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# Annual Report of Local Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people

2024/25



North Lincolnshire

**CHILDREN'S  
MULTI-AGENCY  
RESILIENCE &  
SAFEGUARDING  
BOARD**



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**This Annual Report, alongside our North Lincolnshire Children’s Multi-Agency and Resilience Safeguarding (MARS) Local Arrangements, other key documents, as well as policies, procedures and other resources referenced in this document are published on the Children’s MARS**

**website <https://www.northlincscmars.co.uk>**

## Section 1: Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to our **Annual Report of Local Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people 2024/25**. This report fulfils our statutory responsibility to publish a report at least once in every 12-month period and sets out what we have achieved as a result of our Local Arrangements, considering child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective our arrangements have been in practice.

In North Lincolnshire, our ambition is for children to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities and through our One Family Approach, we aim to create an integrated offer that works for all children, young people and families.

Set in the context of our One Family Approach and the underpinning practice model, our Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Resilience (MARS) Local Arrangements place children, young people, families and communities at the heart of our early help and safeguarding system. There is strong evidence of how the One Family Approach is embedded across our local arrangements and across the partnership, we remain committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and families via the fewest best interventions, leading to whole family turnaround. As safeguarding partners, we are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the positive outcomes achieved and the strength of partnership working.

As a result of collaborative working and high support, high challenge at all levels across the early help and safeguarding pathway, we have continued to make progress in developing our local offer for vulnerable children, young people, families and communities. This placed North Lincolnshire in a strong position to respond to the changes within Working Together 2023 and in implementing the National Social Care Framework 2023. We have continued to listen, learn, review and adapt to maintain and build on our creative, innovative and flexible practices. This has resulted in positive experiences and outcomes and contributes to achieving our ambition for children to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities.

# Section 1: Welcome and Introduction

In 2024 / 25 we have continued to:

- work jointly to safeguard and promote the welfare of children to fulfil all functions across our Local Arrangements
- coordinate the multi-agency safeguarding services to respond to the needs of individuals and diverse communities, prioritising the most in need, to help and protect children, young people and families
- support and develop our workforce
- build on our outstanding partnerships and practice to ensure that everyone can recognise and fulfil their responsibilities
- updated and published local safeguarding arrangement documentation in line with Working Together 2023
- ensure effective communication and information sharing and focus on shared accountability and consistent practice across all agencies within our quarterly subgroups and Board meetings
- ensure clear accountability, governance and leadership and put engagement of children, families and practitioners in shaping the services

Our Family Help Offer closely aligns with the ambitions and values of our One Family Approach, and our Local Arrangements has a focus on the importance of bringing services together around families to deliver whole family working and it emphasises the importance of early help in increasing the likelihood of good outcomes for children and families.

## Section 1: Welcome and Introduction

Looking forward, we continue to be in a strong position to respond positively to new policy directions and guidance, specifically, the Families First Partnership Programme. Delegated Safeguarding Partners will play a key role in overseeing progress being made and key decisions ensuring:

- Whole-family approaches to support and protection
- That there is published guidance on Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection and Family Networks
- Reinforcing the importance of collaborative working between statutory partners and wider agencies

As we further develop our integrated children and families offer, we remain committed to a culture of listening, learning, reviewing and adapting, which is reinforced through our republished arrangements, our learning and improvement culture that is welcoming of improvements and innovations, and the multi-agency practice developments and transformation that continue to evolve.



**Paula South**

Director of Nursing – Core  
Statutory Partnerships/  
Deputy Executive Nurse

NHS Humber and North  
Yorkshire Integrated Care  
Board (ICB)



**Rachel Smith**

Director of Children and  
Families  
North Lincolnshire  
Council  
(Chair of Children’s  
MARS Board 2024/25)



**Paul French**

Chief Superintendent and  
South Bank Commander  
Humberside Police

## Section 2: Overview of our Local Arrangements

### Governance & Partnerships

Over the last year, there have been changes at a strategic level across some statutory partner agencies though there has continued to be a collaborative leadership approach and shared commitment to ensuring an equal and robust partnership.

The key roles and functions of the board, are detailed in the Terms of Reference and the responsibilities are detailed in the Local Arrangements and underpinning Memorandum of Understanding. In line with Working Together 2023, the Children's MARS Key Documents were updated and republished on the website in December 2024 within the required timescales. Within this the Partnership Structure was updated to include the distinct roles of the Lead Safeguarding Partners and Delegated Safeguarding Partners. This has led to the review of the sub-group membership to ensure the chairs of the groups are of the right governance level. Further information about our partnership structures can be found in the Local Arrangements which have been updated to reflect the changes in our partnership arrangements.

As set out in Working Together 2023, the arrangements are in place for the DSPs and LSPs to have regular interaction and communication to ensure that the LSPs has sufficient oversight and detail on key topics and issues to maintain their statutory responsibilities, within North Lincolnshire this will be bi-annually meetings, the first being in August 2025. DSPs meet sufficiently frequently to undertake their joint functions, that being every quarter. The LSPs and DSPs are clearly named in our published Local Arrangement documents on the Children's MARS website.

A Working Together Implementation Plan was coordinated by the Children's MARS, supported by a working group. Further details in respect of the requirements set out in Working Together 2023 and our local response are demonstrated within this section under our 2024/25 shine a light area of focus - Implementing Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework.

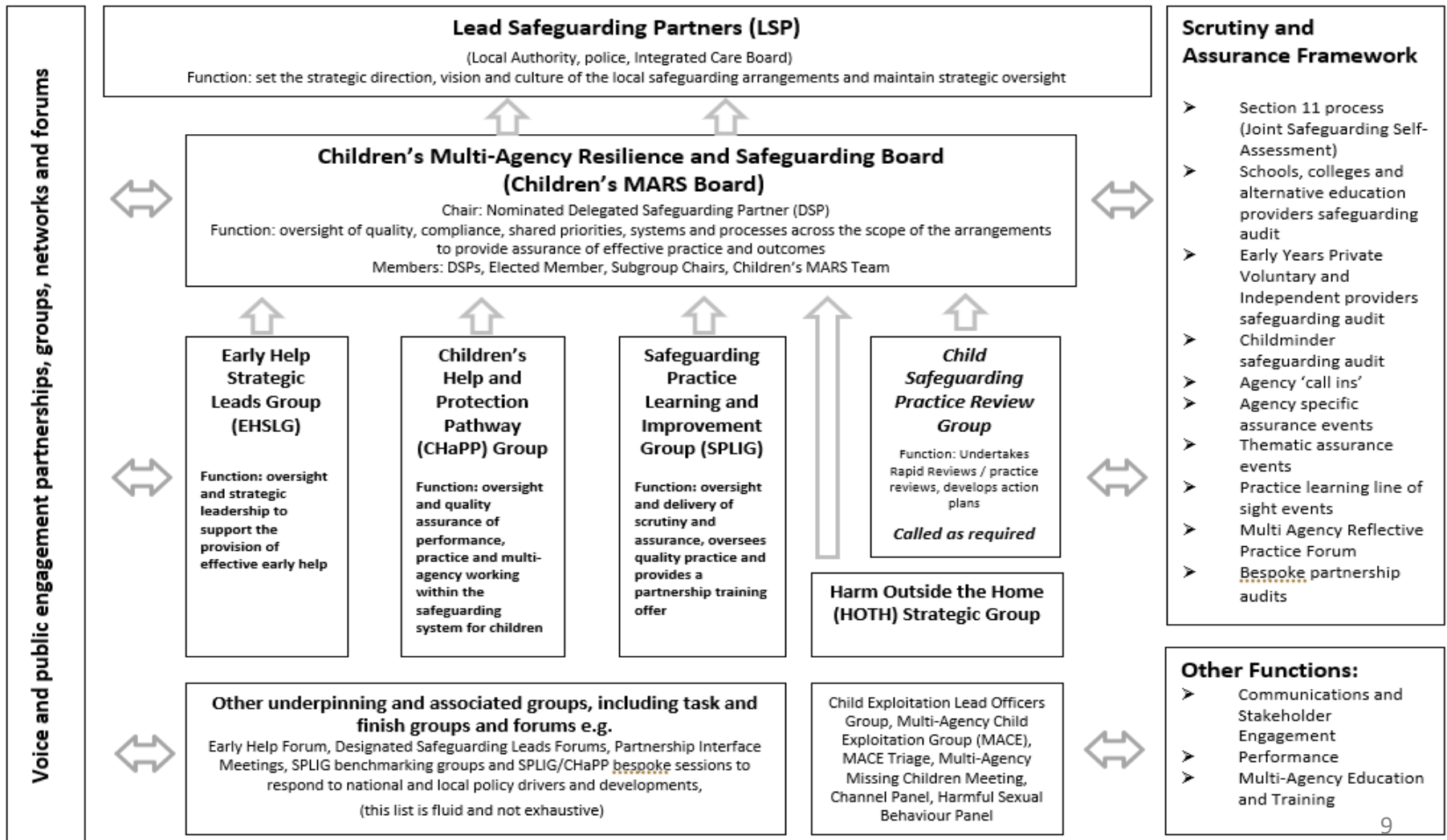
## Section 2: Overview of our Local Arrangements

As part of our commitment to listen, learn, review and adapt, we have continued to review and refine our subgroup arrangements and hold bespoke sessions where focussed conversations are required. Some examples include:

- A bespoke Harm Outside the Home leaders' development meeting was held to implement the changes within Working Together 2023 and to review the operational and strategic governance response. The group also reviewed the performance management information and intelligence analysis to ensure the datasets continue to meet the needs of the group.
- The Terms of Reference for the Early Help Strategic Leads Group and the Children's Help and Protection Pathway Group were reviewed to ensure they continued to be fit for purpose, in line with Working Together 2023 and details on membership were accurate.
- We have also continued to collaborate and work closely with other local and regional Boards and partnerships to reduce duplication and to identify where additional resource and specialist skills can be shared across the wider partnership landscape. Some examples of this include:
  - ✓ Creating a Joint Board Protocol – collaborating with the Safeguarding Adults Board, the Community Safety Partnership Board, the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, the Youth Justice Partnership Board and the SEND Standards Board.
  - ✓ Undertaking joint board development sessions to have a greater understanding of the work taking place across other Boards and partnerships, considering cross cutting workstreams and how we can better work together and to clarify and agree priority action and next steps.
- Overall, the Local Arrangements continue to have a positive impact on outcomes for children and families. Efficient board arrangements with shared chairpersonship, core membership and active, engaged discussions and decision making continues.

## Section 2: Overview of our Local Arrangements

The diagram below shows the partnership structure amended in line with Working Together 2023 adding a higher level of governance by including the Lead Safeguarding Partners. Within North Lincolnshire the chairing arrangements were already set on a rotational basis with each chair taking responsibility to chair the Board meeting on an annual basis.



## Section 2: Overview of our Local Arrangements

### Funding

Safeguarding partners have a shared ownership of funding responsibilities to ensure the implementation of the Local Arrangements. These consist of actual funding and in-kind resources, for example representatives from safeguarding partner organisations contribute to the development and delivery of the education and training programme. In addition, each of the safeguarding partners have agreed that key subject matter experts from their organisations will lead specific pieces of work to progress the areas of focus, strategies and delivery plans. In the event of a child safeguarding practice review, it has been agreed that funding will be met by the three safeguarding partners and where necessary, each partner will contribute equitable and proportionate funding over and above the normal allocation in order to fulfil the costs of any review.

<b>Contributions</b>	<b>2024/25 (£)</b>
North Lincolnshire Council	50,000
Humber and North Yorkshire ICB	38,241
Humberside Police	13,000
Probation Service	2,184
John Leggott College	1,140
North Lindsey College	1,140
Education (including 10,000 DSG)	28,000
<b>Total contributions</b>	<b>133,705</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2024/25 (£)</b>
Contribution towards staffing costs	-129,744
Training and events	-5232
Publications, printing, equipment	-5162
Subscriptions and memberships	-954
<b>Total</b>	<b>-7,387</b>

A breakdown of costs in delivering the arrangements for 2024/25, including financial contributions, is indicated in the adjacent table:

In 2024/25, the Education contribution to the Children's MARS arrangements decreased from £31,000 to £28,000. This reduction was due to a decrease in funding from the Designated Schools Grant. Contributions from other partners remained the same as the previous year.

Staffing costs include Independent Scrutiny Officer and Family Voice Representatives work.

Regarding expenditure changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25:

- Independent Scrutiny and Family Voice Representatives saw an increase in costs
- Training and events experienced a slight reduction in expenditure
- Publications, printing, and equipment costs increased
- Subscriptions showed a slight decrease

During 2024/25 the Board core income is not suffice to meet the core expenditure of the Board, however the carry forward from 2023/24 is mitigating this.

## Section 3: Area Profile – Summary of Performance and Populations

North Lincolnshire Child Population 34,349	North Lincolnshire School Population 24,068
<p>3% of our population are receiving targeted family help</p> <p>3% of our population are open to children’s social care</p> <p>0.4% of our population are Child Protection</p> <p>0.6% of our population are a Child in Care</p> <p>0.4% of our population are a Care Leaver</p>	<p>5% of our school population have an EHCP</p> <p>14% of our school population have SEN Support</p> <p>31% of our school population are eligible for free school meals</p>

- The vast majority of performance and activity information relating to the early help and protection system continue to show sustained high performance and compliance with local practice standards and statutory timescales which demonstrate the success and effectiveness of our local practice
- Families benefit from an effective early help offer, delivered by agencies committed to intervening early, supporting the whole family, and preventing escalation of need through the fewest, best interventions
- Children in North Lincolnshire who are in need of help and protection are receiving timely, appropriate help and support, they make good progress, and are supported to live safely within their family network
- There are few children in external foster care and residential provision enabling them to remain connected to their local support networks and community

## Section 3: Area Profile – Summary of Performance and Populations

We have maintained and further developed our performance framework which provides assurance and oversight of performance activity, a summary of which is as follows:

- The number of early help assessments recorded from partners has reduced from last year. The largest contributing agencies remain pre-schools, schools or further education establishments, with 97% of all assessments completed by them. Requests for targeted Family Help have also reduced although the number of children open to Family help had increased by the end of March 2025. Audit activity and management oversight at the front door to explore this has evidenced the amount of informal early help being provided where professionals intervene early in accordance with the Helping Children and Families In North Lincolnshire document and this being a factor in the reduction.
- Front door activity is in-line with last year. The number of Single Point of Contact (SPOC) enquiries has decreased by 7% this year. Timeliness in responding to referrals and assessments remains strong. The re-referral rate at 15% remains the same as last year and below the latest national and statistical neighbour averages.
- Numbers in respect of Domestic Abuse remains stable. The number of referrals with a presenting issue of domestic abuse is in-line with the previous year. At the assessment point the number of assessments with a factor of domestic abuse are in-line with the previous year although proportions have increased. Domestic Abuse will remain a Shine a Light area 2025/2026 due to it being recognised that this needs to remain an area of focus.

## Section 3: Area Profile – Summary of Performance and Populations

### Summary of performance activity continued:

- **The numbers of children in need and child protection interventions have increased during 2024/25.** After reductions in the previous 2 years, the number of strategy discussions increased in 2024/25. Section 47 enquiries remained in-line with last year but ICPCs increased significantly. Children starting a child protection plan also increased, with a further 40 children subject to a child protection plan at the end of March 2025 when compared with the same time in 2024. These children benefit from timely conferences that prevents drift and have strong multi agency support that leads to the timely ending of child protection plans based on lasting change, with re-plans reducing during 2024/25 and running below comparators. Oversight remains strong with thematic audit work taking place to ensure we understand the narrative behind any increase and steps taken as needed. This is an area of oversight within the safeguarding arrangements.
- **2024 / 2025 There has been a decrease in allegations against people who work with children** in comparison to the previous year. We remain confident that those that need to be scoped in, are scoped in.
- **The children in care population has risen but remains below the latest national comparators.** Oversight remains strong, ensuring we understand the narrative behind any increase and ensuring that any child who needs to enter care remains close and in their community. Our ambition for children continues to be for children to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities.
- **Children in care experiencing placement stability has continued.** Children experiencing three or more placements in the year remains low and in-line with the latest national and statistical averages demonstrating the commitment to stability for children in care. Those in care for 2.5 years and remaining in the same placement has reduced over 2024/25; the reasons for this are understood and this remains a priority for the Care Experienced Partnership. The partnership continues to ensure the timely completion of health assessments, dental checks and immunisations for children in care.

## Section 3: Area Profile – Summary of Performance and Populations

### Summary of performance activity continued:

- **Care leavers who are in suitable accommodation has remained higher than national and statistical neighbour averages.** The overall number of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment and training has decreased. However, within the overall cohort our number of care leavers attending university is higher than previous years. As a partnership we continue to explore creative ways to raise the aspirations of our young people.
- **Absence rates show an improving trend** for both primary and secondary schools though they remain above pre-pandemic levels.
- **Suspension and exclusions have increased.** Challenge remains in place for suspensions and permanent exclusions, and this remains a priority area. 2025/2026 this will be an area of focus for the newly established Safeguarding Education subgroup.
- **The number of Electively Home Educated children increased over the year** and there has been significant work undertaken to understand the parental reasons for this. This is alongside a strong offer to maintain links to those home educated, which has resulted in a number of children with Special Educational Needs re-entering school.
- **EHCP timeliness has improved during 2025 following a reduction in performance during 2024.** It is now running above the latest England average.

## Section 3: Area Profile – Summary of Performance and Populations

### Summary of performance activity continued:

- The number of children identified to be at risk of or who have experienced sexual or criminal exploitation are in-line with last year. There is enhanced management oversight of this cohort through regular case audits, within case supervision, at the Multi Agency Children Exploitation meeting, through the Exploitation Lead Officer Group and through the Harm Outside the Home Strategic Group. Partners are working to ensure that children receive help at the lowest level, are supported and protected, and that perpetrators are disrupted alongside harmful places and spaces being addressed.
- We have seen a decrease in missing incidents for all children, with missing incidents for children in care in-line with last year's reduction. The Multi-Agency Missing Children Meeting is embedded and robust in focusing on reducing missing incidents with action plans being devised to complement statutory or early help plans and to initiate early help assessments or provide support. Children have a Police safe & well check, as well as taking up independent return interviews after a missing episode.
- The rate of proven reoffending was lower than comparators and there have been no children sentenced to custody during the period. The number of children entering the youth justice system as first-time entrants increased in the first half of the year. This was reviewed by the Youth Justice Partnership, with actions taken and this trend subsequently decreased. A high proportion of cases are out of court disposals and prevention cases (this is diversion work to prevent children becoming first-time entrants), demonstrating the success and effectiveness of the preventative approach that is taken.
- There have been more National Referral Mechanism cases during 2024/25. The tracking and monitoring of this is robust and a factor has been the training and awareness raising in respect to when referrals are to be made.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

Annually we identify 'Shine a Light' areas of focus. An update on these areas for 2024/25 are as follows;

### Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Transitions to Adulthood

*We said we would further develop the multi-agency approach to transitions to adulthood and ensure relevant assessments carried out in childhood assist professionals understanding in adulthood*

**Activity** - Accredited Practitioners within Family Support delivered an 8 weeks programme called 'I'm the Girl I Want to Be', to support younger girls to have an increased understanding of relationships, whilst building self-esteem and aspirations preparedness for transition into their futures. The groups have positively supported emotional wellbeing of young people increasing their confidence, provided support with sex education, friendships and relationship.

**Impact & evidence** – Most participants reported increased confidence and self-esteem. The group was described as a safe and calming space to express themselves. The experience helped the children feel more valued, more supported and more hopeful for their futures.

*"This group has made me more confident, and it helped me to make friends. Even my dance teacher at school has recognised I am more confident because I used to hide behind my peers whereas now, I stand at the front of the class in front of the mirrors".*

**Future Plans** – Further sessions will be running during 2025.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Transitions to Adulthood

**Activity** - Procedures for supporting care leavers in their transition to adulthood have been reviewed and enhanced, which includes understanding assessments / information in respect to early experiences and ensuring this is considered in how we support into adulthood. A clear pathway has been established for Family Hubs Teams to deliver more intensive, tailored support focused on developing independence for selected individuals. Young people are supported within their local communities to help them build confidence, develop essential life skills, and integrate into what may be a new environment. This support includes practical guidance on managing a home and everyday life skills. Importantly, the community-based approach fosters a sense of belonging, contributing to long-term sustainability. These personalised support packages are designed to empower young people by boosting their confidence, enhancing emotional well-being, and equipping them with the tools they need to thrive independently.

**Impact & evidence** – Young people already benefitting from the pathway have reported having a greater sense of confidence, with appreciation for having someone to offer guidance when needed. One young person’s case study was documented, and the author wrote;

*“Most meaningfully, she said she felt she could trust me—something she described as significant. Being invited to be part of her journey and to hear her story was a privilege, and it meant a great deal to be trusted in that way.”*

**Future Plans** – Family Hubs pathway to continue and impacts will be measured; this may be demonstrated through the figures in respect of stability within an independence placement.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Transitions to Adulthood

**Activity** - A new Transition Team, based within Adults Safeguarding, has been developed to support in the preparation for adulthood for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The purpose being to coordinate the plan around children and young people who may be considered to need more support in transitioning from children's services to adults.

**Impact & evidence** – Individual child cases have been effectively supported through this arena, with evidence suggesting that the additional pre-planning has contributed to a smoother and more positive journey for the children involved. This proactive approach has enabled more tailored support, leading to improved outcomes and reduced disruption.

**Future Plans** - The effectiveness of the work will continue to be monitored.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Transitions to Adulthood

**Activity** - Funding for a transitions worker within the DELTA service (Young People's Substance Misuse Service) was granted and has continued allowing a clear pathway to support those young people moving from children to adult services, with young people aged 18–25 now being supported through DELTA rather than traditional adult services. This approach respects the voice of the young person and their readiness to transition, rather than relying solely on age thresholds.

**Impact & evidence** - Since the implementation of the transitions post, there has continued to be a noticeable reduction in those service users who did not attend their appointments, and in addition a reduction in drop-out rates, indicating improved engagement.

**Future Plans** – The outcome of the 2-year funded post will be decided following further evaluation

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Transitions to Adulthood

**Activity** - The Humber Health Partnership, specifically through the South Bank Lead Transition Nurse, have developed innovative pathways and processes to support the transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people. These pathways are designed to be individualised and person-centred, with a strong emphasis on early involvement of adult and community services to ensure continuity of care and support.

**Impact & evidence** - This approach has been nationally recognised as innovative practice, with only 9.7% of NHS trusts across the country having achieved similar standards. To showcase this work and foster collaboration, a transitional conference was held in November, bringing together partners and stakeholders to engage with the service model and its successes.

**Future Plans** – The initial setup will be introduced at the Youth Forum to capture the voices, perspectives, and active participation of young people in decision-making processes. Transition Clinics will continue to be delivered in local specialist schools and colleges. In the near future, Children’s Services will also be able to participate, supported by the implementation of a newly established Transition Team.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Transitions to Adulthood

**Activity** - North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Partnership (YJP) remains committed to supporting 17-year-olds to ensure that they are accessing the most appropriate support ahead of transitioning to post 18 services. Data highlighted that whilst there were no cases eligible for formal transition to Probation, there were a number of children open to YJP on out of court diversion programmes. In response to this a new process was created to allow identification of cases approaching adulthood to put the appropriate support in place. In 2024/25 a Probation Officer was seconded to be based within the YJP two and a half days a week and plays an integral role within transitions work.

**Impact & evidence** – Case examples have already been reported, each demonstrating positive outcomes that would not have been achieved without early-stage involvement.

**Future Plans** - The Youth Justice Partnership (YJP) will continue to encourage and promote the child and young adult to engage with Adult Social Care Services and where appropriate, will continue to offer voluntary support to promote a seamless transition into Adult Services.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Domestic Abuse and the Impact on Children

*We said we would further develop our understanding of and our multi agency response to domestic abuse and the impact on children including what our offer looks like for children who have experienced domestic abuse*

**Activity** - In November 2024, a joint board development session was held, providing Board members with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the work being carried out across various Boards and partnerships. The session highlighted existing collaborative efforts and identified key priority areas for joint focus, with domestic abuse emerging as a significant cross-cutting issue.

**Impact & evidence** - The initial meeting has facilitated work outside of the session in respect of helping to reduce duplication across services in relation to domestic abuse and enabling the use of existing resources more effectively.

**Future plans** -The local response to tackling domestic abuse has been progressed further by the establishment of a Learning and Development Group within Children's Services in respect of Domestic Abuse to move forward the production of the North Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Offer document and reviewing of the domestic abuse toolkit.

**Activity** – Independent Domestic Abuse Violence Advisors (IDVA) are co-located at the front door within Children's Services.

**Impact & evidence** – This allows for immediate consultation on domestic abuse concerns, including lower-level issues and supporting more timely and appropriate responses.

**Future plans** – This arrangement will continue to be reviewed for its effectiveness.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Domestic Abuse and the Impact on Children

**Activity** – Thematic audits of domestic abuse cases held within Targeted Family Support were undertaken to provide assurance that plans are effective in managing risks, providing safe support to manage the impact of domestic abuse and highlight learning points for practice.

**Impact & evidence** –The activity provided assurance of already strong practice and also identified areas for further strengthening, voice was clearly evident alongside well-considered interventions.

**Future plans** – Additional audits will be conducted regarding domestic abuse to ensure continued best practice.

**Activity** – The Domestic Abuse Champion Network has been established across the Humber Health Partnership, with 159 champions now in place. These champions are embedded within key wards and departments where children may attend, including the Emergency Department, Fracture Clinic, Paediatrics, Midwifery, and Gynaecology. This network supports a holistic, whole-family approach to domestic abuse, recognising children as victims in their own right. Champions receive extensive, bespoke training to enhance their knowledge and confidence in identifying and responding to domestic abuse. They provide peer support within their departments, enabling earlier intervention and additional opportunities to support families affected by domestic abuse—from pregnancy through to childhood and beyond. The Trust has also benefited from the leadership and support of a dedicated Domestic Abuse Coordinator, who has played a pivotal role in developing and embedding this work.

**Impact & Evidence** - Feedback from training sessions has been overwhelmingly positive:

- 99% of participants reported feeling more confident in recognising indicators of domestic abuse and applying this knowledge in practice
- 98% stated they felt more confident in responding to disclosures of domestic abuse

**Future Plans** - The Trust plans to extend the Domestic Abuse Coordinator role into the next year to further embed and build upon the progress made to date.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Domestic Abuse and the Impact on Children

**Activity** – The Vulnerability Hub provides a consistent, force-wide approach to managing vulnerability through a centralised model. It brings together key areas including Vulnerable Children, Vulnerable Adults, Domestic Abuse, Contextual Safeguarding, Early Help, and locality-based problem solving to reduce future demand.

These Hubs aim to improve information sharing, enhance decision-making and strengthen threshold management.

This approach is supported by partners such as Health, Education, Children’s Social Care, and Early Help, who participate in the Partnership Integrated Triage Meeting (PiTstop). This forum enables effective information sharing, early intervention, and appropriate signposting, helping to reduce unnecessary referrals to the Dedicated Decision Maker and Children’s Social Care—allowing them to focus on high-risk cases. To further strengthen the model, a PiTstop meeting was established in each local authority area. These meetings coordinate the partnership response to early intervention and contextual safeguarding alongside local police teams. They also serve as a conduit for MACE, TTCG, and OCG meetings, supporting disruption, engagement, and local problem solving to reduce vulnerability within communities.

**Impact & evidence** - This has significantly enhanced information sharing across the partnership, leading to more informed and timely decision making. This enhanced connectivity is helping to align efforts, reduce duplication, and support more strategic outcomes across the board.

**Future plans** – The work of the Vulnerability Hub and PiTstop meetings is subject to regular review, with ongoing audits conducted to ensure the system functions effectively. This process will continue.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/25 Domestic Abuse and the Impact on Children

**Activity** - To ensure enhanced understanding and preparation for a possible Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), Children's MARS held a JTAI Dry run event in respect of the JTAI theme of domestic abuse in October 2024. The dry run event was scheduled, where possible, within the time frames of the guidance. From a data perspective we were keen to experience the quick turnaround of the data lists that must be produced for inspectors whilst first requiring validation from partners and other agencies. Using the key lines of enquiries within the guidance we also collated learning of our current local offer for families within North Lincolnshire and then identified any potential gaps. This has driven activity over 2024/2025.

**Impact & evidence** - This event was well attended by partners with attendance from all agencies. Following the event good practice and learning points were collated and summarised and an evaluation session was convened for those who participated. Feedback from those who contributed felt it had been a positive and informative event and in particular setting out the offer from each agency's perspective allowed greater knowledge and understanding of the whole North Lincolnshire offer. New relationships and contacts were forged for more collaborative working in the future. A 7-minute briefing has been produced for dissemination to the partnership.

***“the level of attendance, contribution, and overall willingness to engage was positive. Despite the pressures on time and competing priorities, colleagues made a concerted effort to participate. Importantly, attendance was not mandatory, yet the voluntary commitment demonstrated by all involved reflected a shared commitment to improvement.” [comment from the Independent Scrutineer]***

**Future plans** - From this event a Learning and Development Group in respect of Domestic Abuse was established to work through identified actions and deepen understanding of the families being supported in North Lincolnshire and what their experiences were telling us. Moving forward this will include a launch of the domestic abuse training offer, with more specialist training provided and the launch of an updated 'Domestic Abuse at a Glance' document and toolkit. In addition, a bespoke audit group regarding re-referrals where domestic abuse was a factor has been undertaken. Action plans from both the Learning and Development Group and the bespoke audit group are established and the work continues into 2025/2026.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/2025 Implementing Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework

**Activity** – A communication plan and accompanying documents were provided via cMARS communications and the subgroups to disseminate the key messages and changes to Working Together 2023. This included a summarised paper of the changes for all partners and agencies to understand the impact. A bespoke briefing for schools was presented at the DSL Forum and a bespoke summary for the health system was provided to health colleagues. In addition, three Working Together 2023 online briefing sessions were provided by the cMARS Team and later in the year three workshops presented by Independent Scrutiny Officer, entitled Working Together Workshops – Principles of working with Families and Help and Protection for Children. Both the briefings and the workshops included an evening session to be fully inclusive and to accommodate those working within the education and early years arenas. The workshops included one face-to-face session and two online sessions. In November 2024, the annual cMARS conference was presented with the theme of Working Together incorporating understanding the changes and impact and included keynote speaker Robin Harper-Coulson, Independent Scrutiny Officer (ISO), presenting on key features and implications for practice from Chapter 1 & Chapter 3 of Working Together 2023.

**Impact & evidence** – The evening training session to accommodate those working within the early years sector was attended by 33 childcare providers. In total the training sessions reached 71 people who work or volunteer with children and young people in North Lincolnshire. The annual cMARS conference was attended by over 200 professionals from North Lincolnshire extending the reach further. Feedback was obtained regarding the training sessions and from the conference presentation and demonstrated that the partnership felt well informed and more confident and understood the impact within their roles and responsibilities.

**Feedback received:** *'The team will look at examples of practice we are already implementing and identify any gaps in training. I would like to feedback that Independent Scrutineer is an amazing deliverer of training. He has so much knowledge and experience - he just brings the training to life. Thank you for putting the training on in person - this is so much more meaningful and interactive'*

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/2025 Implementing Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework

**Activity** – Strengthening of the role of other agencies within the partnership has been a key work stream for the Children's MARS Board. The role of key partners, including education and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector has been strengthened with work taking place throughout the year via a 'Safeguarding in the VCFSE sector' connectivity group who meet once a quarter. The group have overseen the production of a bespoke briefing on the Children's MARS arrangements and has been included in the 'Positive Activities Funding Provider Pack' for any newly established groups. The briefing aims to strengthen awareness and understanding of local safeguarding partnerships, ensuring that funded activities are aligned with best practices in child protection and wellbeing, it encourages providers to sign up to the cMARS communications list and also directs them to the website.

**Impact & evidence** – The bespoke safeguarding briefing was disseminated late in the 2024/25 period, its impact will be monitored and evaluated throughout 2025/26. The aim is for 100% of newly established groups receiving Positive Activities Funding to be signed up to the Children's MARS website and actively engaging with its resources. The Lead Officer for Universal Participation & Wellbeing (Children & Families) will continue to play a key role in supporting providers to access and utilise the Children's MARS materials. This includes ensuring providers are aware of the safeguarding expectations, can navigate the resources effectively, and are embedding best practices into their delivery.

**Future plans** – Evidence of engagement and application will be gathered through ongoing monitoring and feedback mechanisms.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/2025 Implementing Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework

**Activity** – The 'Safeguarding in the VCFSE sector' group have produced a document, in conjunction with the Local Authority Designated Officer, for parents and carers in respect to choosing safe out of school settings. The guidance includes what to look and ask for from an out of school setting, what to look and ask for from private tuition, other useful information and what to do if you are concerned about your child or another child in an out of school setting.

**Impact & evidence** – Children's MARS have shared and discussed the document at four events attended by parents and carers where we distributed the report and raised awareness. Feedback indicated that they found it useful, and as a result, it has been added to the Parents and Carers section of the Children's MARS website.

**Future plans** – To continue to disseminate the document where necessary.

**Activity** – We have worked to increase our engagement with schools Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). The termly briefings for DSLs continue to be well-attended and highly valued across schools, these sessions provide essential updates and guidance on safeguarding and child protection practices. New for 2024/25, the briefings included a standing agenda items from the Children's MARS Board, with updates presented by the Board Manager and also for the Front Door, with reports delivered by the Lead Officer for Front Door SPOC, Contact and Referral, and Unplanned Out-of-Hours (OOH) services. These additions ensure DSLs are kept informed of key developments and operational insights from both strategic and frontline safeguarding services.

**Impact & evidence** – Evaluations are always positive, with over 100 DSLs joining on a regular basis. A monthly newsletter is also produced being viewed by around 260 DSLs.

**Future plans** - To monitor the uptake of schools visiting SPOC/IMAP as part of the new to role DSL Induction offer and monitor the uptake of schools accessing the new Wednesday afternoon SPOC/IMAP Early Help Offer, "stuck cases" conversations.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/2025 Implementing Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework

**Activity** – In March 2025, cMARS presented to the Board a proposal to establish a safeguarding subgroup specifically for the education sector. This proposal was agreed upon and will be implemented in the 2025/26 period. Colleagues within the education sector continue to play an integral role in the Children's MARS arrangements, ensuring that workstreams maintain a strong focus on education and early years. Representation from the education sector is well embedded across the Children's MARS Board, its subgroups, and associated task and finish groups and forums. This ensures that the voice and perspective of education professionals are consistently reflected in safeguarding discussions and decision-making processes. However, the establishment of a dedicated education safeguarding subgroup will further strengthen this engagement, providing a focused platform to address sector-specific safeguarding challenges and opportunities.

**Impact & evidence** – Education representatives help disseminate safeguarding messages and practices across a wide network. Their presence ensures that educational perspectives are considered in strategic decisions and operational planning. It promotes better coordination between education professionals and other safeguarding partners and provides a clear line of accountability and a platform for education professionals to escalate issues or share best practices.

**Future plans** - Implementation of the agreed safeguarding education sub-group will ensure a dedicated subgroup can respond more quickly to emerging safeguarding concerns within the education sector.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/2025 Implementing Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework

**Activity** – A consultation has been completed to support the development of the VCFSE pages of the Children's MARS website. This consultation aimed to identify what the sector believes is necessary to effectively safeguard children and their families. Children's MARS engaged with VCFSE representatives through individual meetings and by attending the 'Community VISION & Partners Safeguarding Event for North Lincolnshire'. This event provided an opportunity to connect with a wider range of sector representatives. At the event, Children's MARS hosted a promotional stand and facilitated a workshop to strengthen the sector's understanding of local safeguarding arrangements, also using this opportunity to gather feedback on the Children's MARS training programme. Head of Service, with oversight of Children's MARS was also a keynote speaker at the event.

**Impact & evidence** –In relation to the consultation for the 2025/26 cMARS Training Plan, feedback was gathered from approximately 25 representatives from the VCFSE sector. Their input was incorporated into a broader consultation across the partnership. This process resulted in a list of training topics that both partners and agencies expressed interest in. Many of these suggestions have already been integrated into the training plan, while others are currently in the process of being implemented.

**Future plans** – Continue to hold quarterly 'Safeguarding in the VCFSE sector' meetings, aiming to broaden participation by encouraging wider representation. The group will also develop a plan to expand engagement through additional activities such as drop-in sessions, evening meetings, and participation in local VCFSE events—particularly within the faith sector—by the Children's MARS team. Repeat the training consultation annually at the VCFSE Safeguarding event and consistently gather feedback on the website content to ensure it remains current and relevant.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/2025 Implementing Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework

**Activity** - As part of the implementation of Working Together 2023 and the refresh of the local arrangements, the Children's MARS Board agreed to undertake a gaps analysis to determine whether any further resource is required to further develop and strengthen the local arrangements. Any additional funding required will be discussed and agreed by the Lead Safeguarding Partners. The gaps analysis will also include an assessment of the impact and value for money of funding received. Facilitate the LSPs and DSPs reviewing the funding arrangements to ensure that agencies are contributing enough to support the decision-making infrastructure and statutory requirements of local arrangements.

**Impact & evidence** – Following a review of current funding arrangements, it was determined that existing financial contributions were sufficiently robust to maintain support for the decision-making infrastructure and statutory requirements of the local arrangements, given the monies held in reserve and carried forward this financial year. In addition, the £30,000 reserve for any potential Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) was agreed to continue.

**Future plans** - The Lead Safeguarding Partners and Designated Safeguarding Partners will continue to monitor and review these arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Update on Shine a Light Areas of Focus 2024/2025 Implementing Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework

**Activity** - Significant progress has been made in reviewing and updating the structure and documentation of the former Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) Strategic Group. The group has now been officially renamed to the Harm Outside the Home (HOTH) Strategic Group to better reflect its strategic focus. All references to ROTH have been updated across the cMARS website, associated training materials, and the group's Terms of Reference (TORs). The definition from Working Together 2023 has been thoroughly reviewed. Assurance has been provided—via a visual mapping—that all elements of this definition are represented within the sub-groups reporting to HOTH. The reporting template has been revised to provide stronger assurance and clearer evidence of the work being undertaken across the partnership.

**Impact & evidence** – The updated TORs were circulated and formally signed off by the group. The first meeting of the newly formed HOTH Strategic Group is scheduled for August 2025, during which assurance regarding the sub-groups alignment and reporting will be evidenced.

**Future plans** – The effectiveness of the HOTH Strategic Group and its reporting sub-groups will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Children's MARS Website

**Activity** - Relaunch of Children's MARS Website – linked to shine a light area Working Together 2023.

In 2024/25 we reviewed the existing Children's MARS Website. The website review considered the following;

- Link Audit: All website links were checked; broken links were removed.
- Accessibility Compliance: Ensured alignment with Council accessibility guidelines.
- Policy Update: Incorporated changes from Working Together 2023 guidance.
- User Consultation: Engaged with young people, VCFSE sector, early years, education, early help professionals, and Family Voice Representatives. Gathered feedback on usability, content clarity, and areas for improvement.
- Redesign Objectives: Improve user-friendliness and navigation. Ensure mobile accessibility and clearer language (especially reducing acronyms). Separate content for children/young people and parents/carers. Introduce dropdown menus for easier access to key sections. Add dedicated dropdowns for Early Years and VCFSE sector under the "Professionals" menu.
- Engagement with Young People: Sought input on content representation and design preferences. Prioritised mobile usability and simplified content layout. Incorporated feedback into the final design.
- Implementation: Reorganised site structure and updated documentation. Language revised in line with Working Together 2023. Demonstrated the redesigned site to original consultees before launch.

**Impact & Evidence** - Initial feedback was very positive during the development stage. Previews of the pages relevant to particular groups/individuals were demonstrated for consultation. Post-launch monitoring via Google Analytics (from May 2025) will track usage, reach, and engagement. Over 2025/2026 we have continued to receive positive feedback.

**Future Plans** - Ongoing review, consultation, and monitoring to ensure the site remains relevant and accessible.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Maintaining a strong approach and commitment in respect to collaborative working:

**Activity** – Positive collaboration between local housing service and the local authority in respect of capturing children and young people’s voice - Ongo, the local housing service partnered with North Lincolnshire Council, initially encountered difficulties in effectively incorporating the voice of the child into their audit processes. Recognising the importance of capturing children's perspectives in housing-related decisions, Ongo reached out to the local authority for guidance and support. In response, North Lincolnshire Council invited Ongo to participate in in-house peer mentoring sessions. These sessions focused on best practices for embedding the voice of the child in service evaluations and audits, fostering a collaborative learning environment between the council and Ongo staff.

**Impact & evidence** – An Ongo representative described the experience as “*extremely positive*” highlighting the value of the peer mentoring approach in building confidence and capacity within their team. The sessions not only improved Ongo’s understanding of how to meaningfully engage with children and young people but also strengthened the partnership between the housing service and the local authority. This collaborative effort has laid the groundwork for more inclusive and child-centred auditing practices.

**Future plans** – Building on the success of the initial mentoring sessions, Ongo plans to embed child voice mechanisms into all future audits and service reviews.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Maintaining a strong approach and commitment in respect to collaborative working:

**Activity** – An inspection of North Lincolnshire Probation Service during 2024/25 highlighted areas for improvement in safeguarding.

North Lincolnshire Council responded with targeted training for probation staff. Prior to the inspection, a meeting between safeguarding leads identified delays in child safeguarding checks and led to the creation of the Interface Meeting, which was positively noted by inspectors.

**Impact & evidence** – Training improved practitioners' understanding and confidence in applying safeguarding processes. Practitioners are now more proactive in requesting safety plans and supporting social workers.

The Interface Meeting has streamlined safeguarding checks and enhanced joint decision-making, especially around custody pre-release planning, improving outcomes for families.

**Future plans** - Further collaboration is planned with lead officers to enhance information sharing between probation and social work teams. Training will be revisited periodically to ensure continued learning. Ongoing encouragement for staff to attend relevant training via the CMARS website.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Maintaining a strong approach and commitment in respect to collaborative working:

**Activity** – The Early Help Forums were relaunched in 2024/25 and established across four localities. They provide a strong platform for multi-agency collaboration, incorporating valuable input from the Family Voice Representatives (FVR). These forums offer a space for sharing practical insights and collective learning. Practitioners were consulted on the relaunch of the Early Forums, and their feedback indicated a preference for shifting the forum time from after school to during the school day. They also suggested changes to the meeting length and proposed agenda content. Additionally, there was strong support for co-facilitation with Family Support, to help strengthen support networks across locality areas.

**Impact & evidence** – Feedback from forum participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with all respondents rating the forums 4 or 5 out of 5 for helpfulness. Key takeaways included:

*“We learned about services we weren’t previously aware of.”*

*“It was a valuable opportunity to discuss important issues. Attending future meetings will be beneficial.”*

*“Thank you! Selfishly, it was great to attend something so local – that’s never happened before.”*

**Future plans** - Attendees were also invited to share their views on future priorities for the forums. Their feedback directly informs the planning and focus of upcoming sessions. Looking ahead to 2025/26, implementing national reforms, including the Families First Partnership Programme. A key component of this is the Family Help strand, which presents a timely opportunity to further review and strengthen all aspects of Family Help and Early Help services.

## Section 4: Key Developments and Successes

### Maintaining a strong approach and commitment in respect to collaborative working:

**Activity** – The Family Help School Support pilot was launched to provide early advice and guidance to schools on early help and intervention. The aim was to strengthen multi-agency collaboration, prevent escalation of need, reduce unnecessary referrals to statutory services and support schools in identifying and addressing family needs early. Details of the support offer were shared across all early year's providers, schools, colleges and alternative education providers in early November, introducing the team and outlining the support available.

**Impact & evidence** – Initial feedback was very positive, prompting requests for further information. Subsequent follow up with individual schools began, with the aim of building the network and developing relationships to aide communication. Initial queries centred around requiring further clarification on the scope of support, for example in comparison to the existing Family Help offer.

**Future plans** – To continue to embed the offer.

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Scrutiny and Assurance Framework

The Children's MARS Scrutiny and Assurance Framework was published alongside the Local Arrangements. In addition to scrutiny and assurance activity already referenced in relation to multi-agency case audit practice learning line of sight events, there has been additional activity, including independent scrutiny, leading to local learning, partnership action, changes in practice and outcomes.

A summary of learning and key themes are provided to those involved and disseminated widely through the Children's MARS news updates and 7-minute briefings that are available on the Children's MARS website.

### *Thematic audit – 'Front door' - Single Point of Contact enquiries, contacts and referrals*

This work was carried out by an Independent Scrutiny Officer in October 2024 and forms part of the annual programme of activity scheduled within the scrutiny calendar.

It was an opportunity to seek assurance and consider the application of professional curiosity, consistent decision making, child specific manager oversight and direction, the quality of critical reflection and supervision and the effectiveness of Partnership Integrated Triage (PITSTOP) Meeting. This was achieved by observations of practitioners and managers at the front door and through the facilitation of case discussions demonstrating good practice and areas for development.

The audit findings concluded that there was good tracking of contacts and referrals to avoid drift or delay, consent was sought to share and gather information and decisions to not seek consent were recorded. There were examples of management oversight providing good and timely guidance for practitioners, the PITSTOP meeting was well attended by the key partner agencies and the staff in the front door were committed and passionate about their role and the work.

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Multi-Agency Reflective Practice Forum

The Multi Agency Reflective Practice Forum (MARPF) provides scrutiny and assurance across the safeguarding pathway in order to facilitate organisational and partnership learning and continually improve services and frontline practice. The MARPF is accountable to the Children's MARS Board via the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG). The MARPF meets on a bi-monthly basis and provides a reflective practice forum for managers and practitioners working with families to review the quality of practice and intervention across the partnership. MARPF is in place to ensure that practice across agencies is compliant with Working Together to Safeguard Children and with North Lincolnshire's Helping Children and Families document (threshold document) to consider how effectively multi-agency practice is contributing to the achievement of the Children's MARS arrangements. Driving an even stronger partnership with schools, colleges and local agencies, using learning from the audit work to think innovatively about multi-agency practice and ensure that there is a collective responsibility for safeguarding children and building their resilience.

There have been six MARPF meetings held throughout the year on themes such as children not in education and the impact of lockdown, domestic abuse, parental capacity, Tier 4, mental health and neurodiversity, no access to public funds and use of translation services and the child's voice.

#### Examples of good practice this year included:

- Evidence of multi-agency information sharing and working
- One Family Approach evident in respect of supporting children to remain within their family
- Child's voice was evident
- Early recognition of vulnerabilities to CCE
- Strong evidence of professional curiosity

To complete the learning cycle, examples of good practice and areas for improvement are summarised in a 7-minute briefing tailored for frontline practitioners prepared by the MARPF Chair. On a quarterly basis, key learning, good practice, and strategic recommendations are fed into SPLIG, and a summary is included in the Children's MARS news update.

*I found the whole discussion really interesting to be part of but also it has certainly helped broaden my own skillset around safeguarding and other agencies.*

*School DSL in respect of MARPF*

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Use of Performance Data in Scrutiny and Assurance

Data is presented at each of the sub-groups and the Children's MARS Board, this identifies where support is most needed. It enables early help by flagging risk before it escalates, it tracks the progress by measuring the impact of services and interventions, support collaboration by helping agencies work together effectively and ensures accountability by giving the evidence for decisions and outcomes. During 2024/25 some examples of specific scrutiny work driven by the data are shown below, some may have involved group of relevant partners to come together, other may have involved individual auditing and investigations:

- A deep dive audit in relation to the increase in Local Authority Designated Officer investigations alongside the annual report
- Assurance sought around the increase in persistent absence and Electively Home Educated (EHE) from a safeguarding perspective and within the context of the increase in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Deep dive into the increase in entry to care
- Bespoke report in relation to the incidents in schools and settings where adults have entered with weapons including what happened, how we responded and any learning
- Explore the decrease in early help assessments and front door activity but an increase in child protection pathway
- Bespoke meeting held to determine the next steps in relation to the feedback from young people gathered from Hope Hack and how it links into wider voice and engagement activity
- Lead officer for Independent Review to provide assurance and context in respect of multi-agency attendance at child protection conferences
- Exploration in respect of how education and health information is shared in retrospect when strategy discussions are held out of hours
- Task and finish group to break down the data in respect of Early Help figures to understand this and look at the early help offer

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Annual Safeguarding Audits

Under Section 175 of the Children Act 2004, the safeguarding audit for schools and colleges, overseen by governors, measured compliance with the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and enabled the Children's MARS Board to receive assurance about essential safeguarding practice across all schools, colleges and settings. Since 2021, audits are requested from all schools (including special and independent) in North Lincolnshire, colleges in North Lincolnshire, alternative provision utilised by North Lincolnshire and all out of area provision that North Lincolnshire children attend. In 2024, there was a 100% return from schools and colleges (81 settings) and 93% (29 settings) from alternative provision. The outcomes of the audit highlighted consistently good practice in relation to safeguarding and strong partnership working.

In addition to this all Private, Voluntary, and Independent Childcare Providers are required to complete the safeguarding audit. Previously, nurseries and pre-schools completed the audit annually, while childminders did so every two years. However, to ensure a consistent approach across all provider types, a decision was made for childminders to also complete the audit on an annual basis, aligning them with nurseries and pre-schools. New for this year's audit included a focussed section of domestic abuse and Operation Encompass. There was a 100% return rate for the audit (67 childminders and 64 settings) in 2024. Responses have been individually reviewed to ensure compliance, provide assurance and to determine levels of support and challenge for settings. Policies and procedures continue to be robust and childminders and assistants are competent to address any concerns as they arise. Staff are professionally curious and aim to offer support at the earliest opportunity to ensure children are safeguarded and families are supported. Themes emerging from the analysis inform termly Designated Safeguarding Lead's (DSLs) updates, childminder networks, bespoke safeguarding training for settings and safeguarding updates for the sector as a whole.

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

As part of our commitment to listen, learn, review and adapt and to ensure that we are fulfilling our responsibilities under *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*, our Local Arrangements for 2024/25 have been independently scrutinised.

**To undertake the annual review, the Independent Scrutineer, undertook the following activities:**

- Read and reviewed the key documents and papers of the Children's MARS Board, the SPLIG, the CHaPP, and the EHSLG from April 2024 to March 2025.
- Observed the August 2025 Children's MARS Board on the 11<sup>th</sup> August 2025 as the key mechanism for seeking and providing assurance.
- A critical aspect was meeting with children, young people, and families to seek their views, including the Youth Council, children and young people at a Neighbourhood Youth Club, and the Parent Carer Panel.
- Met with practitioners, managers, and senior leaders in two focused discussions to determine and drill down into their views on the effectiveness of the local arrangements.
- Spent an afternoon with North Lincolnshire's Children's Services Single Point of Contact Team as part of "the right to roam".

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

#### Key findings in respect to 2024/2025 Shine a Light Areas of Focus:

- Transitions to Adulthood: Enhanced pathways and dedicated roles have improved outcomes for vulnerable young people.
- Domestic Abuse: Multi-agency audits, training, and co-located IDVA support have strengthened responses.
- Working Together 2023: Training, website redesign, and strategic alignment have ensured widespread understanding and implementation.
- Performance & Assurance: Audits across schools, early years, and commissioned services show high compliance and proactive safeguarding. The Board uses SMART action planning and data-driven decision-making.
- Practice Frameworks & Workforce Development: Children's MARS employs trauma-informed, strengths-based frameworks and delivers high-quality multi-agency training. Staff report strong supervision, peer support, and professional pride.
- Partnerships & Integration: Cross-board collaboration is evident, with joint development sessions addressing duplication and shared priorities. The VCFSE sector and education are increasingly represented.

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Independent Scrutiny of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements

#### Key findings;

- Strategic Leadership and Governance: The Children's MARS Board demonstrates strong leadership, a collaborative culture, and effective governance. Meetings are well-structured, inclusive, and focused on continuous improvement.
- Implementation of Working Together 2023: Significant progress has been made in embedding the updated statutory guidance, including the launch of a communications plan, revised local arrangements, and alignment with the Families First Partnership Programme.
- Voice of Children & Families: Engagement with children, young people, and families is strong, including Youth Council consultations, Parent Carer Panels, and the recruitment of Young Scrutineers.

Overall, the report identified many strengths in respect to the safeguarding arrangements in North Lincolnshire.

***'North Lincolnshire's Children's MARS arrangements reflect a mature, inclusive, and responsive safeguarding partnership. The Board's commitment to continuous improvement, co-production, and evidence-informed practice is evident across strategic and operational levels, with measurable impact on outcomes for children and families'***

The report did identify some areas for consideration as part of the ongoing development of the safeguarding arrangements, and these will be built into the 2025/2026 Delivery Plan.

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews – Local Reviews

During 2024/25 two serious incident notifications were received that progressed to a local Rapid Review. In North Lincolnshire these had been the first serious incident notifications that had progressed to the Rapid Review stage for a significant period of time. In both cases the decision made was that a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review was not required. The Rapid Reviews had presented robust overviews, where learning, as well as key strengths, had been fully captured.

As part of the learning the Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) process within North Lincolnshire was reviewed and strengthened including a 'Learning from Rapid Reviews' training added to the Children's MARS Training Programme and delivered by Children's MARS team. A 'Spotlight' document for frontline practitioners was produced.

We have also continued to annually seek assurance through the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG) that partner agencies and key relevant agencies:

- have internal processes in place for identifying potential serious child safeguarding cases
- are aware of the criteria for a serious child safeguarding case and how to notify the safeguarding partners for them to consider whether the criteria are met
- have internal processes in place and are aware of/know how to request that the safeguarding partners or their representatives consider undertaking a child safeguarding practice review if the criteria are not met, yet the case may raise issues of importance to the local area and there has been the identification of good practice, poor practice or 'near miss' events
- have or have not discussed and considered one or more potential serious child safeguarding cases yet concluded that they do not meet the criteria for notification

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Independent Scrutiny

Report for the Children's MARS Board on serious cases which were considered within Children's Social Work Services, but not referred to the Head of Service/ Safeguarding Partners between April 2024 - March 2025

Independent Scrutiny of the identification and notification process for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews has been in place since 2020, following the publication of our Local Arrangements. This forms part of the Children's MARS Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, and it aligns with the Children and Families Assurance Learning and Development Framework.

The annual assurance process, coordinated by the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group, confirms that all serious cases have been correctly identified and notified, assuring the Children's MARS Board of compliance.

The outcome of the Independent Scrutiny 2024/2025 was as follows:

***'After reviewing the information and rationale for the decision not to notify regarding the two cases that were subjected to a Serious Child Safeguarding Case Consideration Meeting. I believe that the decision-making was robust and that the cases did not meet the criteria for submission to the Head of Service/safeguarding partners'.***

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews – National Reviews

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published their report *The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Annual Report 2023/24 December 2024*, their 5th annual report. Work that has been undertaken to disseminate the findings via our subgroups and consider the relevance of the cross-cutting issues identified in the report and identify where and how local practice needs to develop or improve.

Chairs and leads were tasked to take the themes within their retrospective groups to give group consideration and provide assurance that current practice have this embedded. Specifically work will take place in 2025/26 around mental health and extra familial harm.

In March 2025 the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published the report *“It’s Silent”: Race, racism and safeguarding children, Panel Briefing 4* and the Children’s MARS presented it to the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG). The members recommend that the partnership carefully evaluate current work in this area and identify what further development is needed to address and respond to issues of race, racism and racial bias. The group discussed the awareness-raising recommendations from the report to be reviewed in the context of current work and embedded into existing practice. Work is ongoing to consider alternative approaches needed to address the challenges to engagement and raise awareness. The report continues to be part of the agenda for SPLIG and will to be progressed at future meetings.

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews – National Reviews

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published their report ***“I wanted them all to notice”: Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment*** in November 2024. Children’s MARS developed a tailored briefing, which was presented across several sub-groups and the schools Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum in February 2025, to summarise key points. To support this, In March 2025, Children’s MARS established a task and finish group to review the recommendations in detail and assign actions based on North Lincolnshire’s current position.

In addition to this North Lincolnshire were able to secure a funded position with the NSPCC to complete the Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Snapshot Tool to explore the local need in respect of child sexual abuse and to understand the gaps and opportunities across the breadth of their local offer. Children’s MARS brought together partners to undertake the NSPCC CSA snapshot session on the 10th March 2025 and after dissemination of an additional survey we were able to capture information from a good range of partners and agencies within the consultation. Bringing together professionals from the police, health services, local authorities, education, and other sectors to discuss the sensitive topic of child sexual abuse proved to be both valuable and necessary. The multi-agency collaboration supported constructive dialogue, particularly when addressing complex and challenging issues. The session created a respectful environment that encouraged open discussion and shared learning.

The NSPCC submitted the report at the beginning of June 2025, which included:

- A summary of the current local CSA strategy and activities
- Summary narratives and RAG rating for each of the 5 areas and an overall score
- Recommendations for future planning and delivery

The task and finish group will continue its work, and once the NSPCC report is received, any recommendations will be integrated into the group’s ongoing activities. Child sexual abuse will be a key area of focus for Children’s MARS in 2025/26, with further work planned to address this priority.

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

#### Family Voice Representatives

##### **Activity** - The Family Voice Conversations

Family Voice Representatives (FVR) are central to delivery of voice and engagement activity in North Lincolnshire. They bring their lived experiences and expertise to their roles, better enabling families to have a voice and making sure that our information, support and offer for children, young people and families are co-produced, leading to better outcomes. Their role is to listen, support and represent parents and carers' voices to improve outcomes for children and their families.

A review of the role of the FVR took place in 2024 and a new project was initiated to strengthen the voice of children and young people who have received support through our integrated children and families offer. The project invited families to take part in a facilitated discussion with a FVR to explore their opinions and experiences of the support and intervention that they had received.

The questionnaire was coproduced with a local Family Hub Parent Carer Panel and the discussions asked core questions that support families to share their story with a focus on:

1. What was important
2. What worked for them and what made it possible
3. What could the best experience look/feel like and how can we get there

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

#### Family Voice Representatives

The approach is designed to gain a deeper insight into lived experiences of families, supporting systematic evaluation of quality and informing future delivery. The methodology is built around the One Family Approach Practice Model and other recognised engagement mechanisms, taking a strengths based / solution focused approach to learning, planning and improvement activity.

At the launch of the conversations it was recognised that the Family Hubs staff were using similar feedback tools and therefore a joint approach was established. A set of questions were created with help from local parents and these questions help families tell their stories in a meaningful way. The approach focuses on strengths and finding solutions.

**Impact & evidence** – Themes and next steps are generated from these conversations and disseminated to the relevant parties. The evaluation report recognised that North Lincolnshire Family hubs are delivering valued services that helps parents feel supported, understood and empowered.

**Future plans** – Strengthening promotion of the offer including NL Family web app and coproduction with families will support continued reach.

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

#### Family Voice Representatives

##### **Voice Activity**

The Family Voice Representative (FVR) roles are dedicated to supporting and challenging local multi agency arrangements including wider assurance functions. Some of the activities and development work the Family Voice Reps were involved in during 2024/25 are shown below:

##### ***Training & Presentations***

- Attended 6-week Parent-Led Advocacy Training
- Guest speakers on Early Help training
- Guest speaker at NHS SEND Transitions presentation
- Lived experience and co-production presentation to Family Help staff
- Compere & guest speakers at CMARS Annual Safeguarding Conference

##### ***Recruitment & Strategic Involvement***

- Participated in recruitment panels for Heads of Service, Family Hubs, and Family Support posts
- Attendance/representation at CYPP, Hub Huddles, and Early Help Strategic Leads Group

### Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

#### Family Voice Representatives

##### ***Networking & Voice Contribution representation at***

- Family Hubs Parent Carer Panel
- Carers' Support Network meetings
- SEND Parent Carer Conference
- Fostering and SGO/Adoption Support Groups
- Virtual School Conference
- NHS Humber Health Partnership Transition Conference
- “Reforming Our Local SEND Approach” Round Table Event
- Carers in Partnership Meeting
- SEND Transition Event
- With Me in Mind coffee morning to support family voice and youth forum engagement
- NHS Patient Experience Group: discussions on lived experience, complaints, and service improvements
- Local Offer Group: contributed to timeline development from diagnosis to age 25

##### ***Consultation & Feedback***

- Undertook themed audits for evidence of family voice in Early Help assessments
- Contributed to NHS questionnaire design for reasonable adjustments in appointment letters
- Recorded feedback via Our Family Voice Conversations survey
- Family Help feedback gathered through Family Hub sessions and follow-up calls

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Voice and Stakeholder Engagement

#### ***The Staying Safe Conference***

To celebrate the work of the peer mentors/buddies in school, Children's MARS along with Education colleagues held the Stay Safe Conference. The event was held over two days in February 2025 and consisted of a number of workshops designed to upskill students from Primary and Secondary Schools across North Lincolnshire. Over 210 students attended across 16 schools and undertook workshops including:

- Child Exploitation including Knife Crime
- DELTA substance misuse
- First Aid
- Living in the Digital Age
- The Blue Door
- Resilience and Positive Thinking
- Keeping Going resources to keep active

***"I've learnt about what a good relationship looks like and how to be safe in the digital world. I also learnt about how to be resilient"***

***"I learnt about grooming and how to be safe"***

***"I learnt about where to get help from exploitation and drug abuse"***

***[children and young people who attended the Conference]***

Following the event, peer mentors will share their learning with fellow students within their schools. The School Improvement Team will then follow up to assess the impact of the event and the learning on the school environment

#### ***Feedback***

Of the school staff that completed the feedback form, the conference was rated 8.6/10 and of the young people that completed the children's feedback form the conference rated the event 8.9/10.

# Section 5: Learning and Improvement

## Voice and stakeholder Engagement – Children’s MARS Conference 2024

The Children’s MARS Conference was held in November 2024 at the Baths Hall over 200 people attended from across the partnership. The event focus was on ‘us’ as a place and how we work well together as a partnership across North Lincolnshire. The conference was opened with welcome speeches from Helen Davis, Place Nurse Director for North Lincolnshire’s Health & Care Partnership, Rachel Smith, Director of Children & Families, North Lincolnshire Council and Gary Foster, T/Superintendent, Neighbourhood & Partnerships, Southbank Division.

### Keynote – ‘This is us’ setting the scene for our place, North Lincolnshire

We welcomed North Lincolnshire’s Senior Public Health Manager, Steve Piper, to the stage. Steve shared an overview of key data and intelligence in respect to North Lincolnshire. The highlight of Steve’s discussion was what does this data and intelligence mean to partners and how can this information inform practice, policy and ensure consistent developments.



### Keynote – Working Together 2023 Key features and implications for practice Chapters 1 and Chapters 3

Robin Harper-Coulson, Independent Scrutiny Officer (ISO) was also welcomed to the stage and shared some key messages from the Working Together 2023 guidance.

*For me the top takeaways are looking at the wider picture and the whole family, and working together and sharing information appropriately*



### Other events of the day included

Tabletop discussions to reflect on what working well together meant to attendees and what responsibilities they held in respect to working well together.

A video was shared of voices throughout North Lincolnshire discussing what working well together means to them.

‘What Voice Tells us’ presentation from Helen Blaydes, One Family Approach & Supporting Families Policy Manager, Gemma Bryan & Jules Whall our Family Voice Representatives.

Robin Harper-Coulson (ISO) discussed reflections from the annual scrutiny of local safeguarding arrangements.

There were presentations from the Head of Services responsible for the Adult Safeguarding Board, the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board the Community Safety Partnership Board, the Youth Justice Partnership Board and the Children’s MARS Board.

Closing remarks were given by Councillor Julie Reed, Cabinet members for Children & Families.

*Well done to all involved, the conference was great giving a good insight to the partnership work taking place within North Lincs and reinforcing areas of focus. It was great to network with other attendees.*

*That North Lincs schools are all working hard to safeguard children. CMARS are supporting organisations across North Lincs to provide excellent resources and North Lincs are ahead of the game.*

*Thank you for a jam-packed conference, very informative and excellent speakers*

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Communications

There is a commitment to communicating across the safeguarding partner organisations and other agencies.

The Children's MARS website is central to our communications strategy and during 2024/25 was significantly strengthened to improve accessibility and navigation. The content for children and young people was split from the parent/carer section and drop-down menus applied for easier access to key sections. New sections for the Early Years and Voluntary, Charity, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector were established under the 'professional' menu.

Children's MARS news updates continued to be used to communicate information and messages relating to the Local Arrangements to key stakeholders. Messages also continued to be shared through our social media channel @SafeNorthLincs.

Regular email communications via the Children's MARS communications list alert practitioners to what is new and available both locally and nationally. This has been an important mechanism to increase the reach of key messages across the partnership and there continues to be high levels of engagement with the information circulated. There are further opportunities to target communications i.e., with the VCFSE sector and the education DSLs arena, to raise awareness of and engagement in our Local Arrangements.

#### ***Feedback received***

***'cMARS communications are particularly strong and embedded into staff induction processes, supporting consistent learning'***

# Section 5: Learning and Improvement

## Communications

### *Some examples of communication activity include:*

- Promotion of new training added to the Training Programme during 2024/25 in respect of Private Fostering, Preparing and report writing for CP conferences, National Referral Mechanism, Managing Allegations - The Role of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for School Leaders
- North Lincolnshire Dangerous Dogs & Safeguarding Policy
- Light up the night event for sexual abuse awareness week
- Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse free webinars
- Domestic Abuse Strategy Consultation Survey disseminated on behalf of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board
- Briefing on Joint Targeted Area Inspection on Serious Youth Violence published report
- Dissemination of a new guide from the UK Safer Internet Centre, offering support and guidance, for professional, young people and parents, on how to respond to incidents and concerns where young people are victims of sextortion
- An NSPCC news story on Sexual Extortion or 'Sextortion'
- High Alert notification regarding Slings and Breast Feeding
- Professional insight document into C&YP subject to Domestic Abuse, Language document in respect of working with children and young people at risk or subject to exploitation and Domestic Abuse Commissioners Summary Report
- Crimestoppers spotlight campaign on Female Genital Mutilation
- Webinars shared by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

### *Impact:*

- There is a greater awareness across the partnership of the work of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the learning from their reports and reviews
- The sign up to the communications lists has increased throughout 2024/25 indicating an increased reach
- The website enhancements allow for improved accessibility and user experience, more so for those using a mobile devices
- Key messages and regular updates via communications ensures enhanced consistent awareness
- Access to evidence-based practice and national learning to improve to support the continual professional development of the workforce within the partnership
- It ensure professionals are aware of local policy changes and can implement them effectively

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Multi-Agency Education and Training

The Children's MARS Education and Training Programme is underpinned by a model of continuous development and seeks to develop the core competencies of the children and family's workforce.

Children's MARS education and training has continued to be offered both virtually and face to face. The quarterly training evaluation reports presented to the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG) have highlighted that there has been an overall improvement on practitioners' confidence in the subject matter after all Children's MARS training courses. Based on feedback and evaluation, training remained of a high quality, delivered by knowledgeable and engaging trainers with examples of positive impacts on practice such as enhanced knowledge and skills to engage, assess, plan and work directly with children, young people and families.

#### ***New in 2024/25 – 4-year training analysis was completed and new interface meeting***

In December 2024 Children's MARS undertook an analysis of the last 4 years of training provided by the Children's MARS arrangements. The analysis allowed us to understand the total take up across each year and for each individual course subject. Following this work we have established a monthly meeting with the Children's Workforce Training and Development officers to coordinate courses which are provided via the workforce training plan and the cMARS training plan. This has allowed us to amalgamate a small number of courses where attendance is lower for either the Children's MARS or workforce, thus creating a more beneficial training experience for the individuals and the training facilitator. This newly established interface meeting allows us to discuss emerging training requirements of the partnership and of the children's workforce to coordinate and plan training accordingly. Where these requirements have aligned, we can use the opportunity to combine the arrangements and where applicable, the funding of the training. There have been, and will continue to be, opportunities where the workforce training can offer spaces to bespoke courses for the partnership, that we would not previously have had.

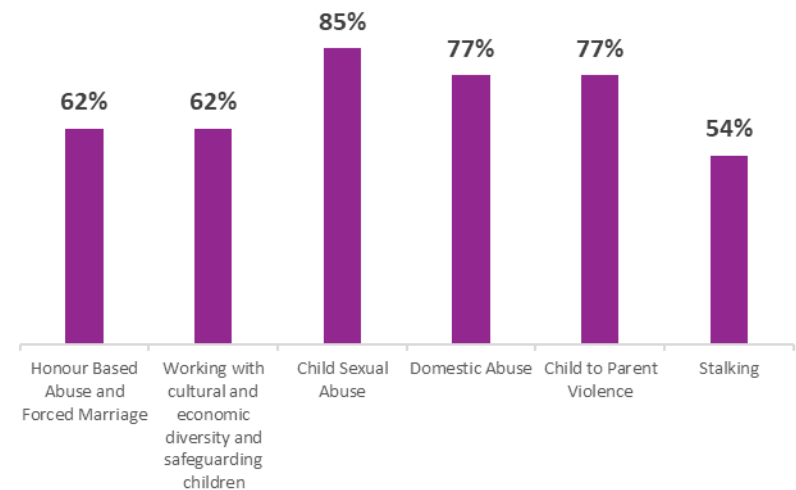
## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Multi-Agency Education and Training

#### ***New in 2024/25 – Training consultation to inform the 2025/26 Training Programme***

In addition to the training analysis, in January 2025, Children’s MARS disseminated a training consultation to the partnership to help inform the 2025/26 Training Programme offer. This consultation directly inputted into the plan which was presented to the Board for sign off in March 2025. To extend the consultation further the Children’s MARS were able to consult directly with colleagues from the VCFSE sector when attending the ‘Community VISION & Partners Safeguarding Event for North Lincolnshire’.

The chart opposite shows the top 6 courses chosen, all of which will feature on the 2025/26 Training Programme.



## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Multi-Agency Education and Training

Child Protection training has continued to be offered as a priority course throughout the year and is well attended and in high demand. A number of bespoke courses were commissioned from national experts in 2024/25 including Domestic Homicide which had the highest attendance of all the commissioned courses.

#### ***Key highlights include:***

- 82 practitioners trained in Child Protection
- 76 participants attended the Domestic Homicide Training
- 71 attendees at the bespoke Working Together Training facilitated by our Independent Scrutiny Officer
- 397 eWorkbooks completed during the year, 155 on the theme of Safeguarding Children Awareness
- Additional bespoke safeguarding training was provided for early years settings and childminders for 169 practitioners
- Bespoke Child Protection Training was provided at a local Police station and for the Probation Service
- Bespoke Managing Allegations Against People Who Work with Children training provided by the North Lincolnshire Local Authority Designated Officer to 35 Early Years professionals, 4 Foster carers, 13 School Governors, 8 RDaSH professionals and 123 Children's workforce staff
- 230 practitioners attended the Annual Children's MARS Conference
- 210 children and young people attended the Stay Safe Conference
- 67 practitioners attended the newly relaunched Early Help Forums across 4 localities
- 7 minute briefings, special edition newsletters and briefings have been used to communicate learning to frontline practitioners
- Mock conferences and reviews have been conducted to support learning and practice development

## Section 5: Learning and Improvement

### Multi-Agency Education and Training

#### ***Feedback from practitioners:***

An electronic feedback survey is distributed after each training course delivered as part of the Children's MARS Education and Training Programme. Practitioners have provided the examples below of how training has improved their knowledge and will impact on their practice:

- ***This course gave me a valuable insight into the topic, the conversations in the room was also really helpful, and the resources for me to investigate after session will help me in placement***
- ***The training was essential to my role, particularly working with vulnerable families, although it also gave me a better understanding that HOTH can happen to any child, and it everyone's responsibility to be aware of the dangers to children. It made me think of families with older siblings and being more aware of family circumstances***
- ***It has given me tools to use with children and young people to examine how they identify culturally, and have the discussion about what is important to them***
- ***It was a good reminder of checking my unconscious bias when dealing with all diverse cases***
- ***Understanding the importance of parent/children's voice***
- ***Increased knowledge of various risks & safeguarding issues linked with HOTH. Useable resources, especially the video clips which can be used with colleagues, staff, parents & children***
- ***I think this training has the ability to transform the way that we work with domestic abuse within Family Support. I am passionate about taking what we have learnt and developing this further.***
- ***I will be more knowledgeable in how to approach and how to ask the right questions to someone who I may believe to be involved in HBV or FM. I feel I am also more trained in how to spot signs of it.***
- ***It has sparked the question of how we as police link in with seldom listened to groups to ensure they are supported and crimes recorded***

## Section 6: Future Priorities

### Shine a Light Areas of Focus for 2025/26

In order to define our **Shine a Light** areas of focus for 2025/26, we have taken account of emerging national themes, outcomes of research, local learning, performance data and analysis, practice wisdom, voice and experiences. Key areas of influence include:

- An ongoing need to focus on developing our partnership approach to transitions to adulthood in its widest sense
- A need to continue to enhance our interface with and contributions to the Domestic Abuse Strategy and governance arrangements, through a specific focus on domestic abuse and the impact on children

As such, our Shine a Light areas of focus for 2025/26 are as follows:

'Shine a Light' Areas of Focus	Anticipated Partnership Action and System Change
Further develop the multi- agency approach to <b>transitions to adulthood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a practice learning line of sight event, incorporating the Family Voice Representatives.</li> <li>• Utilise the Family Voice Representatives to discuss transitions for SEND children and young people and their families</li> </ul>
Continue to develop our understanding of and our multi agency response to <b>domestic abuse</b> and the impact on children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake further audit work related to domestic abuse and the impact on children as part of the partnership preparation for a potential Joint Targeted Area Inspection</li> <li>• Coproduce a local offer document to clearly outline the support, services, and pathways available for individuals affected by domestic abuse</li> <li>• Review and update the domestic abuse toolkit</li> <li>• Produce a domestic abuse spotlight resource for professionals</li> </ul>
Ensure <b>Voice</b> of children, young people and families is heard, valued, and influential in shaping outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once recruited, ensure the work of the Young Scrutineers is focussed across all shine a light areas</li> <li>• Continue to enhance the role of the Family Voice Representatives, particularly with the wider partners</li> </ul>

## Section 6: Future Priorities

### Shine a Light Areas of Focus for 2025/26

'Shine a Light' Areas of Focus	Anticipated Partnership Action and System Change
Enhance detection and strengthen professional awareness of <b>Neglect</b> within the partnership and wider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coproduce the Neglect Strategy for North Lincolnshire to provide a coordinated, multi-agency approach to identifying, preventing, and responding to child neglect</li> <li>• Review and update the neglect toolkit</li> <li>• Undertake multi-agency audit work in respect of neglect</li> </ul>
Build awareness and resilience in respect of <b>Child Sexual Abuse</b> , and strengthen the response pathway for practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a practice learning line of sight event as part of the partnership preparation for a potential Joint Targeted Area Inspection</li> <li>• Embed the learning from the National Panel review into Child Sexual Abuse</li> <li>• Consider any potential recommendations from the NSPCC snapshot report and embed into the work of the task and finish group</li> <li>• Produce a child sexual abuse spotlight resource for professionals</li> <li>• Facilitate a child sexual abuse roadshow event alongside the CSA Centre of Expertise</li> </ul>

As well as our specific 'shine a light' areas of focus, the Children's MARS Board adopts a 'right to roam' approach and as such, will maintain a line of sight across the early help and safeguarding pathway in order to seek assurance, challenge, shape and influence partnership action and system change, some of which are the responsibility of other partnership and planning frameworks. As part of this, to orientate 'line of sight' activity, the Children's MARS Board will take account of local learning, performance, practice wisdom and voice and experiences on wider emerging need and harm.

## Section 6: Future Priorities

### Development Plan

As safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, we will continue to listen, learn, review and adapt in order to ensure our Local Arrangements best meet the needs of the children, young people and families in North Lincolnshire, so they are resilient and safeguarded to enable them to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities.

As well as the actions associated with the ‘shine a light’ areas of focus, our Local Arrangements are underpinned by a strategic development plan, which is built around the following areas:

- Actions carried forward from the previous development plan, where progress has been made, but where a further focus is required
- Key actions pertaining the delegated safeguarding partner’s portfolio areas
- Considerations from the Independent Scrutiny Review of the Children’s MARS Local Arrangements

Areas	Anticipated Partnership Action and System Change
Shine a Light Area of Focus 2024/25  <i>Carry forward</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOTH Strategy 2025 – 2028 is being presented to the HOTH Strategic Group August 2025 and then to the cMARS Board.</li> </ul>
Scrutiny and Assurance  <i>Carry forward</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with the changes to Working Together 2023 and the Shine a Light ambition to improve the interface and relationships with the voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE). The Children’s MARS Board should consider that they have a member and deputy of the voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) also represented at Children’s MARS strategic discussions- significant work has been undertaken but we recognise that there is still more to do in ensuring representation in the actual subgroups and this will be achieved 2025/2026</li> <li>• The Children’s MARS Board should consider the reflections from schools that further training and development are required to support children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse or violence- significant work has already taken place but we recognise there is more work to do and Domestic Abuse is an ongoing Shine a Light Area for 2025/26</li> </ul>

## Section 6: Future Priorities

Areas	Anticipated Partnership Action and System Change
Governance  <i>Portfolio area</i>	2025/2026 we will review the partnership and governance structure which includes the subgroups. Alongside, this we will review memberships and the reporting structure. The governance documents, available on the cMARS website will be updated in line with this. To ensure the governance is robust and that members have a strong understanding of local performance we are also reviewing the performance reporting structure into the local arrangements.
Funding  <i>Portfolio area</i>	A review of the funding arrangements will take place to ensure that funding contributions are fair and equitable. We will continue to deploy funding and capacity in such a way as to ensure our safeguarding arrangements remain proactive and forward thinking.
Scrutiny and Assurance including Independent Scrutiny  <i>Portfolio area</i>	2025/2026 we will further develop the scrutiny and assurance framework which will include a calendar of planned scrutiny work. This will include an enhanced focus on the involvement of children and families in the scrutiny and assurance processes.
Responding to National Reforms  <i>Portfolio area</i>	<p>We have already reviewed arrangements to ensure that Delegated Safeguarding Partners are cited in respect to the Families First Partnership Programme and that there is the governance in place to ensure that they have a key decision-making role in respect to future developments.</p> <p>Alongside the above we will continue to respond to all National Reforms, local and national drivers including the National Safeguarding Panel. The delivery plan will be kept under review and adapted as required.</p>

## Section 6: Future Priorities

Portfolio Areas	Anticipated Partnership Action and System Change
<p>Multi-agency education and training</p> <p><i>Portfolio area</i></p>	<p>We will review the current system in respect to how we understand the impact of the training provided and how we use our understanding of this to ascertain future training needs.</p> <p>We will ensure that training remains aligned to the cMARS identified priorities.</p>
<p>Communication and Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p><i>Portfolio area</i></p>	<p>We will review and update the Communications Strategy to ensure that the Families First Partnership Programme is covered within the strategy with planned events to ensure stakeholders are full involved in discussions and developments to ensure co-production and co-design.</p>
<p>Review of local safeguarding arrangements</p> <p><i>Considerations from the Independent Scrutiny Review of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements</i></p>	<p>The 2024/2025 Annual Review of local safeguarding arrangements by the Independent Scrutineer Review has taken place and a report completed. The report identified many strengths across the safeguarding system and alongside this noted some considerations with regards to further developing safeguarding practice. We will progress these considerations over 2025/2026. Updates will be provided to the Children's MARS Board, within the specific delivery plan.</p>

## Section 7: Glossary

A	<p><b>Alternative provision (AP)</b> is when a child is provided with an alternative to mainstream schooling</p>
	<p><b>Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR)</b> may be undertaken following identification and agreement that a case meets the criteria of a serious child safeguarding case. It is for the safeguarding partners to determine whether the criteria are met and whether a local child safeguarding practice review is appropriate taking into account that the overall purpose of a review is to identify improvements to practice. In some cases where the definition of a serious child safeguarding case is not met yet there may be issues of importance to the local area, the safeguarding partners may choose to undertake a local child safeguarding practice review</p>
C	<p>The <b>Channel Panel</b> is part of the UK Government's Prevent strategy, which aims to safeguard individuals from being drawn into terrorism. It is a multi-agency process designed to support people identified as vulnerable to radicalisation</p> <p>The <b>Children's Help and Protection Pathway Group (CHaPP)</b> will oversee and seek assurance in relation to multi-agency working across the 'safeguarding pathway' including the interface between early help services and statutory safeguarding processes.</p> <p><b>Contextual Safeguarding</b> is an approach to safeguarding that recognises that young people can be vulnerable to harm in a wide range of social environments, not just within their family or home.</p>
	<p><b>Designated Safeguarding Partner (DSP)</b> are responsible for working with other agencies to ensure safeguarding policies and practices are followed across organisation</p>
D	<p><b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b> are the main point of contact in a school or organisation for safeguarding concerns, responsible for managing and responding to child protection issues</p> <p>The <b>DELTA</b> Substance Misuse Service is a community-based support service for children and young people aged up to 19 in North Lincolnshire</p>
E	<p><b>Early Help Strategic Leaders Group (EHSLG)</b> the overall aim of the EHSLG is to work to better understand and implement the collective impact of early help</p> <p><b>Early Help, early intervention and early help offer</b> are forms of support aimed at improving outcomes for children or preventing escalating need or risk</p> <p>An <b>Early Help Forum</b> is a local multi-agency meeting where professionals come together to discuss early help</p> <p><b>Electively Home Educated</b> means a parent or guardian chooses to educate their child at home instead of sending them to school full-time</p>

# Glossary

F

**Family Voice Representatives** are parents or carers who represent the views of families to help shape local services and ensure they reflect real-life experiences

**Family Hubs** are free spaces that offer advice, help and sessions to support families within North Lincolnshire

**Family Hub Parent Carer Panel** are a group of parents and carers who work with Family Hubs to co-design and improve services, ensuring they meet the needs of local families

The **Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme** is a UK government initiative aimed at reforming children's social care by creating a more joined-up, family-focused system of support

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)** refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons

H

**The Harm Outside the Home Strategic Group** brings together strategic and lead officers with responsibilities for protecting children who may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families

**The Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) panel** role and function of the Panel is to act as a steering group, and the referral and allocation route for specialist assessment and intervention, a source of knowledge, expertise and support for the practitioner team and providing senior management oversight of the HSB work

**Hope Hack** is a youth-led event designed to give young people a voice and empower them to create solutions to social challenges in their communities

I

**Integrated Multi-Agency Partnership (IMAP)** is a partnership of co-located social work, police, health and education practitioners and supervisors who take contacts and referrals on children where there are safeguarding or protection concerns. They share and analyse information to inform decisions regarding whether a child is in need or in need of protection

**Independent Scrutiny Officer (ISO)** is a role established under UK safeguarding frameworks to provide **objective oversight and challenge** of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and/or adults

J

**JTAI** stands for Joint Targeted Area Inspection

# Glossary

L

A **Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP)** is one of the three statutory safeguarding partners defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) in England

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** the LADO is responsible for managing and overseeing allegations made against adults who work with children

M

**Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Triage** is a partnership group who come together to discuss which children and young people who are experiencing and/or at risk of child sexual or criminal exploitation will be presented to the MACE meeting

**Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Meeting** is a partnership group who work together to improve outcomes for children and young people who are experiencing and/or at risk of child sexual or criminal exploitation

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** is an agreement outlined in a formal document

**Multi Agency Reflective Practice Forum (MARPF)** is a meeting that provides multi-agency reflective oversight regarding the quality assurance of practice at key points along the safeguarding pathway

N

**NL Family** is a digital and community-based initiative in North Lincolnshire designed to support families by providing accessible, inclusive, and free services through a network of Family Hubs and an easy-to-use mobile app

**The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)** is a British child protection charity

O

**The One Family Approach (OFA)** aims to create a system that works for all children, young people and families in North Lincolnshire

**Organised Crime Group (OCG)** A group of individuals who work together on a continuing basis to plan and commit serious crimes for profit or gain

P

**Partnership Integrated Triage (PITSTOP) Meeting** is a multi-agency daily triage which considers police information and identifies potential levels of need at the earliest level including any action required

R

A **Rapid Review** is undertaken when the safeguarding partners have agreed that the criteria for a serious child safeguarding case have been met. The Rapid Review enables facts to be gathered, any immediate action to ensure children's safety to be taken and considers the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Rapid Review assists the safeguarding partners to decide what steps they should take next, including whether or not to undertake a local child safeguarding practice review

# Glossary

**@SafeNorthLincs** is a partnership social media presence joint between the Children's MARS Board, Local Safeguarding Adults Board and the Community Safety Partnership

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** is used to describe a child or young person who has a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support

**Single Point of Contact (SPOC)** is the 'front door' of children's social care in North Lincolnshire where help, advice and guidance is provided to families and professionals

**Shine a Light Area of Focus** are the Children's MARS Board's areas of priority focus

S

**Seven Minute Briefing**, a 7-minute briefing is a concise, focused learning tool used widely in safeguarding and local government settings to convey key learning or messages

**Serious Incident Notification (SIN)** any organisation working with children should inform the safeguarding partners of any incident they think that should be considered for a child safeguarding practice review, there is a specified form which once submitted is considered a Serious Incident Notification

**The Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG)** is responsible for co-ordinating the outcomes of scrutiny and assurance activity that are multi-agency in nature

**Sextortion** is a type of online blackmail. It's when criminals threaten to share sexual pictures, videos, or information about you unless you pay money or do something else you don't want to

**Terms of Reference (TOR)** define the purpose and structures of a project, committee, meeting, negotiation, or any similar collection of people who have agreed to work together to accomplish a shared goal

T

**Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG)** plays a key role in law enforcement by making tactical decisions based on current intelligence, crime trends, and community needs and is typically part of a broader tasking and coordination process used by police forces to ensure that operations are intelligence-led and responsive to emerging threats

V

**Vulnerability Hub** provides a consistent, force-wide approach to managing vulnerability through a centralised model. It brings together key areas including Vulnerable Children, Vulnerable Adults, Domestic Abuse, Contextual Safeguarding, Early Help, and locality-based problem solving to reduce future demand

**VCFSE Voluntary, charity, social enterprise, faith (VCFSE)** and private sector organisations and agencies play an important role in safeguarding children through the services they deliver

# Glossary

W	<b>Working Together 2023 (WTG23)</b> The government published the revised statutory guidance – Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) in December 2023. The guidance replaces Working Together (2018) and applies to all organisations and professionals who work with children and young people
Y	The <b>Youth Justice Partnership (YJP)</b> is North Lincolnshire’s Youth Offending Team

# Contact and Follow Us:



**@safeNorthLincs**



**mars@northlincs.gov.uk**



**www.northlincscmars.co.uk**



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Lincolnshire  
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