



Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

**Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
Annual Report 2022/23**

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (CBSCP) Annual Report 2022/23

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Introduction by the Independent Chair and Scrutineer

The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Partners as part of their arrangements to safeguard children and promote their welfare are required to demonstrate that they are open to independent scrutiny.

I have been appointed to take on the role of independent chair and to offer independent scrutiny of the Central Bedfordshire safeguarding arrangements and this is my assessment of how effective these arrangements have been in practice over the past 12 months. I will highlight where I feel the arrangements are performing well and where I consider further development is required.

As an independent scrutineer, it is my role to review the annual report for the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. This report highlights the commendable work carried out by the partnership, reflecting its unwavering commitment to the safety, wellbeing and development of children and young people in Central Bedfordshire.

The partnership has successfully prioritized the voice of children, actively involving them in decision-making processes and leveraging their insights to improve co-ordinated service delivery. By placing children at the heart of their work, the partnership has demonstrated its dedication to understanding and addressing their unique needs.

This report highlights the priority issue of 'neglect'. Neglect continues to be the most common form of child abuse across the UK, which reflects the position in Central Bedfordshire. It is vital that as a partnership, there is early recognition of neglect to ensure a consistent and timely response.

As a Pan Bedfordshire partnership we have adopted a single countywide child neglect assessment tool, called the Graded Care Profile (GCP2). GCP2 has been adopted by all partners, however, returns using this tool are low and disappointing. I will continue to challenge agencies to use GCP2 to identify children at risk of neglect and hope to see an increase in returns and an early intervention to improve the lives of children who are at risk of neglect.

Central Bedfordshire's Exploitation and Missing Annual Report was presented to the partnership. The report showcases the partnership's determination to protect children from harm and support those who have been affected by these devastating experiences. Their work is a testament to the importance of a unified approach in tackling these complex issues. Return Home Interviews can provide the partnership with a rich picture of intelligence which highlights key themes or trends and assists with activities to prevent further missing episodes. Whilst this is challenging work, I would like to see an increase in the successful completion of RHI's and will provide added scrutiny to this area in the following year.

The comprehensive Section 11 reports from relevant agencies and schools across Central Bedfordshire demonstrate a strong culture of safeguarding, accountability, and continuous improvement, essential in maintaining a high standard of child protection.

The partnership in Central Bedfordshire has displayed real vigour when it comes to learning from serious cases. The purpose of reviews of serious child safeguarding cases, at both local and national level, is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Such reviews should seek to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Partners to identify serious safeguarding incidents at a local level and then to review them as appropriate so that improvements can be made.

This report includes the detail of the Rapid Review the published Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) along with a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) that were undertaken during this reporting period, along with highlighting how the partnership has learned lessons from high profile national reviews.

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Partners have a well organised group of multi-agency professionals that oversee reviews and ensure there is a culture of learning and continuous improvement. The group are very keen to see that the recommendations from reviews improve outcomes for children and that lessons learned are embedded into practice. Furthermore, the partners have created a robust audit regime which ensures that the learning is revisited and embedded. I will closely monitor the audit process to confirm that learning is indeed embedded, and practice is improved.

Following the 'Max' Safeguarding Adult Review a key focus of the partnership has been transitional safeguarding, ensuring a smooth and coherent journey for young people as they navigate the complexities of adolescence and transition to adulthood. The collaboration between agencies must be really strong in this area to create a strong safety net for these vulnerable young individuals. This continues to be complex and challenging work, particularly for those children who have been experiencing abuse and exploitation. As they reach 18, the services available to them are limited.

Abuse and exploitation does not end at 18 years of age and yet many services for adults are designed only to support those people with ongoing care and support needs. This important work needs to continue to enable the partnership to develop effective 'Transitional Safeguarding' arrangements.

Lastly the partnership's Safeguarding Training has received excellent feedback from delegates, highlighting its effectiveness in fostering a collaborative approach among professionals and empowering them with the knowledge and tools needed to safeguard children.

There are many strengths to the safeguarding children arrangements across Central Bedfordshire. I have found a partnership that is open to scrutiny and challenge and one that strives to continually learn and improve practice.

There is strong leadership and a clear sense of joint and equal responsibility from the three safeguarding partners. The partnership is one that is built on high support, high challenge and where difficult conversations are encouraged.

In conclusion, this annual report showcases the outstanding work carried out by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership in the past year. Their dedication, collaborative spirit, and unwavering commitment to child protection have yielded excellent results, and I am confident that they will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the children and young people they support.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all of the organisations and individuals in the public, voluntary and private sectors who work tirelessly across Central Bedfordshire to improve the safety and quality of life of our children, young people, and families.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Caton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Alan Caton OBE
Independent Chair and Scrutineer Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Partnership

Statutory Partners Overview

John Murphy Assistant Chief Constable, Bedfordshire Police

As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, the past year has seen a steady increase in demand that has increased system pressures for police and partners. We recognise these pressures can be managed most effectively through collaboration and multi-agency working arrangements, which we remain committed to continuing to evolve so that we collectively best meet the needs of our communities.

As the policing workforce continues to grow, we are committed to training and developing our staff, embedding learning and more modern working practices. We remain focused on creating a culture which is victim-focused and in which professionals can identify vulnerability, including in circumstances where it may not be obvious, where staff are empathetic and consider the lived experience and wishes of vulnerable people, especially children.

With regards to the 22-23 priorities, Bedfordshire Police continue to align its policing response to these and has dedicated teams responsible for protecting vulnerable people, both Children and Adults, alongside a dedicated Rape and Serious Sexual Assault Investigation team and a well-established Cyber Hub capable of managing online and digital threats. We are fortunate to have experienced partner-supported mental health and wellbeing services to support colleagues and ensure an effective response to mental ill health incidents at the earliest opportunity.

Sarah-Jane Smedmor, Director of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council

This year has seen the continued hard work and commitment, from practitioners across our partnership, to ensure they work together to safeguard children. For our children, life is returning to the 'new normal' following the turbulence of the pandemic. As with any change, this 'new normal' is bringing with it opportunities and challenges. For us as practitioners, listening to the voices of our children and their families is as important as ever, especially given the context and backdrop of the everyday.

We have continued to see an increase in need within families, many refer to as a cost of living crisis but we know and recognise everyday this means children living in poverty. Its important for us to talk about this, underlining the essential focus on early intervention and community partnerships to support families in the right place, in the right way at the right time. For too many children, their daily battles with their own emotional and mental health is meaning they are less able to enjoy their childhoods as we would all hope. Again, a partnership approach to early support for children, in their homes and schools is essential and we have seen our partnership recognise this and start to flex in approach. What has become increasingly evident is for these children, support needs to be multi agency and wrap around.

Within Children's Services we have taken the time to reflect on the national reports into the horrific abuse of children with disabilities in residential. Our commitment to ensuring we provide where needed, the most caring homes for children where they can trust adults supporting and caring for them is a priority. To achieve this, we strive to ensure that children are as close to their families, communities and ourselves as possible, so we can also provide conspicuous care.

All of this underlines the importance of the safeguarding partnership, the only way we can support and wrap around children who need us most is together, and the last year as evidenced within this

report shows we do this well. Our relationships with each other provide the basis for great multi agency practice.

As we look forward together, the opportunities which will arise from Stable Homes Built on Love and the review of Working Together, will be a focus for the MASA, alongside our continued focus on child neglect and domestic abuse. Thank you to all practitioners across the partnership for their continued commitment to safeguarding children.

Sarah Stanley, Chief Nurse, Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes, Integrated Care Board

July 2022 formally saw the transfer of the previous clinical commissioning group to the new Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Partnership. The ICB maintained it's function around safeguarding vulnerable adults and children and young people and was able to strengthen the place-based support offer for Central Bedfordshire with the introduction of a Head of Safeguarding and two Specialist Safeguarding Nurses along with our Designated Nurses Safeguarding Children, Children in Care and Adults.

The ICB continues to play an active role with our safeguarding partners across Central Bedfordshire and feeds into the wider Pan-Bedfordshire programmes of work including, joint working groups, SAR and CSPR review panels, transitional safeguarding and many more.

Our health partners continue to work together to ensure babies, children and young people are safeguarded however, acknowledge the impact that the pandemic continues to have on the overall delivery and satisfactory of services, notwithstanding, an ongoing rise in the number of safeguarding referrals across children's services, with added pressures to support delivery of the integrated front door with partners.

BLMK-ICB continues to host the Bedfordshire & Luton CDOP statutory function. Data on circumstances of child deaths, is fed into the National Child Death Mortality Database, which informs wider learning, and that action can be taken both locally and nationally, to reduce the number of children who die.

Section 1: Introduction

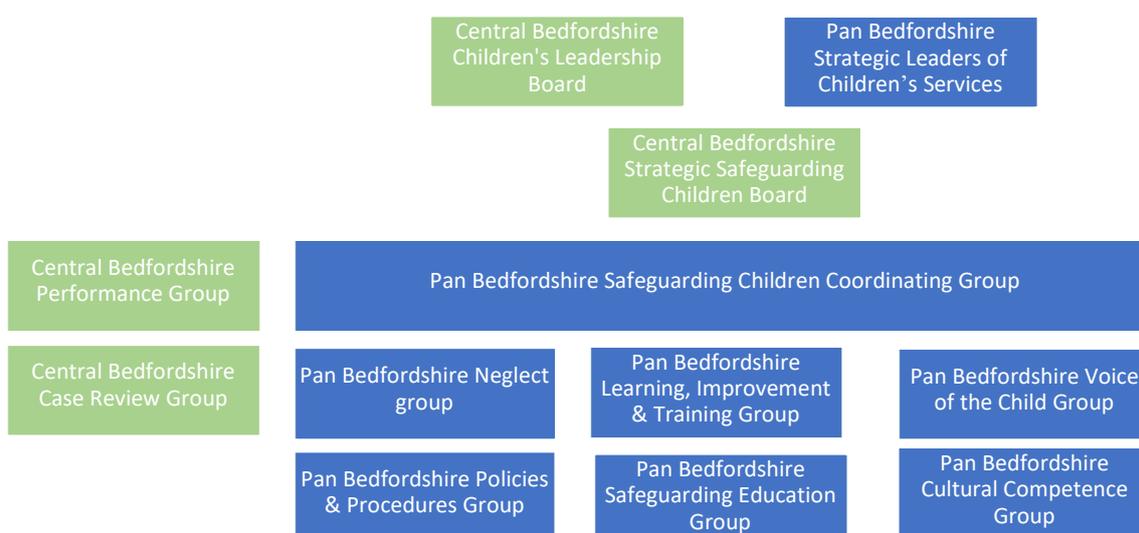
The 2022/23 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Annual Report summarises the work of the Partnership throughout the year, highlighting how the safeguarding arrangements have been effective including evidence of impact. The report also identifies any areas for future development.

Central Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements:

The Central Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements cover the Local Authority area of Central Bedfordshire. The three Safeguarding Partners are Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Bedfordshire Police

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership work closely with neighbouring Partnerships in Bedford Borough and Luton. As such, our structure includes a number of Pan Bedfordshire groups. Central Bedfordshire Children’s Leadership Board acts as an Executive for the arrangements. Scrutiny for the arrangements is provided by our Independent Chair, Alan Caton.

Central Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Structure During 2022/23:



***This structure has been updated from April 2023**

Central Bedfordshire Demographics:

Central Bedfordshire has a growing population of 294,300. It is a largely rural area with over half the population living in the countryside and the rest in a number of market towns. The area is generally prosperous, with above average levels of employment, however there are pockets of deprivation and greater need.

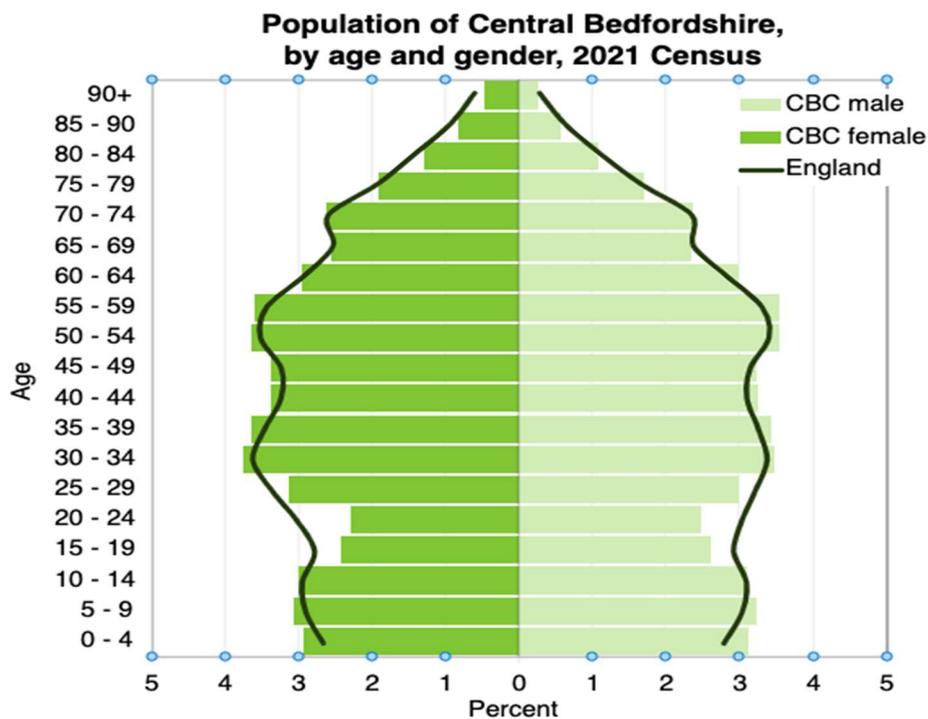
Between 2011-2021, Central Bedfordshire’s population rose by 15.7%, this is above the average rate for England (6.6%) and among the fastest-growing areas in the country. The Census (2021) records a 32.6% increase in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 11.5% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 16.7% in children aged under 15 years.

Central Bedfordshire’s [Census 2021 factsheet](#) provides information on the ethnicity of residents; White British (83.5%), White- Other (5.3%), Indian (1.6%), Black African (1.3%) White Irish (1.2%), and White/ Black Caribbean (1.1%). Over 95% of pupils of compulsory school age speak English as a first

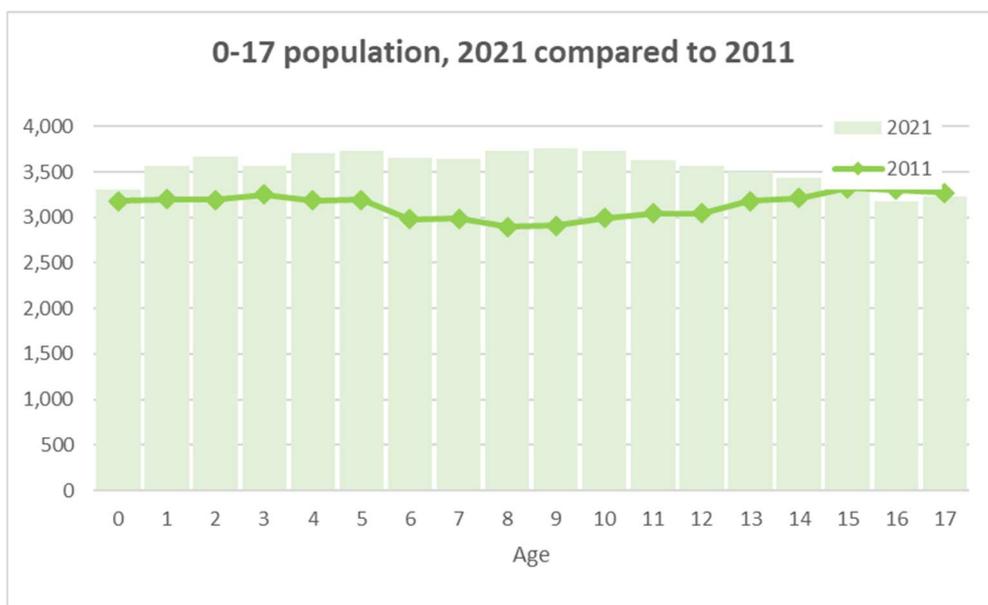
language. However, more than 60 different first languages are recorded among the remaining children.

In 2021, the crime rate in Central Bedfordshire was lower than the average across similar areas. (Source: [Police UK](#)). Life expectancy and overall health are both slightly better than the national average, and children are less likely to be obese. (Source: [Central Bedfordshire Insight, May 2022](#))

Children and Young People:



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, Mid-Year Estimates of population by single year of age, 2011 and 2021

Percentage of children aged under 16 in Relative in low-income families	2019/20	2020/21
United Kingdom	19.30%	18.70%
Central Bedfordshire	11.40%	10.80%
Neighbouring Local Authorities		
Luton	30.90%	27.80%
Milton Keynes	18.00%	18.10%
Bedford	17.10%	14.90%
Buckinghamshire	12.00%	13.00%
Huntingdonshire	12.40%	11.20%
Dacorum	11.30%	10.20%
North Hertfordshire	10.60%	10.00%
South Cambridgeshire	8.70%	7.70%
St Albans	7.50%	6.90%
Central Bedfordshire highest wards		
Eaton Bray	21.70%	22.00%
Dunstable Manshead	16.90%	16.90%
Dunstable Icknield	13.20%	15.50%
Tithe Farm	19.80%	15.40%
Houghton Hall	19.80%	16.20%

Source: [DWP](#), Children in Low Income Families (Relative) by Local Authority (2020/21)

Education Information January 2023 census	
No. pupils in Central Bedfordshire schools	48039
% of minority ethnic background	22.2% (England 35.7%)
No. of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)	6303
No. of pupils receiving Free School Meals (FSM)	13.1% (England 23.8%)
No. of children with SEN Support	5777
No. of children with Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)	2339

Source: School Census Data (January 2023)

Participation in Education, Employment and Training:

- At the end of February 2023, Central Bedfordshire reported a three-month average of 2.6% or 165 young people who were NEET. This was lower than the national (2.8%) and regional (3.1%) averages. The overall percentage of Young People who are NEET in Central Bedfordshire has increased by 0.2% to 2.6% or 17 young people from last year.
- Central Bedfordshire reported a three-month Not Known average of 0.6% at the end of February 2023. This figure was lower than the national (2.4%) and the regional (1.1%) averages.
- 5,744 (94.9%) young people aged 16 and 17 were confirmed as having an offer of learning and continuing in education, an apprenticeship or employment with accredited training. This was higher than the national (94.5%) average but lower than the regional average (95.6%).

- At the end of February 2023, Central Bedfordshire reported a three-month average of 96.8% for young people who were engaged in Education, Employment or Training. This was higher than the national (94.8%) and regional (95.8%) averages.

Source: Central Bedfordshire Youth Support Service Annual Report 2021-22

Vulnerable Children:

The majority of children and young people in Central Bedfordshire enjoy safe and healthy lives within their family networks and communities, however, there are a proportion of vulnerable children who are at risk of poorer health and well-being outcomes. This section of the Annual Report sets out those categories of children and young people in Central Bedfordshire who have been identified by the local authority and other agencies as in need of help or protection to promote their welfare.

In response to the pandemic, Bedfordshire Police updated systems to include a notification where a child/ren subject to a Child Protection Plan, allowing specialist officers to also attend in case of safeguarding concerns. This remains an effective process, giving additional information to officers, who previously would not have known before arrival at the location.

Children’s Services Front Door:

Access and Referral is the front door for anyone seeking information and/ or services for children, young people, and families, or to make a safeguarding referral. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is based here. In 2022/23, Access and Referral received 17,278 enquiries. The high and stable percentage of referrals leading to a Social Care Service suggests that professionals know when to refer children for help and are making appropriate referrals.

Year	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
No. of enquiries	12,525	16,291	15,212	13,858	12,319	10,859	8,789
% of referrals leading to provision of a Social Care service	100%	99.8%	100%	99.8%	100%	99.6%	93.2%

Early Help:

Central Bedfordshire's Early Help Offer identifies the need for help for children and families as soon as problems emerge, or when there is a strong likelihood they will emerge in the future, offering ‘the right help at the right time’. The Early Help Offer includes universal and targeted services designed to reduce or prevent specific problems from escalating or becoming entrenched.

The 0-12’s Family Service (established in April 2019) brings together Childcare, School Readiness, Children’s Centres and Early Years SEND along with Homestart, Early Communication Support Team, 0-19’s Health Teams and other key partners working from and with Children’s Centre Hubs to deliver a comprehensive offer that meets the growing and changing needs of children aged 0-12 and their families. The service supports children and their families at all levels/ tiers of need from universal support to working alongside professionals supporting children and families open to early help, social care, and specialist services.

Central Bedfordshire’s Early Help Locality Teams are integral to the delivery of the Children and Young People’s Plan and the Central Bedfordshire multi-agency partnership early help offer. Early Help has been at the forefront of Children’s Services Transformation and is a responsive locality focused service to support children and families who without support are likely to require statutory social care intervention with the aim of reducing demand on Children’s Services. The two service areas work

together to develop a positive partnership between professionals and families that empowers families of children and young people and builds resilience and wellbeing in individuals, families, and communities.

Building Resilience in Families (BRIF) meetings are held weekly across all 5 localities to support (with their consent) families that are not open to Early Help or statutory Children Services. The panel is a multi-agency team working together to offer very early intervention to children and their families, to prevent and reduce the escalation of incidents or issues. The BRIF Panel consists of a core group including Housing, 0-19 Service, Police, Adult Mental Health, Children Centres, and other key partners/agencies relevant to families or to the issues prevalent in the locality. 309 referrals were discussed at BRIF between July 2021- July 2022.

Examples of support provided through BRIF include; Homestart provided free school shirts, one off payment that can be used towards fuel costs, information about local stores providing free toothbrushes and tooth paste for children under 5, free personal hygiene products and where families can access free nappies. DWP have also shared links to receive support and discounts on household fuel costs as well as current benefit information.

The 2021/22 Early Help Localities and 0-12 Family Service Annual Report was presented to the Safeguarding Children Strategic Board in September 2022, providing assurance on the support provided to children, young people and their families.

Family feedback on support:

97% of families stated that we had helped them with their problems and needs

99% of families stated that we treated them well

Families fed back on individual improvements:

79% stated that they had a better understanding of how their child learns and develops

78% stated that they had better ideas of how to support their children's needs and behaviour

78% stated that their confidence as a parent had improved

48% stated that their relationships with their family had improved

68% stated that they had better ideas for improving their own and their family's health and wellbeing

Source: 307 survey responses between 1st Sept 21 and end of Aug 2022

Year	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
No. of EHA completed	1616	907	1,061	1,202	1,279	1,404	1,504
No. of Children in Need (at the end of the year)	1,397	1,422	1,248	1,176	1,316	1,356	1,344

Children with a Child Protection Plan:

Children who have a child protection plan are considered to be in need of protection from either neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or a combination of one or more of these. The child protection plan sets out the main areas of concern, what action will be taken to reduce these concerns and by whom. The plan will also set out how we will know when progress is being made.

Year	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
No. of referrals to Intake & Assessment Team (CSC)	2,235	2,118	1,565	1,776	1,556	1,811	1,876

No. of children subject to Child Protection Plans (at the end of the year)	212	225	147	156	189	223	161
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Children in Care:

Children in care are those looked after by the local authority. Only after exploring every possibility of protecting a child at home will the local authority seek a parent's consent or a court's decision to move a child away from his or her family. Such decisions, whilst very difficult, are made in the best interests of the child.

Year	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
No. of children in care (at the end of the year)	380	327	303	310	320	314	323

Looked After Children assurance reports were presented to the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Partnership Strategic Board as follows:

- Children's Social Care: Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report 2021/22 (September 2022)
- Health: Looked After Children Annual Report 2021/22 (December 2022)
- Looked After Children: Virtual School Interim Annual Report 2021/22 (March 2023)

Equalities Information:

The Equality Act 2010 puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is keen to ensure that no child or group of children are treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular need, as a consequence all reports received request agencies to identify any equalities implications.

The CBSCP reviews equalities information as standard practice. This includes in exploitation and missing data, case review groups, examples include CSE, Missing Children, Looked After Children, Neglect, Forced Marriage, Honour Based Abuse, FGM and youth offending data.

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership recognised the need to strengthen practice in this area; during 2022/23 a Pan Bedfordshire Cultural Competence Group was added to the structure. For 2023/24, this theme became a golden thread in all meetings.

Section 2 – Effectiveness of the Arrangements

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership priorities were reviewed and revised as part of their multi-agency Development Session in July 2022.

PRIORITY: Neglect

Neglect continues to remain the most common form of child abuse across the UK. Partners across Central Bedfordshire aim to ensure, that there is early recognition of neglect cases and that from early help to statutory intervention there should be appropriate, consistent, and timely responses to need across all agencies.

The CBSCP works closely with neighbouring Safeguarding Children Partnerships in Bedford Borough and Luton, taking a county wide approach to raising awareness of neglect and helping frontline practitioners to identify and tackle neglect. The Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Group is guided by the [Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Strategy 2020-23](#) with oversight of the annual workplan.

Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Group holds bi-monthly themed meetings. 2022/23 themes included learning from local and national practice reviews, emotional neglect, poverty informed practice and Think Family, informing a number of new practitioner guidance documents.

[Chronology Guidance 2022](#)

[GCP2 Principles \(November 2022\)](#)

[Think Family Briefing \(March 2023\)](#)

[GCP2 Practitioner Briefing \(March 2023\)](#)

[Neglect Practitioner Briefing \(March 2023\)](#)

In September 2022, the CBSCP Business Manager and a Children's Social Care Practice Manager attended the Central Bedfordshire Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum to hear from schools about their experiences of neglect, and to raise awareness of neglect and the resources and training available to schools workforce to support their practice.

The Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Group have agreed their new 3yr strategy (2023-2026), with an annual workplan, effective from April 2023. A Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Conference is planned for 14th February 2024. Work is ongoing to create a data set that will support the countywide work on Neglect. It is agreed that the 2023/24 Section 11 audit will use Neglect as its key theme across all standards.

BLMK ICB is actively engaged with the Pan Bedfordshire Neglect work streams, to ensure consistency of approach across the county and partnership systems. CCS highlight Graded Care Profile in training and supervision when there are any identified issues of neglect. Staff have all been offered training for GCP2 within children's services and there is an emphasis on using this tool to support ongoing assessment of need, referrals as part of multi-agency working. Assessment tools such as 'A Day in the Life of....' are available for staff on the intranet and are equally advocated within training and supervision to support maintenance of focus on the lived experience of a child. ELFT promotes GCP2 training to safeguarding contacts.

Bedford Hospitals Trust describe the standard practice, when a child/ young person is admitted to hospital, of recording their presentation, weight, height, and any developmental delay. The names of those with parental responsibility are also recorded alongside who is accompanying the child at the time. The Safeguarding Children Team have a system of 'information sharing' electronic forms for all hospital staff to share a concern about a child 24/7. This allows staff to share any level of concern with the Safeguarding Team which would include concerns that would not meet the threshold for CSC or

the Emergency Duty Team out of hours. The Safeguarding Team review this information, gather information and take action. The safeguarding team can also provide supervision to staff that raise concerns to promote good practice. All concerns around neglect are raised through the information sharing pathway and where threshold is met referred to Children's Social Care. Many cases generate robust discussions with partner agencies such as the 0-19 service to explore wider health information to support a referral and assure follow up on discharge from hospital. There are effective working relationships with the 0-19 service including their safeguarding team with the aim of leading to better outcomes for children.

As part of their Ofsted ILACs Action Plan (2022), Central Bedfordshire Children's Services have a focus on children subject to pre-proceedings (PLO) and previous delays of process/action has resulted in a more targeted approach for long term neglect. Chronologies completed by early Help services (implemented in November 2022) provides meaningful/robust history to inform decision making. Timely interventions/ actions for children subject of a plan to progress if needed into PLO process and this is more time limited. Specialist assessments are now available to children subject to a CP plan rather than waiting to PLO process to commence which enables greater understanding of barriers preventing parents' capacity to change and therefore effect positive change; or decisive action to be taken. The length of time children are subject to a plan or repeat plan has reduced.

The Graded Care Profile (GCP2):

There is a single countywide child neglect assessment tool in place, the Graded Care Profile (GCP2). This is a nationally recognised tool, which has an established research basis. The tool was introduced across Pan Bedfordshire as a series of workshops. The Partnership has continued to monitor how the tool has been embedded in practice. Professionals and agencies report usefulness, through both feedback and training. It has been identified, that whilst the GCP2, is being used within agencies, further consistency, across the partnership needed to be addressed. A Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Strategy & Delivery Plan is currently being developed, in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton (Pan Bedfordshire) to address this need. The aim, as the three Safeguarding Children Partnerships, is to work together to strengthen, support and develop the workforce and practice to improve outcomes for all children. This strategy will help and support practitioners to identify indicators of neglect.

The GCP2 is an assessment tool, developed by the NSPCC to help frontline practitioners measure the quality of care a child is receiving. Within Central Bedfordshire GCP2's are completed by Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services staff along with colleagues from Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS). Whilst more practitioners were trained in 2022/23, the number of assessments has fallen. It has been identified that refresher training should be provided to build skills and confidence with an expectation this will improve assessment completion numbers.

Children's Services Audit (November 2022) on Neglect and the completion of GCP2s in relation to children on a child protection plan highlighted the numbers remained stubbornly low. This has prompted a renewed focus on completion of GCP2s and consequently further training has been offered, wider services are completing GCP2s, there is a focus on which children are subject to a plan due to neglect, ensuring the completion of a GCP2 an 'day in the life of' form part of CP plan. A radio button in process of being developed to pull through from CP plan to evidence if and when GCP2s are commenced.

From April 2023, GCP2 'champions' will present a 6 monthly highlight report on GCP2 completions, quality and recommendations with the aim of increasing the use of this valuable assessment tool across Bedfordshire.

GCP2 completions by agency	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Children's Services	24	38	12	10	16
Cambridge Community Services	12	37	15	59	37
Total	36	75	27	69	53

GCP2 training	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
GCP2 training completed *	41	74	12	111	54

* This represents those attending multi-agency training. This data does not reflect in house training agencies may provide.

'Found it all useful, the videos were good, where after a clip we would complete our own evaluation. When making assessments with the families I work with, this will be a useful tool to refer to. Most useful aspect was practicing using the profile alongside colleagues to support assessments.'

'(I will) Report back to Head Teacher and be able to work with Early Help or Social Workers in carrying out an assessment. I hope to partner with professionals on this.'

Understanding Neglect: new training course launched

Following a successful pilot session, a new one day 'Understanding Neglect' training course was launched by Safeguarding Bedfordshire. Partner agencies, including Bedfordshire Police, Children's Social Care and Cambridge Community Services committed staff to support with the development and delivery of this course.

'Knowledgeable trainers from different backgrounds which meant they could share different experiences and perspectives. I really enjoyed this course. There was a good level of interactive learning... enough time was allocated to answer questions and discuss.'

'The course was well delivered, with opportunities given to everyone to make a contribution. It was relaxed and interactive and key points clearly identified. Having the training completed over Teams allowed me to still be available in the office during my breaks to meet the needs of my clients. Some Teams training can be boring however this was to the point, and interactive with everyone given the opportunity to make a contribution. In my daily role, I work with women and their children who are already involved with different services. The training will enable me to be more aware and not just brush things aside thinking someone else would already know that but instead question things that I may think do not add up and act on them. I will also be informing my colleagues of this and sharing the slides with them.'

Bedfordshire Police Body Worn Video (BWV) Scrutiny Panel:

Bedfordshire Police provided opportunities for a multi-agency panel to scrutinise BWV footage of neglect cases. The panel met twice in 2022/23, with two Central Bedfordshire cases reviewed. This was an opportunity to highlight the Police Officers calm interaction with a parent and children and to recognise development opportunities in gaining the voice of the child/ren present and to further professional curiosity. Bedfordshire Police have identified and shared learning as a result of this panel as part of their ongoing development work to support offices and staff to accurately record cases of neglect.

Private Fostering:

Parents may make their own arrangements for their children to live away from home or with other close family members, this is known as privately fostering children. The local authority must be notified of these arrangements. As numbers remain low, CBSCP continues to raise awareness of the need to identify and report cases to Children's Services using [promotional campaign materials](#) and via newsletters. In September 2022, a Children's Services Practice Manager gave a presentation on Private Fostering to the Designated Safeguarding Leads forum which may explain the increased numbers this year.

Year	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16
No. of private fostering placements identified/ in place in Central Beds (at the end of the year)	11	2	2	4	3	5	7	3

PRIORITY: Contextual Safeguarding and Exploitation

Partners have continued their to work ensure that children and young people in Central Bedfordshire are protected from extra-familial harm and reduce episodes of missing. The contextual safeguarding approach promotes thorough assessments and safety plans around children and young people who are at risk of significant harm beyond their own family.

This strong partnership approach has identified adults and locations of concern and a prompt response of community safety patrols, youth worker outreach, visits to premises, and seen perpetrators of exploitation served Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN), along with warning notices and convictions for Modern Day Slavery offences. In July 2022, 3 adult perpetrators who formed part of a local gang dealing Class A & B drugs, were charged with 15 counts of modern-day slavery following extensive multi-agency working by Bedfordshire Police, Children’s Services and partners. The five victims were CBC residents. This is an excellent example of how local services are shifting practice to ensure that victims of exploitation are brought to safety and seek justice for the trauma they have faced.

Bedfordshire Police have expanded the use of Operation Encompass to capture information on missing children and share with the relevant school to ensure appropriate support and keep track and monitor risk of exploitation.

Central Bedfordshire Children’s Services identify strong relationships with Bedfordshire Police in information sharing and joint working, along with support from agencies such as Link to Change. Their dedicated CSE Co-ordinator ensures consistent guidance on best practice and support to service delivery who shares weekly updates with Independent Reviewing Officer and Child Protection Chairs. The Missing Protocol and return home interviews support prompt engagement with children and families to provide support and high rates of completion of return home interview.

Child Exploitation Strategies and Guidance:

Exploitation is addressed in Bedfordshire Violence and Exploitation Reduction Strategic Response and Bedfordshire Violence and Exploitation Strategy. This uses a whole systems approach to prevent and reduce violence and exploitation. A child friendly version of this document is in development.

CBSCP supported two free exploitation toolkit and disruption briefings, organised by the Bedfordshire Partnership Strategic Lead (Exploitation and Missing). Over 100 practitioners attended and reported feeling more confident to identify, respond to and disrupt exploitation activity.

Central Bedfordshire continue to offer provider forums to share good practice partnering with colleagues across Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes. In June 2022, Central Bedfordshire Councils Exploitation & Missing Coordinator and Bedfordshire Police attended the residential care providers forum to remind providers of the importance around reporting children missing and also completing

the key information forms for any children in their care. In October 2022, they attended the Designated Safeguarding Leads forum to share an update on exploitation and support services and reporting mechanisms.

The first 'Power to Parents' workshops were delivered in Autumn 2022. Delivered by Children's Services with Partner agencies, the workshops aimed to educate parents/ carers on the signs of exploitation, discuss the highlights challenges of parenting adolescents and signpost a range of local support services.

BLMK ICB is actively involved in the workstreams in relation to contextual Safeguarding & Exploitation and has an identified lead who engages with PREVENT and the CHANEL panel. Preventative work through awareness raising activities or therapeutic outreach, including appropriate literature to target vulnerable young people (e.g. missing young people) and people whose work places them in a position to recognise and report worrying behaviours; codes of practice for staff with direct contact with children/young people at risk of child exploitation; procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns specifically mention child exploitation.

BLMK;

- ensure that the organisations providing health and care services have the right policies, procedures, and guidance in place to keep people safe from abuse and neglect.
- ensure we learn lessons from cases, where adults and children come to serious harm and abuse and neglect was already known about or suspected.
- ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for sharing information between organisations where someone might be at risk of being harmed.
- employ clinical experts, who can provide safeguarding advice, to those who work with and in local health and care services
- have 'designated professionals' who specialise in safeguarding adults, safeguarding children and safeguarding looked-after children (children in care).

Tackling, Reducing and Ending Exploitation (TREE) project:

Following a successful launch in 2021/22, the TREE project has continued to tackle the root causes of exploitation. This year, the project worked closely with schools in areas where higher risks were recognised.

As part of the TREE Project in CBC, we gathered feedback from children, young people & residents which helped to highlight any emerging issues which needed resolving. It came to light that in Biggleswade and Houghton Regis in particular, there was a lack of outreach youth workers to be able to engage with young people at risk of exploitation. It also became clear that in these two areas, there was a gap between children/young people and the wider community, causing issues in relationships and community morale. Due to this, the Community Safety Team used funding received from the VERU to fund detached youth work in both of these areas. The findings from this youth work will feed back into the community safety meetings to ensure that ongoing disruption and community plans are informed.

TACKLING, REDUCING AND ENDING EXPLOITATION

The **TREE** project is a unique partnership between different agencies in Biggleswade and Shefford with one mission: **To keep children and young people safe.**

Youth workers will be out across the towns over the coming months to engage with young people and the wider community, address any concerns and help put an end to things like violence, exploitation and organised crime.

Please speak to us if you want any help or advice, or make contact with any of the partners involved in the project.

We are all here to help and support you.

PROUD SUPPORTERS OF THE TREE PROJECT

Aquarius BYOS
Central Bedfordshire AGAINST FACES
BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
V (Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit)

Tackling Reducing and Ending Exploitation
A Bedfordshire Partnership

Exploitation Communications Campaign:

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership continue to support the work of [Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation](#) (BAVEX) is the countywide campaign to raise awareness and reporting on all forms of exploitation, including county lines, modern slavery, cuckooing, human trafficking, and child sexual exploitation.

Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency training: Exploitation themes	2022/23	2021-22	2020-21
Exploitation themed (classroom)	21	18	6
Contextual Safeguarding (classroom)	11	32	17
Radicalisation, Extremism & Prevent eLearning	488	605	237
Exploitation & Modern Slavery themed eLearning	472	692	135

Exploitation and Missing Annual Reports:

Central Bedfordshire's Exploitation Annual Report was presented to the Safeguarding Children Partnership in December 2022, providing the partnership with assurance that the local response to those vulnerable to exploitation and/ or missing from home/ care continues to advance. This includes improved data collection, return home interviews completed, Practice development includes embedding a process across Children's Services to ensure that those children that have been missing from home but unreported to the police, also have access to a return home interview. This acts to safeguard 'hidden' missing children and build a clear picture of those children missing from home, as well as those missing from care.

The Elective Home Education Annual Report and Children Missing from Education Annual Report were presented to the Strategic Board in December 2022; the report highlighted the increasingly close working relationship with the Exploitation and Missing Officer and 0-19 Team, resulting in increasing number of professionals across agencies contacting the Elective Home Education Team when they become aware of children not in education.

PRIORITY: Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience within Families

CBSCP shares guidance, advice, and resources from partners in relation to the mental health and wellbeing within families, in particular we have shared resources through our website, newsletters

and email circulation/distribution lists. Mental Health and well-being is recognised as a concern locally (and nationally) due to rising numbers of children, young people and adults needing to access services.

In June 2022, CAMHS Service Users attended the Strategic Board meeting to share how they were helping to shape Evergreen, a new 8 bed CAMHS provision for young people. The meeting heard how young people part of interview panels and Chair meetings, and that families were involved in workshop events. In March 2023, we were privileged to have 3 young people from CAMHS Participation Group share their journey from initial support to transitioning to adults services. They spoke of what made a positive impact on their mental health; adults who listen, explain what's happening and why, and communicate well but highlighted Transitions, delays to EHCP's and placements out of area/ on adult wards as particularly difficult times. These themes will inform discussions at the June 2023 Strategic Board meeting.

An increase in child death by (suspected) suicide was raised in Case Review Group and Pan Beds Learning, Improvement and Training Group. Partners have requested an update from Public Health once their Mental Health audit is completed. It was agreed that the Case Review Group will now be advised of child death by (suspected) suicide, as an opportunity to identify themes or actions that may be taken to support practice and policy development.

We have supported local initiatives including [Better Days](#), inviting the project leads to present at our Board meeting. Toolkits and useful resources were shared as part of Mental Health week 2023. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership promotes Reflect (replacing Kooth) across the partnership and shared updated support service list and a wide range of emotional wellbeing related training provided by the local authority.

In December 2022, ELFT presented their Annual Report providing assurance on service provision during a time of increased complexity. Safeguarding children, young people and adults cannot be done in isolation; it is only truly effective when work is collaborative with partner agencies to 'Think Family' and protect all those at risk of harm, abuse or neglect. This approach is being embedded across ELFT services. The recent CAMHS Deep Dive reviewed local services, need and demand using public health information to consider how as a system we are meeting the needs of our local communities – the recommendations will inform future commissioning and development of services. ELFT are also exploring projects to review access to teams using our Single Point Of Entry and also a triple aims project to see how the system is supporting young people in education in vulnerable/ deprived wards.

BLMK ICB commissions Mental Health Services, from East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) and works with ELFT and CHUMS to support the integrated pathway for children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health needs. BLMK ICB lead the Bedfordshire Children and Young People Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Network Meeting which provides the opportunity for key stakeholders to understand developments in relation to these issues. They also supported the development of the MH&WB hub within the Local Offer website. BLMK ICB have led the Clinical Reference Group for Children's Eating Disorders focusing on the national ambitions. This has led to the development of Integrated Clinical Guidance for the management of Children and Young People with Eating Disorders providing care before, during and post admission to medical ward or CYPMH unit.

In partnership with Caraline Eating Disorder service and Mental Health School Teams the ICB is supporting a Body Project Pilot to support prevention and early identification. ELFT provide an intensive support service-offering intensive outreach, in-reach during admission or home treatment when required.

BLMK ICB and ELFT are leading a series of workshops across the system entitled “Using I Thrive to improve our Mental Health system for Children and Young People in Bedfordshire & Luton.”

In February 2023, a new digital text messaging service was launched. Children and young people in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire Luton and Milton Keynes young people can text REFLECT to 85258 if they need advice or support. This change of digital service was completed following a review of Kooth provision. The service is free and confidential and delivered in partnership with Shout.

In March 23, Mind BLMK & ELFT CAMHS opened a Young Person’s Sanctuary in Luton, a Bedford Sanctuary followed in May and a Central Bedfordshire service will be launched shortly. The Young Person’s Sanctuaries are safe, non-judgemental spaces that young people can come to if they find themselves in crisis or mental distress in the evenings. There is no need to call and book an appointment, they simply drop in and will be met by a trained mental health worker who will listen and help them identify ways to address the problems they are facing. The teams will also be able to refer and signpost to other services if required. The Young Person’s Sanctuaries were identified as the preferred support option during a round of public focus groups to shape a new 24hr extended mental health crisis care across Bedfordshire.

Children’s Services appreciate that schools offer good support for emotional wellbeing and self-esteem, evidenced in PEPs and LAC Reviews. They are using creative tools e.g.: dogs in a school, alternative emotional wellbeing services to support emotional wellbeing. CAMHS representatives visit schools and CHUMs offers support for children with emotional needs in the community. There is acknowledgement that there is an issue re emotional/mental health support and services available. The potential detrimental impact on young people with significant emotional/ mental health needs escalating to a stage where they require a Tier 4 mental health response, this may be linked to neuro development needs. Action is underway, including attendance of Hospital crisis ‘huddle’ meetings, LAC CAMHS and CBC strategic meeting to review commissioning arrangements and LAC CAMHS weekly consultation.

SHUE Survey:

The results from the 2021 SHUE Survey were presented at the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Strategic Board meeting in September 2022, providing an opportunity for scrutiny of the action plan and to further inform the work of the safeguarding partnership in 2022-23. Headline comparisons with 2019 results are below. The findings of the 2021 SHEU Survey will inform ongoing plans for improvement across the system; particularly within the context of the impact of Covid-19. The Central Bedfordshire Children Leadership Board will have oversight of the impact of follow up actions and services provision to support the findings of the survey across the system, ensuring a commitment from all key partners.

A total of 8,023 pupils took part in 86 schools. This is an increase in the number of schools that participated in the previous survey in 2019 but represents a 10% decrease in the number of pupils that participated. This survey was conducted during the COVID- 19 pandemic, where there were fluctuating levels of attendance.

The SHUE survey will be repeated in October 2023.

Comparison with 2019	
Good News	Not so Good News
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Bedfordshire pupils in 2021 are less likely to have used drugs or know someone who uses drugs than in 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils in Central Bedfordshire are less likely to have visited the dentist in 2021 than in 2019.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary pupils in 2021 are less likely to have been bullied than in 2019. • Primary pupils are less likely to say their parents smoke in 2021 than in 2019. • Secondary pupils are less likely to have drunk alcohol in 2021 than in 2019. • Secondary pupils are less likely to have experienced negative behaviour from a partner in 2021 than in 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils in Central Bedfordshire are less likely to say that their school had a School Nurse in 2021 than in 2019. • Secondary pupils in Central Bedfordshire are less likely to say they know where to get free condoms in 2021 than in 2019. • Pupils in Central Bedfordshire are less likely to have high resilience in 2021 than in 2019. • Pupils in Central Bedfordshire are less likely to say they are happy with life in 2021 compared with pupils in 2019. • Pupils in 2021 are less likely to talk to someone in their family if they have a problem than pupils in 2019.
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Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency training: Mental Health themes	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Self-Harm & Suicidal Themed eLearning	143	124	102

Voice of Children, Young People and Families

In July 2022, the Pan Bedfordshire Voice of the Child Group held a consultation event with the theme ‘How can we help you to feel safe?’ The event was chaired by Alan Caton, our independent Chair and Scrutineer. 76 children, aged 7-14yrs, attended representing 10 Bedfordshire schools. 20 teaching staff attended and discussions were supported by members of the Voice of the Child subgroup. As a thank you for attending, each school received a £50 Amazon voucher.

This event was a great opportunity to hear directly from children and young people and gain some assurances that they felt happy and safe growing up in Bedfordshire. Although they responded positively about feeling safe, they demonstrated some anxieties around social issues and perceived dangers.

What did children and young people tell us about feeling safe? The children and young people told us they feel safe growing up in Bedfordshire and having kind and trusted adults at home and in school helped. They identified people in uniforms (police, fire, lollipop man) as trusted people in the community. Many described how seeing friends helped cheer them up as did adults who know you well and ‘check in with you.’ The oldest attendees told us about the need for open, honest communication with adults who spend quality time with them, and for more education around emotions and wellbeing. Across all ages, children and young people wanted autonomy; younger children spoke about adults who helped them to learn but also wanting to be listened to. One said, ‘Respect us and what we do or look like, no matter what,’ another ‘teach me basic skills.’ The older group talked about being trusted to make decisions. Technology, notably mobile phones, and CCTV played a part in children and young people feeling safe, many talked about having a phone when out and about; using location tracking apps so people knew where they were and use of CCTV in the streets and in their home. Discussions suggest many of the Yr4-6 pupils had mobile devices. Children and young people said they would not share personal information and should talk to adults if they were worried.

What did we learn about children and young people's worries? COVID related factors played a significant part in the conversations; not seeing friends, wearing masks, not being able to go outside and missing friends, wider family and teachers. Social injustice was a theme in all groups; poverty, use of food banks, the war in Ukraine, Black Lives Matter and discrimination in many forms. They also expressed anxieties about 'not knowing people's intentions' and being harmed if they were not with a trusted adult.

Pupils shared their thoughts on feeling safe;

"I feel safer at home than when I'm out and about because I'm wary of people I don't know."

"CCTV cameras around my house make me feel safe."

"When I walk to school the lollipop man Geoff makes me feel safe."

"Knowing windows and doors are locked helps me feel safe."

"Adults help because they always stick with you."

"Safe is when you don't need to worry about your family or yourself."

"It feels good when I can express myself."

"Friends because we all care about each other."

The event was also an opportunity to hear from school staff, who shared positive feedback about relationships and support for safeguarding within their school teams and their wider communities. Opportunities to come together as localities were beneficial and Designated Lead Forums/ meetings were working well. Many recognised improvements in communication with other practitioners but felt there was still progress to be made. Staff highlighted the increased children, young people and their family's mental health issues and domestic abuse, level of complexity in safeguarding cases, waiting lists for support services, staff wellbeing and capacity but had ideas for how they could be further supported; supervision and training, a focus on preventative work and early support for children, young people and families. There was notable feedback on understanding of the role of the safeguarding partnerships and their work; asking the Partnerships to consider how updates, information and resources can be better communicated to schools, and highlighting that information is spread across multiple websites making it harder to locate. There was support for a 'one stop' Pan Bedfordshire website with an overview of local pathways and offers. The new Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website is in development and a quarterly newsletter is circulated.

The Voice of the Child subgroup held a debrief after the event and felt it was a great opportunity to hear directly from children and young people and gain some assurances that they felt happy and safe growing up in Bedfordshire. Although they responded positively about feeling safe, there were many examples of anxious comments. The group discussed the impact on the children and young people's emotional wellbeing of being so alert to perceived dangers and social issues. The group considered that spending more time around adults during lockdown and experiencing a pandemic would have contributed to this but also wondered if children and young people are accessing information presented at a level that is harder for them to process. The group acknowledged that childhood has often included 'big issues' but there would have been few opportunities such as this event for children and young people to express their views. The group reflected on future events having a focus on support and strategies to build confidence and resilience.

The Chair of the Pan Bedfordshire Voice of the Child Group is leading on work to encourage schools to develop their own children's safeguarding boards. Weatherfield School have a [video on their website](#).

Bedfordshire Police continue to develop the voice of children and young people within their service. Child Victim feedback is gained within PVP Unit through postcard handouts and Victim Engagement

Officers. 'Voice of the Child' training has been delivered to all frontline officers, Force Control Room, and Specialist Detectives.

BLMK ICB gains assurance from the providers it commissions services from that the voice of Children, young people and their families are an integral part of contract arrangements and service provision. For example, via reports of audits. It undertakes listening events with Children in Care Council and has a close relationship with Healthwatch which informs local arrangements.

When Children attend for health assessments their views and feelings are assessed using picture charts rather than text. The complaints procedure is child orientated and was adapted to meet their needs and understanding. BLMK ICB has a culture of listening too and engaging with service users and Children seeking their views in decision making and development of service and policies such as co-production work with service users around LGBTQ issues.

Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) gathered feedback from children and young people who have received a safeguarding intervention to inform service improvements is the review of the Children in Care Initial Health Assessment. 6 young people aged 7 -17yrs, male and female, including 2 ethnic minority participants and 1 non- English speaking asylum seeker (using translation services) took part in the review in the form of an interview style 1:1 discussion with the co-production lead to share feedback on their experience of the initial health assessment process. The research was further expanded by working with SHOUT youth participation group for children in care.

A result of the feedback gathered is the co-production of new resources and materials to be sent to the young person in preparation for their Initial Health Assessment (currently in development), including a personalised appointment letter addressed to the young person, and a short film animation giving information on what to expect in the initial health assessment. The impact of this work is that the service has a greater understanding of the needs of the young people throughout the Initial Health Assessment process, and once the resources have been finalised, the young people will feel well informed, prepared and more in control of the assessment they are undertaking.

Central Bedfordshire Children's Services continue to develop their Corporate Parenting themed approach to service improvement that centres the views and experiences of children and young people. This is still relatively new but has included greater engagement from a range of services within CBC and across the partnership. This will support the development and implementation of the Care Leavers Covenant. IROs writing reports to the child for CLA and plan to commence this approach for CP plans. This has now been rolled out to visits and assessments for children. Direct feedback from parents in conferences and preference to attend in person and this has been rolled out.

ELFT identified capturing the voice of the child when submitting safeguarding children referrals especially in demonstrating impact of parental mental health on the child as an area of development.

In line with CBSCP continuing commitment to hear the voice of children, young people, and their families, the 2022/23 Section 11 audit included Standard 4, requiring agencies to evaluate how service development takes into account the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children, young people and families. (See page 24)

From 1st April 2023, this group will be absorbed as a golden thread into a revised Pan Bedfordshire safeguarding children partnership structure, ensuring the voice of the child is embedded in all work. An 'annual conversation' is planned in early 2024 to review, and evidence, how the voice of the child

has remained a key theme in our work. A task and finish group is engaged in planning our next children's event (November 2023) which will focus on healthy relationships for primary school aged children.

Pan Bedfordshire Cultural Competence Group

The Partnership responded to the review of the adultification, disproportionality and diversity issues and the effects on the criminalisation of children in the Youth Justice system by bringing together a multi-agency Pan Bedfordshire Cultural Competence Group for 2022/23. The group received assurance from Bedfordshire Police on their local practices and ensured the multi-agency training programme content did not carry bias messaging and addressed adultification. Central Bedfordshire Children's Services have undertaken learning to further support culturally sensitive practice. Further work will be considered around the training needs of the workforce on this theme. The National Panel included 'Intersectionality' in their [updated guidance](#) to safeguarding partnerships.

Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Education Group

This new group was created as an outcome of a Department of Education funding to develop Education as the 4th Safeguarding Partner. A small project group representing schools across Bedfordshire liaised with local schools and regional colleagues to identify models of engagement which were working in other areas and consider the best fit for Bedfordshire. The Project Group developed and presented their Strategy and accompanying report to the Pan Bedfordshire Strategic Leaders for Children's Services Group in September 2022 and the first meeting of the Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Education Group took place in November 2022.

Although early days for this group, it's work is recognised as important by all partners as education settings spend so much time with children, young people and families. The impact of COVID on all services is recognised and we hear the pressures school settings face.

The Group meets twice a term for themed meetings based on emerging local concerns, or direct requests from education. Our first theme looked at Sexual Harms following a wave of concerns around Andrew Tate, misogyny and 'banter'. Questions are agreed by the Pan Bedfordshire Group and taken back to local cluster meetings via our Cluster Lead. In our first attempt, there were few responses so we have adapted our approach, resending the questions using online forms and moving from standalone cluster meetings to incorporating meetings with existing, well attended DSL Forums. The approach will continue to be monitored and adapted to ensure it is effective in hearing and responding to the voice of education as a developing partner.

Section 3: Learning from Experience and Evidence of Impact

Section 11 Audit

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies, 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. These duties are also outlined in the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance.

Each year the partner agencies within Bedfordshire self-assess themselves against all or some of the following 8 Standards:

- Standard 1 – Senior management have commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare.
- Standard 2 – There is a clear statement of the agency’s responsibility towards children, and this is available to all staff.
- Standard 3 – There is a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting welfare.
- **Standard 4 – Service development takes into account the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families**
- **Standard 5 – There is effective training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or, depending on the agency’s primary functions, in contact with children and families.**
- Standard 6 – Safer recruitment procedures including vetting procedures and those for managing allegations are in place.
- Standard 7 – There is effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Standard 8 – There is effective information sharing.

The 2021 Section 11 Audit focused on Standard 4 and 5, providing an opportunity to further explore the voice of children, young people and their families (Standard 4) and to gain assurance of effective training (Standard 5). Agencies presented their self-assessments at an online Section 11 event (January 2023), each agency identified a number of key areas within their organisation which needed further development. These areas of development have been collated into an action plan monitored through the Pan Bedfordshire Coordinating Group.

The SCP Scrutineer’s Concluded that *‘Working in partnership is key to ensure effective safeguarding. This year’s Section 11 Event gave agencies the opportunity to reflect on their own effectiveness by looking at the above two standards. As in previous years, the event was well attended and enabled some really constructive conversations. The event was able to capture some key areas of good practice as well as highlighting areas that need further development. We all recognised that in order to continue to develop and improve as partnerships, we need effective multi-agency safeguarding training and to ensure we hear the voices of children, young people and families when we are developing our services. Following this year’s event, action plans will be developed. The action plans will be scrutinised at next year’s event to ensure they have been progressed.’*

Learning from Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership completed one Rapid Review in relation to intrafamilial sexual abuse. Agencies did not identify that sexual abuse could/ should have been predicted or identified. Rapid Review concluded that CSPR criteria is met but that learning has been highlighted by Rapid Review. The National Panel agreed that the learning had been identified and

progressed during the Rapid Review and that Partners decision not to progress to a CSPR was appropriate.

Themes identified in this Rapid Review; a multi-agency action plan is monitored through the Case Review Group.

- Workforce confidence and competence to identify and respond to intrafamilial sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours.
- Timely interventions and support for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours.
- Use of multi-agency chronologies to build a picture of persistent, 'low level' concerns, especially where the support of additional services including Early Help, is declined and there is no sustained improvement in the lived experience of the child.
- Use of Pan Bedfordshire Day in the Life resources to support agencies to understand and evidence the lived experience of the child/ren.
- The impact of parental mental health and the breakdown/ conflict in the parents' relationship on children's lived experience; Think Family approach.

The business unit has promoted free webinars on Child Sexual Abuse to support practitioners to upskill in identifying and responding to concerns of intra familial sexual harm, along with signposting to free local authority training on 'Reducing Parental Conflict' and 'Emotional Literacy Support Assistant' (ELSA) to support family relationships and emotional wellbeing. The Business Manager attended a DSL Forum to discuss responses to untreated sores and rashes in young children and escalation process.

[Baby Euan CSPR](#) was published in January 2023. Key learning included information sharing, professional curiosity, and transient/ mobile families, it also explored how race and ethnicity may have been a factor, and the impact of COVID. The case review group reflected on links to national reviews including 'Non-Accidental Injury in under 1s' and 'The Myth of Invisible Men' in that the baby was under 12 months when they died, and Father had a complex history including social care involvement and Domestic Abuse allegations.

Recommendations included;

- The Voice of the child to be included in assessments.
- Alternative ways needed for engaging families when there is resistance to bring a child to a health appointment. In particular those families who decline universal services where there are only known low level concerns.
- Information sharing between different geographical areas including between maternity services and GP's.
- Increase workforce knowledge of intersectionality.
- Increase workforce knowledge of DA and coercive and controlling behaviour.

A multi-agency action plan to address learning is monitored by the Case Review Group to ensure actions are embedded in practice; a Voice of the Child briefing has been circulated to practitioners, along with updated information sharing and myth busting guidance and 'Day in the Life' resources. Domestic Abuse training is promoted across the workforce, with Bedfordshire Police undertaking additional in house 'Voice of the Child' and 'Domestic Abuse Matters' training.

Learning from Baby Euan CSPR will inform the planning of Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency audits for 2023/24. A Pan Bedfordshire event will focus on learning from Baby Euan and other local and national reviews.

The Case Review Group has asked agencies to complete an assurance report to consider the impact of Rapid Reviews and Practice Reviews carried out in the past 3 years.

Safeguarding Adult Reviews

Our Partnership supported Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) to undertake a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) following the death of 'Max', aged 18yrs. Learning from this SAR led to a new Pan Bedfordshire Transitional Safeguarding Group whose focus is on the transition arrangements from children's to adults' services for key groups including children with disabilities and those at risk of exploitation. Promoting a safe transition from childhood to adulthood, to ensure that individuals are supported and safeguarded from abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Partners including Central Bedfordshire Children and Adult Social Care, ELFT CAMHS, CMHT, Safeguarding Children, and Adult team are working together in reviewing the co-operational between and escalation protocol.

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership will support the SAB to develop their 'Transitions to the Max' learning event later in 2023.

ELFT shared that, as appropriated, a reflective session will be offered to the targeted team. For example: In the December 2022 ELFT Safeguarding Quarterly newsletter, the learning from SAR Max was shared. It highlighted that all ages approach to exploitation, strengthened transitions processes and understanding of transitional safeguarding needs, and development of a housing pathway and protocol to ensure vulnerable young people are not placed at even greater risk as a result of unsuitable housing and rapid multiagency response to ensure risk is assessed and managed. Other recommendations included improved transition planning and understanding of mental capacity, including the concepts of executive and fluctuating capacity. A reflective session was offered in January 23 to a CAMHS team following a Central Bedfordshire Serious Incident and the particular learnings were shared. The safeguarding team is arranging with CAMHS teams including the Early Years team for delivering a reflective discussion regarding Baby Euan learnings. The Euan briefing was shared to both children and adult services in March 23.

Learning from National Practice Reviews

Child Protection in England, the [National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson](#), was considered at our Case Review Group, local Strategic Board and Pan Beds Strategic Leaders Groups. A multi-agency assurance activity was undertaken; agencies reflected on, and provided examples of, how the learning from this report was used in practice. A number of briefings were developed to cascade learning and encourage changes in practice where needed, including assurance that referrals from family, friends and neighbours were assessed appropriately and a move away from the term 'malicious referral'. The Partnership was assured of safe practice within Central Bedfordshire.

A practitioner briefing was circulated following publication of [Child Q](#) (Hackney CSPR) to increase awareness of racism, adultification and use of appropriate adults. This CSPR influenced creation of a Pan Bedfordshire Cultural Competence Group; this group met quarterly in 2022/23 to seek assurance and develop practice when working with black and minority ethnic communities. Partners agreed that, alongside Section 11 audit, agencies would undertake the NSPCC Best practice for strategic decision makers, a framework to identify what their agency already has in place or needs to address at an organisational level to ensure children from black and minoritised ethnic communities are supported and protected more effectively. This served as a practice benchmark and will be reviewed as part of the annual conversation on Cultural Competence in early 2024.

Our training offer was reviewed to ensure learning from local and national reviews was incorporated.

RoSPA 'Take Action Today' campaign launch

As part of the Non-Accidental Injury prevention work, 40 practitioners attended a [Pan Beds launch event](#) for the RoSPA campaign to reduce accidental poisonings. The campaign will be taken forward by children's centres, partnering with health visiting and early years to distribute information and start conversations with parents/ carers of young children. CCS have shared messages across Social Media channels and across the partnership.

Pan Bedfordshire Training Unit

[Safeguarding Bedfordshire](#) provide a multi-agency programme to meet the priorities of the three local safeguarding partnerships (Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, and Luton). The Annual Report summarises attendance and impact. A workforce survey, undertaken in 2022 suggested whilst practitioners enjoy face to face training, virtual classroom sessions are often preferred as they reduce travel time/ cost. Training attendance (face to face and virtual classroom) remains lower than pre-pandemic levels; 733 practitioners attended training this year (a 6% decrease on 2021/22), eLearning completions have increased by 25% to 9,264.

As part of our training assurance work, the Section 11 audit included Standard 5; with agencies evidencing how effective safeguarding training is available to all staff in contact with children, young people, and their families. (See page 24)

The full training report can be found in Appendix C.

Key Performance Indicators

Impact of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership during 2022/23													
Issue & Actions	Impact												
Intelligence Forms The CBSCP has continually raised awareness with partners with regards to completing and submitting the local multi-agency information/intelligence forms to the police in relation to safeguarding concerns and in particular CSE information.	The number of forms being submitted each year, whilst Central Bedfordshire Council submissions have dropped, they remain the highest information provider. Central Bedfordshire schools have also increased.												
		CBC	BBC	LBC	NHS	Beds YOS	Luton YOS	School CBC	School BBC	School LBC	Link to Change	Other	Total
	22-23	876	161	388	96	73	21	444	120	299	144	28	2650
	21-22	1064	154	302	67	79	62	274	103	161	116	728	3110
	20-21	1482	268	392	89	53	140	267	46	64	113	545	3459
	19-20	805	288	478	104	59	211	242	129	161	27	256	2760
	18-19	627	310	320	78	102	89	142	108	137	-	-	1913
17-18	227	231	288	13	90	176	0	0	0	-	-	1025	
Domestic Abuse Referrals Throughout the year the CBCSP has continued to work with the Domestic Abuse Team to promote the reporting of domestic abuse incidents.							2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	
	No. of Domestic Abuse Incidents reported						4605	4937	2815*	4838	4408	3722	
	* Data shows reports where victim is a resident of Central Bedfordshire, and the incident has taken place in Bedfordshire.												
Radicalisation/ PREVENT Training CBSCP has supported the training unit to promote free eLearning on this topic. (Pan Bedfordshire training totals)	Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency training:									2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	
	No. of completions									963	605	692	
Evaluation from conferences and training No large scale learning events have been held this year in response to workforce feedback	No large scale learning events held in 2022-23, however Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, along with neighbouring Bedford and Luton Partnerships are working closely with Safeguarding Bedfordshire training unit to shape a programme of class based and virtual learning and												

<p>about capacity to attend non-statutory training.</p>	<p>development in 2023/24. This will include a Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Conference. We continue to promote the offer to partner agencies and seek assurance of minimum annual training requirements being met.</p>
<p>Exploitation Communications The CBSCP and multi-agency partners work closely with the Exploitation Communication group and Bedfordshire Against Violence & Exploitation (BAVEX) to raise awareness of exploitation.</p>	<p>Campaign materials and outcomes:</p>  <p>The image shows a central poster for Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation (BAVEX). The poster lists key information: Partnership brand/campaign to speak out with one voice against violence, exploitation and organised crime; Financial support from Bedfordshire Police, three local authorities, the CCG, Police and Crime Commissioner and Beds VERU; Overseen by the Pan Bedfordshire Exploitation Communications Group – comms officers and professionals from a range of different organisations in Bedfordshire; Standalone website – bavex.co.uk – outlines the partnership response to organised crime and how to report concerns; Focus on six types of exploitation – child criminal exploitation; custodial; child sexual exploitation; labour exploitation; sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation. Surrounding the central poster are several smaller leaflets or posters, each with a different focus and design, all featuring the BAVEX logo and related text.</p>

On-going CBSCP Challenge of Key Performance Indicators:																			
Indicator, Issue and Challenge	Outcome/Impact																		
<p>Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) conducted within 15 working days of a Section 47 starting. Monitoring ICPC's conducted within 15 days is part of the CBSCP Performance Framework.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>2022/23</th> <th>21/22</th> <th>20/21</th> <th>19/20</th> <th>18/19</th> <th>17/18</th> <th>16/17</th> <th>15/16</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) conducted within 15 working days of a Section 47 starting. % (year-end average)</td> <td>95.4%</td> <td>85.9%</td> <td>82.7%</td> <td>95.9%</td> <td>88.8%</td> <td>96.4%</td> <td>96.4%</td> <td>82%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	2022/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) conducted within 15 working days of a Section 47 starting. % (year-end average)	95.4%	85.9%	82.7%	95.9%	88.8%	96.4%	96.4%	82%
Year	2022/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16											
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<p>The percentage of care leavers in education, employment, or training. CBSCP monitor and challenge performance and outcomes on a quarterly basis. For the second year running, the 65% target was exceeded, and monitoring continues.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>22/23</th> <th>21/22</th> <th>20/21</th> <th>19/20</th> <th>18/19</th> <th>17/18</th> <th>16/17</th> <th>15/16</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Care leavers in education, employment, or</td> <td>68.7%</td> <td>67.7%</td> <td>61.6%</td> <td>61.7%</td> <td>64.1%</td> <td>66.7%</td> <td>70.2%</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	Care leavers in education, employment, or	68.7%	67.7%	61.6%	61.7%	64.1%	66.7%	70.2%	70%
Year	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16											
Care leavers in education, employment, or	68.7%	67.7%	61.6%	61.7%	64.1%	66.7%	70.2%	70%											

	training. % (year-end average)								
<p>Percentage of referrals leading to a provision of a Social Care Service.</p> <p>CBSCP challenges and monitors the use of Thresholds within Central Bedfordshire on a quarterly basis. Since 2017/18, this has consistently been above 99% suggesting that professionals know when to refer children for help and are making appropriate referrals.</p>									
<p>Initial Health Assessments for Looked after Children completed within 28 working days.</p>									
<p>Percentage of assessments completed within 45 days.</p> <p>The percentage of assessments completed within 45 days is routinely monitored by the</p>									

** In Bedfordshire, Initial Health Assessments (IHA) for Looked After Children are completed by Paediatricians. In 2021-22, 69 out of 102 (67.6%) assessments were completed within 28 days. Reasons for assessments completed out of timeframe include; an increase in demand, paediatrician capacity, reliance on other health teams where children placed out of area. On occasion, delayed consent from birth parents, or missed appointments by Foster Carers has been a factor. Where there are delays, BLMK CCG and social care have taken action including exception meetings to investigate reasons for delay and escalation with out of area health teams via the Designated Nurse. Remedial action includes cover for annual leave and foster carers training by health to include importance of IHA.*

CBSCP as part of its Performance Framework.	Assessments completed within 45 days. % (year-end average_	96.8%	97.5%	97.1%	96.2%	95.8%	93.8%	92%

Missing children.
Between 2019-2021, missing children and number of episodes reduced; this is likely to be due to COVID restricting young people's movements.

	2022-2023				
	TOTAL	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
No. of missing children (episodes)		11 (24)	10 (52)	12 (48)	11 (60)
No. of missing Looked After Children (episodes)		4 (13)	2 (40)	4 (28)	2 (2)

	2021-2022					2020-2021				
	TOTAL	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
No. of missing children (episodes)	356 (828)	95 (217)	92 (248)	77 (171)	92 (192)	67 (266)	22 (70)	22 (111)	13 (54)	10 (31)
No. of missing Looked After Children (episodes)	63 (302)	16 (54)	18 (112)	18 (66)	21 (70)	27 (152)	6 (36)	8 (57)	7 (37)	6 (22)

	2019-20					2018-19				
	TOTAL	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
No. of missing children (episodes)	268 (398)	70 (174)	82 (139)	64 (105)	52 (80)	351 (593)	100 (23)	89 (247)	83 (175)	79 (148)
No. of missing Looked After Children (episodes)	78 (161)	21 (58)	26 (49)	19 (32)	12 (22)	65 (309)	20 (90)	18 (119)	15 (47)	12 (53)

Section 4: Areas for Development

The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is working well, with a strong commitment from its partners.

Areas for development are identified as;

- Neglect: Embedding GCP2 assessments in practice.
- The Voice of Children and Young People is evident in our work.
- Develop robust multiagency audits that scrutinise how the Partnership works together and learning is embedded.
- Review of MASH processes.

Priorities for 2023/24	
<p>Our Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect • Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing & Resilience • Contextual Safeguarding & Exploitation • Violence Against Girls and Women <p>Golden threads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Intervention & Support, • Digital Safeguarding, • Transitions, • Working ‘post-Pandemic’, Strengthening the voice of Education within the partnership • Information Sharing <p>Learning and Improvement Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice of children, • Was not brought to appointments, • Escalations. 	<p>Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership held a development session on 11th May 2023.</p>

Appendices

Appendix A: Financial Summary

CBSCP Income			CBSCP Expenditure	
Source	Amount	Notes		
Bedfordshire Police	£16,373.13		Staffing	£195,743.41
NHS Bedfordshire	£44,905.64		Overtime	£21,300
Probation Partners	£1,801.80		Mileage, transport and subsistence	£506.86
Central Bedfordshire Council Budget	£104,965.54		Furniture & Equipment	£516.85
Tubes of Life Training	£1,500		Stationery & Printing	£27.48
Carry forward 21-22	£104,884.23	Including DFE funding	Ad hoc	£91.47
Income from Secondment	£75,541.70		Conference expense	£2,966.51
Total income	£ 348,972.04		Training	£2,300
			Subscription & Website Development	£10,589.36
			Direct school support	£6,822.74
			Carry Forward to 23-24	£96,629.27
Year End Total	£11,478.09			
			Total Expenditure	£ 337,493.95

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partners have agreed for the underspend (£96,629.27) to be carried forward to fund future learning events, awareness campaigns and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Safeguarding partners also make a financial contribution to the Pan Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training Unit.

Training Unit funding:

- Bedfordshire Police £3,618.48
- Central Bedfordshire Council £43,478.97
- BLMK CCG £9,924.20

£6,250 was also spent on Partnership Reviews.

A further £12,228.09 was contributed towards the annual Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) costs by the local authority.

Appendix B: Strategic Board Membership/ Relevant Agencies

- Independent Chair/ Scrutineer
- Bedfordshire Luton & Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board
- Bedford Hospital NHS Trust
- Bedfordshire Police
- Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service
- BeNCH
- CAF/CASS (Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service)
- Cambridgeshire Community Services
- East London Foundation Trust
- Education, including schools and college
- Lay Members (2)
- Local Authority, including Adult Services, Children's Services and Public Health
- National Probation Service
- NHS England
- Representation from the Voluntary Sector (Voluntary Organisations for Children, young people & families, VOCypf and Central Bedfordshire Homestart)

Appendix C: Pan Bedfordshire Training Annual Report

Safeguarding Bedfordshire undertook a review of the training programme in response to low attendance following the pandemic. A reduced programme was offered in Q1 and Q2 as we focused on rebuilding engagement and ensured courses were relevant post pandemic. The review of the offer, the programme started later with a limited offer in Q1/ Q2.

Headlines:

- High satisfaction ratings for courses (99%) and eLearning (98%).
- Face to face training was reintroduced with one in four Working Together to Safeguard Children classroom based.
- 11 courses were cancelled due to low uptake.
- In response to user feedback, a new booking management system (Enable) was introduced in Q3, course bookings and eLearning completion rates have since improved.
- Following a successful pilot, a new Understanding Neglect course has been added to the training programme.
- Increased eLearning registrations from out of school clubs and voluntary groups. Schools have increased training attendance.
- Gathering evaluations remains a significant challenge. Of the 228 delegates trained in Q4, just 89 evaluations (39%) were completed. Where evaluations are completed, they are often low quality. Working Together to Safeguard Children has a higher completion rate (45%) than other courses (28%). This is attributed to Designated Safeguarding Leads completing the evaluation to gain access to their certificate.
- Our 2023/24 training programme is now available.

341 practitioners completed Working Together to Safeguard Children.

- Top 5 free eLearning courses**
1. Level 2 Safeguarding Children (1135 completions)
 2. Radicalisation and Extremism (Prevent) (460 completions)
 3. Level 1 Safeguarding Everyone (458 completions)
 4. Level 3 Safeguarding Children (433 completions)
 5. E-safety (318 completions)
- Q3/ Q4 data.*

Priorities for 2023/24

- Quality assurance of training programme. Training manager will undertake observations of sessions, ensuring effective delivery and content of courses.
- Improve evaluation and impact data. Quarterly reports will include evaluation completion rates. Training manager will undertake impact assessment with a sample of attendees.
- Improve attendance from Statutory Partner agencies: 100 free places (per partnership) offered for Working Together to Safeguard Children training. Each Partnership will agree how these are allocated.
- Improve eLearning completion rates to 90% average by year end.

Attendance summary

Class based Training	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2022/23	2021/22
Courses delivered	12	8	14	22	56	69
Delegates booked	149	137	172	275	733	780
Places Filled %	77%	97%	88%	81%	86%	91%
Satisfaction %	100%	97%	99%	100%	99%	98%
Cancelled	1	3	6	1	11	5

Pan Beds eLearning	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2022/23	2021/22
Learners registered	2634	3654	2501	3,995	12784	8293
Learners completed	1225	2407	2095	3,537	9264	7386
Pass rate %	46.5%*	65.9%*	83.8%	88.5%	72%*	89%
Satisfaction %	99%	100%	97%	97%	98%	99%

Training activity by agency

Training Uptake by Agency	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Total 2021/22**		Total 2022/23	
	Cl	eL	Cl	eL	Cl	eL	Cl	eL	Cl	EL	Cl	eL
Bedford Borough Council	14	80	2	20	5	41	13	85	24	47	37	226
Central Bedfordshire Council	24	122	18	74	27	114	25	101	100	519	94	444
Luton Borough Council	4	0	4	21	3	63	7	37	46	97	18	122
BBC Schools/Academies	13	71	15	196	32	154	57	149	88	867	117	626
CBC Schools/Academies	32	224	20	378	34	394	86	520	159	942	172	1516
LBC Schools/Academies	0	45	36	64	40	151	34	184	91	476	110	451
BBC Early Years, Childcare, Out of School	6	30	9	40	2	124	6	156	20	247	23	350
CBC Early Years, Childcare, Out of School	12	235	6	272	4	307	8	584	32	770	30	1410
LBC Early Years, Childcare, Out of School	14	42	4	46	7	106	0	142	21	181	25	337
University of Bedfordshire	0	0	0	852	0	139	0	439	3	1197	0	1430
Adult Social Care	0	42	0	88	1	76	0	241	n/a	n/a	1	453
Emergency Services	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Faith	0	0	0	2	1	4	0	70	1	7	1	10
Health	10	14	7	9	3	39	14	84	34	81	34	101
Independent Organisation	1	188	6	96	6	271	6	419	40	1001	19	829
Police	8	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	15	7	11	3
Voluntary Charity	10	130	10	253	6	109	19	322	71	634	45	604
Youth Offending Service	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	15	3	0	5
Total	149	1225	137	2407	172	2095	275	3537	760	7389	733	9264

Cl- Virtual Classroom eL- eLearning

* Some completions were manually updated following issues with the host platform during this time.

** Agency types were rationalised in 2022/23. 2021/22 data was reported by organisation.

Training Evaluations and Impact

I am extremely new to my role and the educational setting in which I work. The level of detail provided was very useful in terms of me now being aware of the different stages of safeguarding and sequence of events. It was very interesting to hear the views of people who have many years of experience working in a safeguarding environment. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, School DSL, Central Bedfordshire)

Well-delivered and training material was excellent - lots of links to useful websites! Discussion time was good, and links with info really good! It'll help me to reflect on current practices (and policies & procedures) and inform training I plan and deliver to our field staff who work with SEN children at our charity's services. (Safeguarding Children with Disabilities, Charity worker, Bedfordshire)

Raised how easy it is for (children and young people) to be targeted through online activities, even in their own homes, highlights serious flaws in modern technology in keeping the vulnerable in society safe. highlighting the extend of online danger and how easy it is for perpetrators to target vulnerable victims; how easy it is for the victim to be afraid of discussing the level of control being exerted while the perpetrators monitor the victims every move. I have a much better understanding of how to better teach my own children how to stay safe online/ phone, talking to friends and family about the course and what was taught and hopefully to see signs and be confident to act and protect someone I fear may have been subjected to online grooming/abuse both at home and work. (Exploitation and Disruption, Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council)

The whole training was useful in consolidating what I already knew and providing me with updates and new information. I realised that I had more knowledge surrounding Safeguarding that I thought I had. I now feel more confident in being able to carry out my role of Designated lead in School. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, CBC School staff)

It was good to learn about the Pan Bedfordshire Escalation Procedures as it gives guidance of what to do if you are faced with challenges relating to working together with other stakeholders to safeguard children. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, CBC Childminder)

The course was very engaging, I found it very helpful that all attendees contributed within group conversations and voiced their own opinions, thoughts and feelings. Jenny is a fantastic trainer, who was engaging and extremely interesting to listen to. I have learnt a lot and like the handouts given to refer back to, when needed. To learn about the shocking statistics that were discussed, was very interesting. Also the guidance with referrals and going over the legislation and facts, they are so useful to know. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, DSL, Central Bedfordshire School)

You can see the trainer's passion for the subject which makes the training more interesting and holds your attention. I think this training on Teams worked well. There was a lot of additional information given to look through in our own time, but some really useful links as well. The most useful is the honest and hard hitting information given. It is awful and it isn't pleasant, but as professionals we need to understand everything about exploitation. The trainer was very good at advising on certain parts of the training that some may find triggering and recognising that some adults may have gone through trauma themselves. The disruption techniques were very useful, as was understanding Stockholm syndrome and how this affects a victim's thinking. Being given information on the many orders that can be put in place was brilliant. When talking to parents whose children may be going missing, to help them understand the frame of mind that their children may be in. So many parents feel they cannot get through to their children, and this is all part of the exploitation process. I will also put forward the idea of orders when talking through cases with senior practitioners. (Exploitation and Disruption. Early Help Worker, Central Bedfordshire)

Appendix D: Independent scrutiny

31. The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This independent scrutiny will be part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.

32. Whilst the decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is to be made locally, safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

33. The independent scrutineer should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported.

34. The published arrangements should set out the plans for independent scrutiny; how the arrangements will be reviewed; and how any recommendations will be taken forward. This might include, for example, the process and timescales for ongoing review of the arrangements.

35. Safeguarding partners should also agree arrangements for independent scrutiny of the report they must publish at least once a year.

(Source: Working Together 2018)