed on the June 2025 STSCP Exec agenda for information and discussion.
- The STSCP L&D to consider report.
- The STSCP L&D group to consider the report and action plan monitored by the group.

National Review – Children with disabilities and complex health needs living in residential settings

The report is regarding the children and their families who suffered abuse and neglect in settings where they should have been safe and cared for. These failings which had a small number of children from Redcar & Cleveland local authority residing at some of the three children's homes and residential special schools in Doncaster owned by the Hesley Group.

Link to website document - [Safeguarding children with disabilities in residential settings - GOV.UK](#)

What have we Done?

- We have circulated the documentation to the key partners.
- Placed on the STSCP Exec agenda and assurance sought from both Local Authorities.
- Redcar & Cleveland have assured the STSCP of response and will keep the executive updated regarding the pending investigation.

“It’s Silent” – Race, Racism and Safeguarding Children – March 2025

This thematic review examined the impact of race, ethnicity and culture on multi-agency practice where children have suffered serious harm or died. It included findings from 40 rapid reviews and 14 LCSPRs involving children from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds.

Link to website document - [“It’s Silent”: Race, racism and safeguarding children – Panel Briefing 4](#)

What have we Done?

- We have circulated the documentation to the key partners.
- Placed on the STSCP Exec agenda.
- The key partners have discussed as part of the Tees S11 Audit assurance and action planning has started.

Social Work Reform Report – Stable Homes Built on Love

The National Framework brings together the **purpose** of local authority children's social care, the principles by which children, young people and families should be supported, the **enablers** that should be in place so the system is effective, and the **outcomes** that should be achieved so that children and young people can grow up to thrive. The National Framework puts the voices of children, young people and families at the heart of practice, so they can have a say in how they are supported.

Link to the website - [Children's social care stable homes built on love consultation](#)

What have we Done?

- We have circulated the documentation to the key partners.
- Placed on the STSCP Exec agenda.
- The key partners have discussed as part of the Tees S11 Audit assurance and action planning has started.



SECTION 4: The Work of The STSCP Subgroups

The STSCP Learning and Development group (L&D)

The L&D group provides advice to the Key Partners on whether the criteria for commissioning a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR), as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children, may have been met. The L&D Group provides oversight, and quality assures all the CSPRs, and Learning Reviews commissioned, as well as monitoring and evaluating the resulting multi-agency action plans. Oversight of any single agency action plans are undertaken through the CSPR Challenge Events.

The STSCP Learning and Development group continued its work in overseeing the combined action plan for the recent reviews and participating in the learning reviews. The group continues to be well supported and attended from all agencies. There were two Rapid Reviews completed over this reporting period.

The Learning & Development Group consider several safeguarding review requests ranging from severe neglect to self-harm and placement issues. The group continues to be well supported and attended by a cross-cutting number of partner agencies.

Work to date:

- The L&D group have carried out 2 Rapid reviews over the period with 0 for Redcar & Cleveland and 2 for Middlesbrough.
- As a result, the STSCP has commissioned 2 CSPRs and published the Learning brief for one of the CSPR's.
- The L&D has had an overview of the process from initial decision making to implementation of the media/communication plans.
- The L&D is monitoring the multi-agency action plans pursuant to the reviews and reviewing single agency action plans progress.
- The L&D Group has undertaken 2 Challenge events relating to 2 CSPRs with the resulting reports presented to the STSCP.
- The Tees Section 11 audit was completed in 2024/2025 with an assurance event completed in 2025 and a report produced for both Tees Partnerships.

Safeguarding impact: The work of the Learning & Development group continues to be a strength allowing a multi-agency approach to reviews with a ready-made group of professionals including key partners, relevant partners and colleagues from the Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland DASP's. This allows the dissemination of learning in a timely manner as reviews are being completed.

Evidence of the impact: All identified recommendations from reviews are implemented through changes to processes, focussed assurances and evidence being gathered from across the partnership and a variety of learning offers made to include the use of short '7 minute learning briefings', wider conferences (for example: the Exploitation Learning events described earlier) all with the aim of aiding practitioner awareness, understanding and confidence across a variety of safeguarding topics.

Next Steps/Further Development: The STSCP is considering more imaginative approaches to dissemination of learning such as interactive learning sessions and the use of technology and videos.



The STSCP Quality and Performance group

The group monitors child protection and safeguarding activity on an inter-agency basis on behalf of the STSCP to identify areas of concern to the Board and promote continuous improvement.

Work to date:

The group has reviewed and responded to the Tees Performance Framework and reported to the STSCP.

- Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 data reviewed.
- Q1, Q2, Q3 summary reports reported to the board.

The Q&P group has coordinated the list of audits below and has provided oversight of the associated action plans developed in response to the audit findings:

- Tees Section 11 audit completed in October 2024.
- JTAI themed Domestic Abuse in Child Protection cases December 2024.
- Tees Section 11 audit moderation process completed in May 2025.

The STSCP continually monitors the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of multi-agency practice through the Tees Performance Management Framework. Where gaps are identified, implications for the STSCP are considered and any agreed actions are monitored through the STSCP.

The STSCP Quality and Performance group (Q&P) have an agreed work programme and are developing a performance scorecard. Performance and progress are reported to the Q&P group and presented to the STSCP to monitor and challenge.

Ongoing Quality Assurance

- Monitor partner compliance with the statutory requirement to have effective safeguarding arrangements in place (Section 11).
- Carry out multi-agency audits and identify lessons to be learned and make recommendations for future improvement and feeding into STSCP training.
- Multi-agency audit reports to inform the STSCP of the quality of work being undertaken operationally across the partners and its impact on outcomes for individual children and young people.
- Overview of findings and action plans from multi-agency audits to monitor and review practice.
- The use of the Tees performance dataset.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are published on the STSCP website for a period of 12 months. At the time of writing there was two published Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews on the website. Outcomes and findings feed into our performance structures to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the partner agencies of the STSCP.



The Work of the STSCP Across the Tees

Tees Groups

The STSCP continued to support and participate in the Tees subgroups such as Tees Training with the STSCP training program now aligned with the HSSCP and Tees Procedures.

Tees Procedures

The following procedures being updated:

- Updated Working Together 2023 – Implications for existing procedures.
- Bruising in Non-Mobile Babies.
- Children missing from Education.
- Child Protection Review Conference.
- Deliberate self-harm.
- Initial Child Protection Conference.
- Investigating Complex (organised or multiple) Abuse.
- Neglect Medical / CP Medical.

In the fourth quarter of 2024-2025 TPC have reviewed / developed / amended:

- Safeguarding the Unborn Baby procedure.
- Neglect Medical / CP Medical procedure and Paediatric Assessment
- Children who go missing from education (new).
- Professional Challenge and Resolution of Professional Disagreement
- Physical Abuse procedure.
- CSE page.
- CCE page.
- Modern Slavery page.
- Tees Framework of Need (threshold document).
- HOTH Screening tools, Language Guide and Standard Operating
- Early Help.
- Bruising in non-mobile babies.

Briefings have been delivered across Tees on:

- Safeguarding the Unborn Baby procedure.
- Neglect Medical / CP Medical procedure and Paediatric Assessment Referral form (delivered HSSCP, STSCP dates had to be rearranged).

Briefings are scheduled across Tees for Q1 2025-2026 for:

- Professional Challenge and Resolution of Professional Disagreement Procedure.

Safeguarding impact: The updated procedures will support the Tees approach to safeguarding and improve continuity to services for children and young people across the Tees. Tees procedures group review and implement procedures, they do not undertake the audit work. The audit work to understand whether these procedures impact on practice is undertaken by STSCP Q & P group. If any of these highlight concerns this comes back to Tees procedures for review.

We also review procedures when we are made aware that there may be issues in the system e.g. physical chastisement guidance was causing confusion, and this was raised by the North Tees children's HUB. This was reviewed and included within the newly reviewed Physical Abuse procedure.

It is positive that agreement has been reached across Tees regarding the timeframes for referral for safeguarding the unborn baby. This will impact positively on multi-agency professionals working across Tees in terms of consistency.

Evidence of the impact: For example, consensus reached re timescales for referral re safeguarding the unborn baby and HOTH SOP.

Next Steps/Further Development:

- Monitor the volume of work vs capacity.
- Monitor and ensure attendance at task and finish groups / having all 4 LAs in attendance at main group.
- Collaborate as a partnership where we can to reach a consensus across Tees.

Tees Harm Outside the Home (HoTH)

Following on from the first Tees Harm Outside the Home (HoTH) development session in June the second development session was held in July 2024 and was again well attended from across the Tees footprint. The first session had agreed the Tees HoTH Strategy and identified the task and finish groups to support the implementation of the strategy.

Safeguarding impact: The Tees HoTH approach will enable operational processes to be aligned across Tees when dealing with children/young people who are exploited.

Following the HoTH development sessions all VEMT/MACE documentation was reviewed in line with the new HoTH approach, this has resulted in the following documentation being produced:

- HoTH Screening Tool.
- HoTH Strategy 2024-2027.

The following Tees procedures documentation was reviewed and updated:

- Child Exploitation Pages.
- Children who go Missing page.
- Children Missing from Home Care Protocol.
- Tees-wide Child Exploitation Screening Tool.

What is/has worked well:

- Continued commitment from multi-agency partners.
- Screening Tool and Triage Tools are now live on Tees Procedures website, multi-agency training has been facilitated by HoTH leads, this training was well received additional sessions have been delivered.
- Standard Operating Procedure have been agreed by Joint Exec and the four LAs are in the process of implementation to achieve standardisation of response to Harm Outside the Home.
- Draft KPI's have been completed and are being presented to the Tees Performance Group.
- The children society have been commissioned to deliver the Expert by Experience work and this is underway.
- Harm Outside the Home Conference has been held and overall, positively received.

- The OPCC have identified £70K funding to commission the Community Guardian Project, the commissioning is being led by Rachelle Kipling. HOTH Strategic group will have oversight of the Project.
- Draft Transition Strategy and Standard Operating Procedure has been developed with TSAB colleagues.

Safeguarding impact: on developing & strengthening practice across HSSCP/ STSCP:

- Significant steps have been taken to achieve a consistent approach which will positively impact both professionals and children and families. It is too early to evidence impact, however, the process undertaken to produce the strategy and development plan has provided an opportunity to be debate, discuss and agree what we need to do to improve practice.
- We are working collaboratively across partners to ensure we build consensus across agencies which is more likely to achieve consistent implementation and ownership of the practice improvements.
- The new documentation will support the Tees approach to HoTH and improve continuity to services for children and young people across Tees.

Evidence of the impact:

- All policy / procedures have been co-produced with all partners and all have signed up to the work. There is commitment from partners to leading sub-groups.
- Completion of a Standard Operating Procedure and associated process.
- Review completed of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews both locally and nationally to identify learning and ensure actions from those reviews have been achieved, any gaps will be added to the action plan.
- Consensus reached re timescales for referral re safeguarding the unborn baby and HOTH SOP.

The initial signs from the Q4 data show a marked increase in cases being reviewed at the HoTH meetings, Middlesbrough 60% increase and Redcar & Cleveland 17% ,this indicates that more children are safeguarded by the HoTH processes.

Next Steps/Further Development

- Since the strategy and action plan were agreed significant work has been undertaken to improve and standardise the Tees approach to safeguarding children against harm outside the home.
- The significant challenge moving forward is ensuring that the new process and practice changes are embedded consistently across the partnership and 4 LA's acknowledging practice change takes time and commitment to embed.
- Some of the changes needed will be more significant for some partners and practice changes will need to be safely implemented.

Tees Training

The purpose of the Tees Joint Training Subgroup is to implement, monitor and evaluate a Tees training programme for 2024-2025 based on both partnerships learning and development findings and agreed priorities, reporting back to the two Safeguarding Partnerships the impact of the training programme on the multi-agency workforce.

The group has:

- Monitored the delivery of the agreed Tees Training programmes across both partnerships', including training budget monitoring.
- Undertook quality assurance of the agreed courses for the 2024-2025 training programmes via direct observations.
- Monitored and reviewed E-learning usage and feedback.
- Monitored and reviewed training take-up.
- Monitored and reviewed feedback on training via evaluations / evaluation reporting and undertaking analysis (impact testing).
- Received and considered any new course requests from the two respective Safeguarding Children Partnership's, undertake scoping and ensuring the commissioning of any additional courses required (making decisions on courses to be added / removed).
- Problem-solved any issues arising from the training programme delivery.
- Planned joint events and conferences.
- Reported back to both Safeguarding Partnerships' on the work of the sub-group and impact of the training programme via a 6 monthly reporting template.

The training group has completed the following:

- Put a process in place for any Tees Sub-group to feed in training needs / request additional training courses.
- Put a training quality assurance process in place (training observations and evaluations).
- Have received Positive feedback from QA (observation & evaluation).
- Included learning from reviews included into existing training.
- Delivered briefings delivered across Tees in response to learning / review / amended procedures.
- Delivered the Joint Tees HOTH conference on the 18th March 2025 to 350 delegates.

Safeguarding Impact: The multi-agency workforce has a consistent training offer across Tees which will enable a consistent understanding and approach for children and young people. Consistency of messages to the multi-agency workforce across the Tees.

Evidence of the impact:

Quality assurance via observations of training courses and feedback from practitioners via evaluations has been positive.

Line managers of attendees provide feedback to evidence the impact of the training on the practice of their staff. This information is collated to evaluate the impact of training.

Next Steps/Further Development:

Whilst there is now the consistent training programme across Tees, not all courses within the programme were delivered in the time frame of this report. 10 out of 23 delivered in STSCP. 20 out of 23 delivered in HSSCP.

The delivery of the agreed consistent training programme across Tees – all agreed courses to be delivered.

Review the capacity within the Business Units to facilitate the training programmes.

The Tees Joint training group to scope cost cutting options for the future training program. South Tees to explore the automation of the booking and administration of training, to realise the efficiencies seen in North Tees.

Tees Performance and Quality Sub-Group

The Tees Performance and Quality Sub-Group is a subgroup of both the Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership and the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership. The purpose of this Teeswide group is to bring together the sources of data, intelligence and information into a coherent narrative regarding performance and the effectiveness of local arrangements on behalf of the partnership's Executives.

This requires both data analysis and multi-agency safeguarding expertise to examine what the sources of information are reporting; about where local arrangements are strong and where there is a need to have a deeper understanding or scrutiny of practice to make recommendations for improvement. The focus of this group will be to use the wealth of information collated to answer the following questions:

- What does the information tell us about the effectiveness of the local arrangements?
- What are the strengths and what needs to be improved?
- Are all agencies working together to safeguard children? If not, why not?
- Are children receiving the right level of support at the right time from the right organisation?
- What is the impact of the local area arrangements in safeguarding children and improving their outcomes?

The Performance Analysis group reports back to the partnerships' Executives any Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) for consideration / exploration and any areas of strength. This will provide both scrutiny and assurance to the partnership of both quantitative and qualitative measures, evidencing the effectiveness of the partnerships, areas of learning, strong practice and improved outcomes for children and young people across the STSCP and the HSSCP.

The Performance and Quality Sub-Group will function as a hub of intelligence and quality assurance, providing assurance reporting to the Partnerships' Executives.

Phase 1 - Soft Launch (November 2024- March 2025)

This phase involved setting up the Performance and Quality Assurance group to commence the delivery of the framework using existing data and information processes (without the software solution).

This phase we have:

- Established the group on a Tees and partnership footprint.
- Identified the representatives for the new Performance and Quality Assurance sub-group.
- The group is to be chaired by the DCS from Redcar & Cleveland.
- Additional capacity within the business unit(s) to lead and drive implementation and data collection and to progress further exploration around the software solution for phase 2.
- Outstanding data indicators have been submitted for inclusion into the new Performance and Quality Assurance Framework.
- Further scoping and development of a software solution to support the Performance and Quality Framework.

Safeguarding Impact: The performance framework will allow the partnership to plan based on evidence and not react to changes in systems.

Evidence of the impact:

The dataset is yet to be finalised but when it is the partnership can then quickly prioritise key areas for support/further work.

Next Steps/Further Development

Develop an IT product to fully support the data set and framework.

Tees CDOP

Tees CDOP is now under the governance of South Tees Public Health/NENCICB since 2024.

SECTION 5: STSCP Training

This year saw the introduction of the Joint Tees Training Group meetings which focused on training required within the Tees, budget monitoring and attendance. There has been the introduction of independent observation on training courses which is a first for the STSCP. Additionally, we have also seen the introduction of more in house trainers presenting the training and we would like to thank our partners at the STHFT and TEWV for leading on this.

Course Completion 2024 / 2025:

559 from 772 places / 72% take up

9 Course Subjects with 27 courses held

- Cultural Barriers to Safeguarding Children
- Exploitation with a Focus on Child Criminal Exploitation & County Lines
- Exploitation with a Focus on Child Sexual Exploitation
- Impact of Parental Mental Ill Health on Parenting
- Neglect of Children & Young People
- Safeguarding Children Foundation (previously Core Level 3 Safeguarding Children)
- Safeguarding In a Digital Age (E-Safety) Awareness
- Threshold Briefings
- Trauma Informed Approaches to Working with Adolescents

This year was a transition period into the Joint Tees Training programme.

ME-Learning (on-line learning packages)

MBC	Number of Registrations	Registration Status			Awaiting Evaluation
		Completed	Applied	Studying	
Adult Courses	524	465	30	24	5
Children Courses	577	505	40	24	8
Joint Courses	499	414	57	25	3
Total	1600	1384	127	73	16
RCBC					
Adult Courses	375	329	20	15	11
Children Courses	494	429	30	19	16
Joint Courses	377	314	30	25	8
Total	1246	1072	80	59	35

Trauma Informed Approach To Working With Adolescents - March 2025

'Fantastic training course. It's very hard to get 2 days off and this needs to happen so much more as being able to focus in-depth has been fantastic. The knowledge of the trainers has been fantastic. They really encouraged everyone to dig deeper and to think through different lenses. I also really appreciated the way they explained things really in depth and used the correct language to make things so clear.'

Safeguarding Children In A Digital World (E-Safety) Awareness - October 2024

'Highly recommended course. Should be delivered as mandatory in developing digital world.'

Neglect of Children & Young People - February 2025

'The training was extremely informative and has taught me signs of neglect to look out for and be more aware of. It has taught me which agencies to go to if help is needed regarding a child with neglect.'

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

Recognising and Building on Good Practice

The STSCP have identified some key actions and themes for development for example:

- Agreed and launched the “Neglect Strategy” for Practitioners across South Tees;
- The professional challenge and escalation guidance has been revised and updated in response to learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews;
- The Tees HoTH Strategy has been developed and launched, bringing it in line with the latest agendas such as criminal exploitation and contextual safeguarding of harm outside the home;
- The HoTH operating procedure agreed across Tees and implemented from April 2025;
- The STSCP has increased learning opportunities e.g. using virtual events and online briefings.
- As a result of the CSPR learning, the guidance on how to complete chronologies and ecograms for all agencies has been updated and uploaded to the Tees Procedures website.
- We have continued to established a challenge process at the point at which CSPR action plans are signed off as being achieved. This is a supportive process and looks at the impact on children and families and ensure that STSCP is compliant with Working Together 2023.

Stubborn Challenges

- Both MBC and RCBC LAs have been challenged by Ofsted on the implementation of their shared threshold document (ILACS 2019) therefore in response we have reviewed the Threshold of Need “Providing the Right Support to Meet a Child’s Needs” across Tees. Middlesbrough along with Redcar & Cleveland has adopted the Tees Threshold document in order to strengthen the improvement journey.
- The absence of the permanent Safeguarding Nurse role in the ICB continues to cause concern particularly with health colleagues who feel this post is key to the escalation of safeguarding concerns in the health trusts. Also the attendance by the permanent ICB representatives at the executive level meetings has been noted as a weakness to the partnership as they are the key health representative.
- Diversity continues to be a high level priority across the work of the partnership, the partnership continues to promote the use of interpreters in communication with the families whose first language is not English and it was recognised that the use of interpreters by front line staff was integral to effective communication with these families. The partnership continues to monitor the recording of ethnicity as part of the audit program and that this and disabilities are considered as part of assessments and the lived experience of the child/young person.

A heartfelt thank you to...

All the individuals and families who have taken the brave step to share their experiences and worked with us in pushing for change. The 100's of professionals up and down the South Tees and further who have continued to support the partnership and their colleagues.



To find out more about the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership including the Training Programme and the learning identified from the Child Safeguarding Practice and Learning Reviews please visit the STSCP website: <https://stscp.co.uk>



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