

Welcome

to the 2025-2026 Children & Young People's Annual Report for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership

The voice of children and young people
making a difference!



Help and Protection: What We Need to Feel Safe!



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership

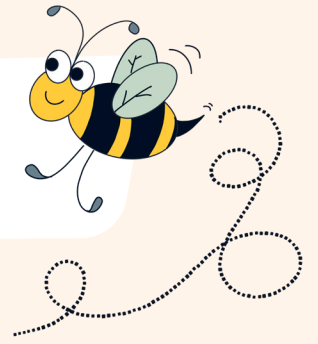


flourish

Notes



Contents



About Us	4
Governance: Some new faces!	6
Education as the fourth partner	7
Key Messages	8
What partners say about safeguarding arrangements	10
Telling our story with data	11
Inspection and Scrutiny	14
Section11: Safeguarding self assessment	16
The NSCP Priorities & Projects	17
Learning & Training	21
In conclusion	24
Colouring, Puzzles & Quizzes	26



Introduction: About Us!

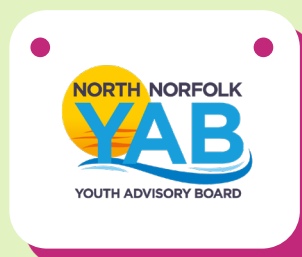
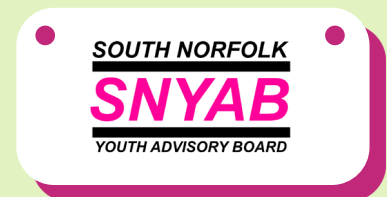
Welcome to the children and young people's annual report for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). Young people with a wide range of experience and different backgrounds worked with members of the NSCP Business Unit, and Participation Officers to co-produce this report. We are happy to share our understanding and experience of safeguarding so we can help the partners appreciate what it's like to be child or young person growing up in Norfolk today.

This version of the annual report serves as an executive summary with our thoughts and experiences highlighting what we think needs to happen to keep us safe. Professionals should also see the full report for more detail on the NSCP's achievements and challenges in 2025-26.

There are a wide range of groups for children and young people in Norfolk. This year we had volunteers from Youth Advisory Boards, Dragons and the Youth Parliament involved in writing this report.

Youth Advisory Boards

Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) are led by local young people called young commissioners, aged 11-19 and up to 25 with SEND. YABs bring together young people, councils, political members and other professionals working with young people such as the police, health, education and the voluntary sector. We have 7 YABs to ensure local issues are addressed in each area, based on the feedback from young people who live locally.



Norfolk Participation Groups

Norfolk Youth Parliament

Norfolk Youth Parliament helps young people aged 11 – 18 have a voice on the future of Norfolk. Members of Youth Parliament (MYP) represent the young people in their local areas, sharing their views on a local, regional and national level and speaking to decision makers in Norfolk about the issues that matter to children. MYPs are elected every two years and are voted in through a democratic process.



Youth Parliament
MAKING OUR MARK

Norfolk Dragons



The DRAGONS are an advocacy and participation group of young people aged 13 – 25 yrs with SEND and/or neurologically diverse/developmental differences. The role of the DRAGONS is to express their views and be the voice of this diverse group, providing important

feedback on the services and provision that are currently in use and planned for the future.



Governance: Some new faces!

Arrangements for keeping children safe are included in a local plan for Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA). This was last updated in December 2025. The named partners in this are: the Local Authority (Norfolk Children's Services), Police and Health. They work with lots of different partners, but this year there has been a big change in the people leading this work particularly in health. It's always sad to say goodbye to people, but we have an amazing leadership team who continue to work really well together and with new leaders come new ideas and energy.



Tom McCabe



Sara Tough OBE



Ed Garratt



Paul Sanford

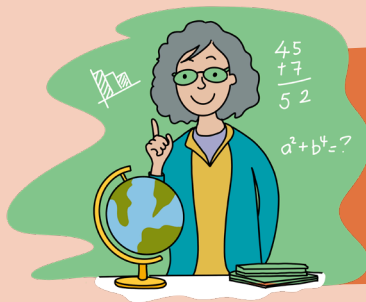


David Buckley



Lisa Nobes





Education as the Fourth Partner!

Education plays one of the most important roles in most children's lives. There are over 400 schools in Norfolk and one school can't represent everyone so we now have a group of dedicated school leaders to help the other partners understand how schools help keep children safe. There are representatives to cover all ages, including Further Education, and they help get safeguarding messages out to all the other schools in Norfolk.

The school leaders are:

Primary



Jessica Balardo



Nichola Stewart

Secondary



Becky Arnold



Glen Allott

Further Education



Helen Richardson-Hulme

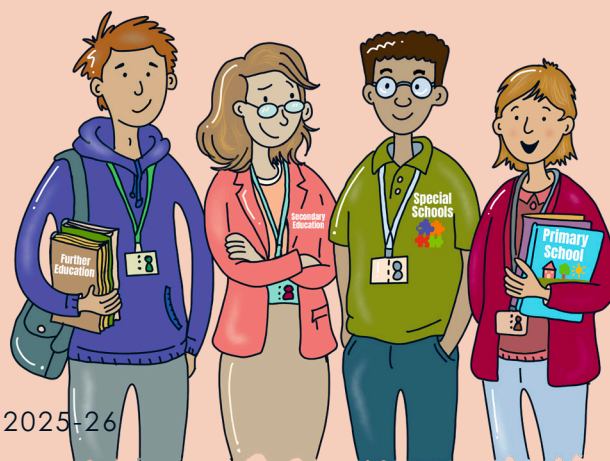
Special Schools



Amanda Fewkes



Belinda Brookes



KEY MESSAGES

Key Messages

This year we thought about what help and protection we need to keep us safe. Here's what we are worried about and what adults can do to protect us from harm:

“

Safeguarding needs to be more visible and we need to understand what is and what isn't a safeguarding risk and why. ”

“

Protection from drugs, the dealers and/or people taking drugs around you: this can happen in public spaces like local parks. We need responsible adults to be present and visible to make this go away. ”



“

We also need more awareness of knife crime and how in some parts of the county crime is starting to feel like part of normal life and this is worrying children of all ages. Sometimes we can't even trust our peers in case of stabbing or worries about something bad happening and we have learnt to avoid certain places. ”



“

Remember to track backwards to find out what has happened to children that made them turn to crime or drugs. ”

“

In schools some of us need protection from bullying: we want our teachers to be 'on it'. When we have wellbeing officers we can find a safe space to talk. ”

“

Talk to us before going into a safeguarding session as it breaks down power imbalances and ask us if it's okay to write things down. ”



“ We want to be heard without being judged. Professionals need to make time to let children talk and build trust.

Try this:

- a. Be approachable.
- b. Put your pen down and have eye contact.
- c. Smile!
- d. Just have a conversation with us! ”

“ You need to be human first, then be a professional. It matters when you help us to feel better about ourselves: when the atmosphere is nice, we feel nice ‘based on vibes’. ”

“ When you ask about our experience, or are welcoming, or provide a place without judgement, it helps us to feel like we belong and that we are seen, heard and listened to. ”

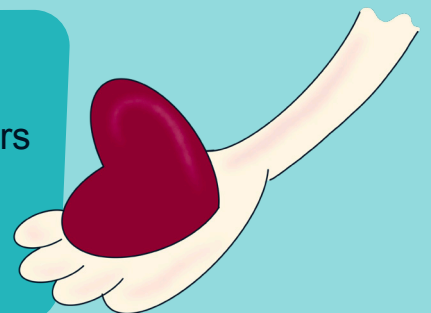


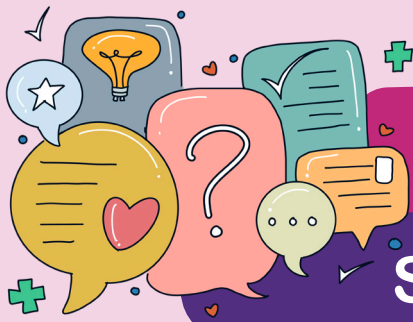
Thank you!

It's important that you know when you get it right for us. Here's what we want to thank you for:

“ We notice when you care and want to thank services who advocate and make time for us. Some of us had experience of this level of care in schools, hospitals and at Youth Advisory Board sessions. ”

“ Thank you also to the adults who provide help and support when needed, for example, to teachers who recognise needs for additional time and support with mental health at exam times. ”





What Partners say about Safeguarding Arrangements

MAP

“When things weren’t working well, we used to see a problem and point fingers and look to blame. These days we see a problem and think ‘How do we solve this together?’ This change doesn’t happen overnight. It came from a lot of joint planning, working, creating workshops where everyone felt equal and listened to, that good ideas were shared, not so much who had the idea but whether it was a good one – this led to developing our shared FLOURISH strategy – everyone was already bought in before it even was launched because they had already been involved. There was no need to “sell” the strategy, it already belonged to everyone.”

Dan Mobbs, CEO, MAP

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service

“I would like to personally thank you on behalf of Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service for your timely and helpful response to a significant incident we recently attended. Our prevention team are actively seeking methods to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of these tragic events. I understand you managed to coordinate responses and feedback from three organisations to help us along with our review process within one working day, this is truly remarkable. We are also grateful for your previous involvement in 2023 which helped us shape our Significant Incident Review process. We believe we are now one of the most forward-thinking FRSs in the Country in this field and this has only been achievable with the support from colleagues like yourself. Thank you.”

Terry Pinto, Prevention Lead, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service



Telling our story with data



The chapter on data in the full report is really comprehensive and interesting and looks at trends and patterns as well as how the NSCP uses data on understanding its priorities. Data use is important so that work is evidence based and helps us to recognise gaps and tailor services to address this, but it may not always tell us the whole story. Data is anything you can count or record. Data is less useful for measuring the emotional stuff, but there are other ways that information can be captured.

In terms of this year's data, the things that are getting better are: children's physical activity, attendance at school and less smoking in pregnancy. The really good news is that this year there were less children going into care. The things that might be getting worse are: increased demands for mental health services as people of all ages are struggling more; increased online risks; and more people living in poorer households.

Sometimes numbers go up, like worries about criminal exploitation or domestic abuse because of awareness raising campaigns and/or training.



Statistically, children with a lot of family problems are more likely to need safeguarding from things like, drugs, alcohol and domestic abuse, which may result in things like harming their school attendance and getting a good education. That said, we know that data has limitations and can't always be used to predict. It might only take one loving person or inspiring adult to break a cycle.



We looked closely at an average week in Norfolk:

Telling our story with data:

In each week in
Norfolk...

- Around **139** babies are born – a reduction from **147** in 2020.
- There are around **191,000** children and young people aged 0-19. Of these, **124,000** are at school, a similar number to 2020.

Within the context of this, each week there are around:

Within Health services around:



- **1030** A&E attendances for Under-18s
- **370** for under-4s (*similar levels to 2022*)
- **17** acute hospital admissions caused by injuries for under-15s (*a reduction from 26 in 2020*)
- **3** acute admissions for mental health problems (*similar to 2020*)
- **9** for self-harm (*a reduction from 11 in 2020*)

The Police:



- **9** children are screened for criminal exploitation by the Police (*down from 14 in 2020*)
- **99** Police investigations are started where domestic abuse is suspected and there is a child present
- **53** children and young people are reported missing to the Police (*up from 42 in 2020*), and around **20** are arrested (*similar to the last 4 years*).

The Council:



- Around **921** contacts are made to the Children's Advice Services (*an increase from around 765 in 2021*);
- Including around **244** from schools and education services
- Around **185** from the Police
- **155** from members of the public
- **114** from health services

Where contacts suggest there may be a risk to the safety or wellbeing of a child, partners work together to agree the best course of action through formal safeguarding routes.

Each week this means around:

- **60** referrals are made to prompt a social work assessment, and around 57 prompt a multi-agency strategy discussion.
- **110** social work assessments and **64** Section 47 Enquiries are completed in total.
- **12** children start a Child Protection Plan, including around **3** who will have had a previous CPP. In addition, around **7** children will become looked after each week (*with a similar number ceasing to be looked after*).
- Between **1** and **2** children and young people enter the Youth Justice system for the first time (*a reduction from around 3 in 2020*).

All of this means that at any one time in Norfolk there are around:

540

children and young people with a Child Protection Plan

1070

Looked After Children (*including around 130 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children*)

145

children and young people receiving Youth Justice Service interventions



Some of the things that caught our eye were:

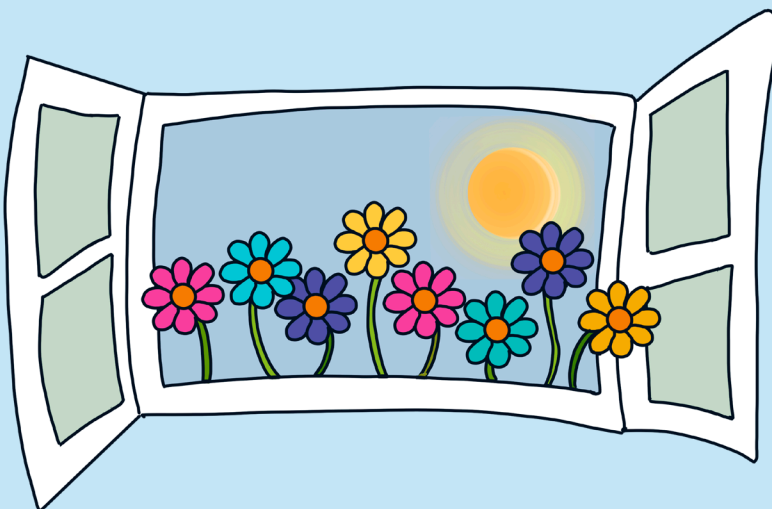
- We need to be more curious about A&E visits. Are these due to accidents or chronic illness? How does this compare to adults presenting to A&E? Children who are aged 16 or 17 may be admitted to adults so do we count them as well and what kind of things are they being seen for?
- How well do we understand children and crime? Young offenders have lots of different types of crime categorisation and usually the most vulnerable children can become young offenders and this in turn can be linked to having trouble with education. We know that services are working hard to break the cycle of re-offending.



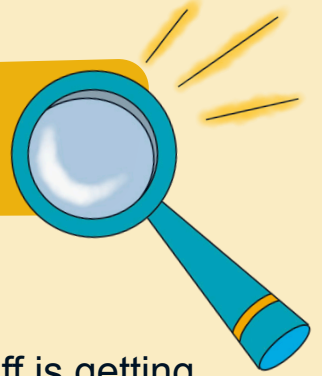
Flourish Survey

In 2024 there was a lot of work done on a Flourish survey that captured our voices. This was a good example of using qualitative data and our feedback to describe our experiences of growing up in Norfolk. About 9,500 children and young people took part in the survey which was done in schools. We think that limiting survey participation to schools, some children will miss out – for example, children who are excluded or who are educated at home – and this may impact on the findings. We would like to see more thought given to including these children in the next survey.

While the Flourish survey covered a lot of topics, we were really interested in the links made between mental health and bullying and we found out that at least 20% of us miss school at some point due to mental health issues.



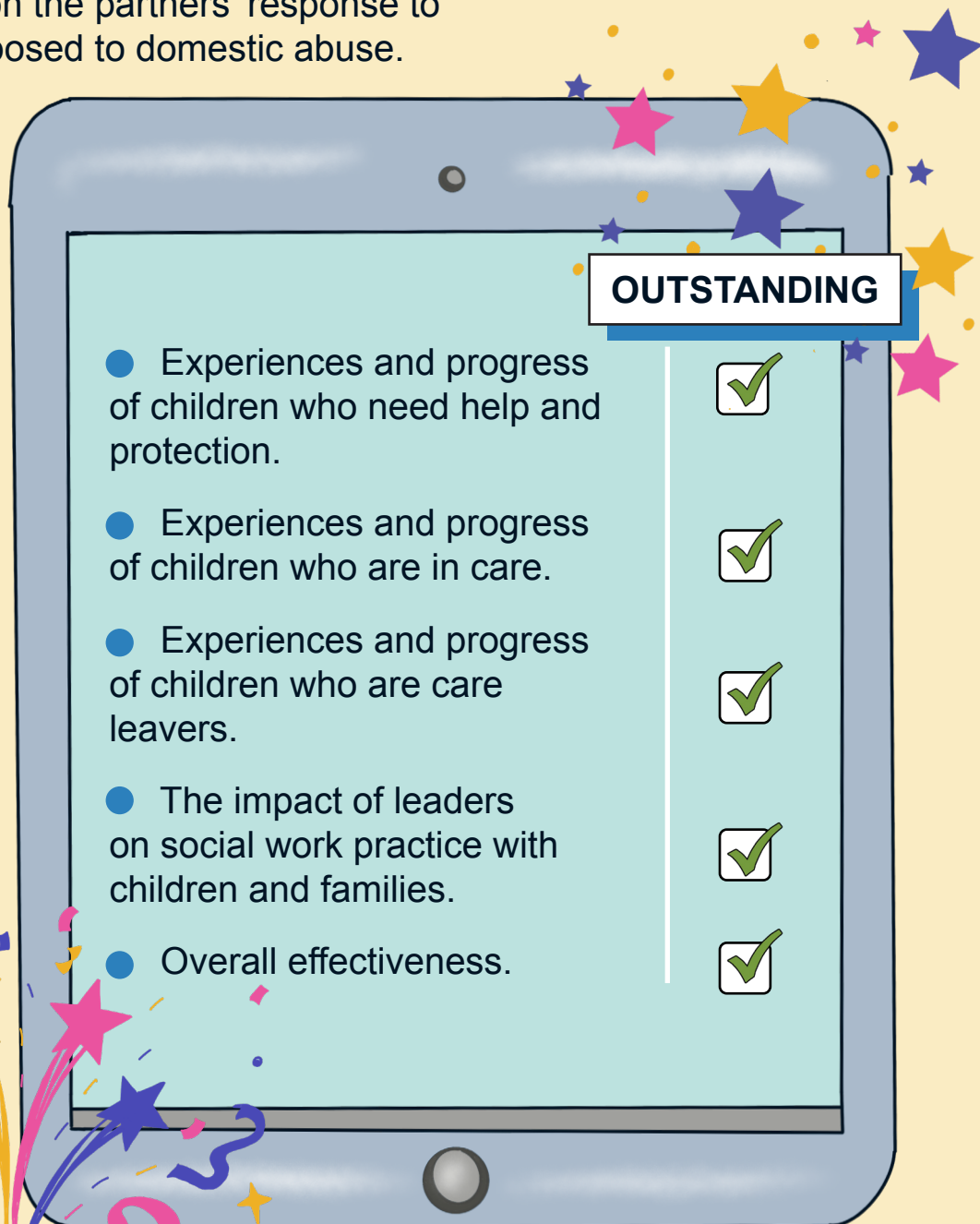
Inspection and Scrutiny



Inspection

Inspection and scrutiny is really all about making sure that stuff is getting done properly and holding people to account with checks and balances. This was an exciting year for Children's Services who received a judgement of Outstanding for its work to protect and safeguard children. This is great news and something to be celebrated; we were particularly pleased to hear how participation and our voices are recognised.

The full report provides further detail as well as an update on last year's inspection on the partners' response to children exposed to domestic abuse.



Inspection and Scrutiny



We think that this Outstanding judgement is a platform to build on and there is still work to be done. Inspectors could not look at everything and we felt that there are parts of the safeguarding system that could be better.

There is always room for improvement. Inspection should include what things we are getting things wrong as a positive: we need a

culture where we can own and learn from our mistakes. It is essential that all services collaborate with families and safeguarding is not seen as something that is confrontational. Let's use this **Outstanding** judgement as a building block to get even better by talking with young people and hearing what they have to say outside of inspection processes.

Scrutiny

Scrutiny needs to be done by people who are independent so that they can be objective. In Norfolk we are lucky to have three scrutineers; their names are Chris Robson, Bridget Griffin and Jo Procter. The scrutineers took time this year to look at our safeguarding arrangements around group based child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse. The details of this work can be found in the full report with the recommendations of how to get better at this.



Scrutiny happens over a longer period and should include the voice of all children and young people – don't just cherry pick who you want to hear from.

Scrutineers



Chris Robson



Bridget Griffin



Jo Procter

Section 11:

Safeguarding self assessment



The Section 11 process means that all agencies – except education who have different ways to self assess - have to report to the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership about what they are doing to keep children safe and promote their welfare. The Norfolk process tests partners' reports to make sure they have evidence. Organisations can say something is being done but when you look deeper it is not! Other times, partners are doing better than they think they are and just need to build their confidence and we find that out in conversations with them.

Next year we are going to help with the Section 11 process by providing some questions we want to ask partners.

The NSCP Priorities and Projects

The NSCP had three priorities this year: child exploitation, Families First (we'll explain a bit more about that in a minute) and child sexual abuse. Most of the work was done around exploitation and Families First, particularly including fathers in safeguarding solutions; the NSCP will do more on sexual abuse next year now that the scrutiny work has been completed. Some of our project work is directly linked to these tricky issues. The full report provides a lot of detail but here's a summary of the work done:

● Child Exploitation

Significant system progress has been delivered, including things like: a place-based prevention model in Great Yarmouth; strengthening the coordinated response to County Lines; developing how we use data; producing multi-agency Good Practice Guides; putting on more training and supporting workforce development; getting better at recognising risk to exploitation; and more prevention activity in schools and communities.



Overall, Norfolk has strong and effective multi-agency safeguarding practice and partners work hard to be child-centred and innovative in the way they work with us. The partnership still needs to be vigilant to the ways people exploit children as their methods might change. There are also increases in youth violence and criminal exploitation, but that might be because partners are better at identifying and recording the risks as they emerge.

● Families First and Father Inclusive Practice

Families First is about helping children and their families get the right support early, before problems get worse, so they can stay safe and do well together. This means different services like social care, schools, health, and police working closely as one team, sharing information and making decisions together to support families in a joined-up way. It focuses on giving families help that feels supportive and not judgmental, involving the people who know the child best (like parents, relatives, or trusted adults) so they can be part of decisions and care.



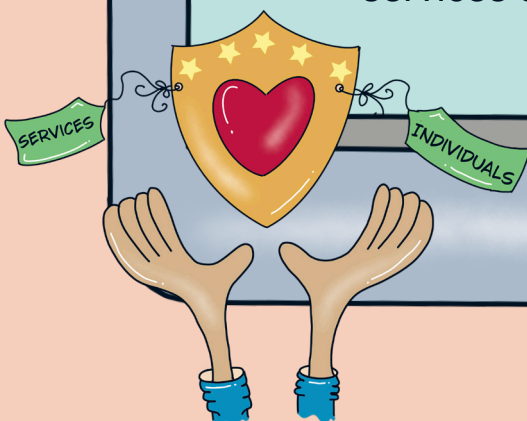
New approaches include having one clear place to ask for help, specialist teams working together to protect children, and making sure families can stay together safely wherever possible. There is also a strong focus on making sure fathers and male carers are included, listened to, and supported, as this can make a positive difference for children. Overall, the aim is to provide earlier, stronger support so children can grow up safe, supported, and connected to their families and communities. Norfolk partners are coming together to do this and are making some good progress but there is still a lot of work to do. There is more learning about how we work with fathers, and what we think about this, later in this report when we learned about a Safeguarding Practice Review.

What we think needs prioritising

● We think the NSCP should talk to us about what to prioritise. It would be better to get the basics right rather than picking an area of concern. Like we said in our key messages, we think that basic communication is the most important thing, for example...



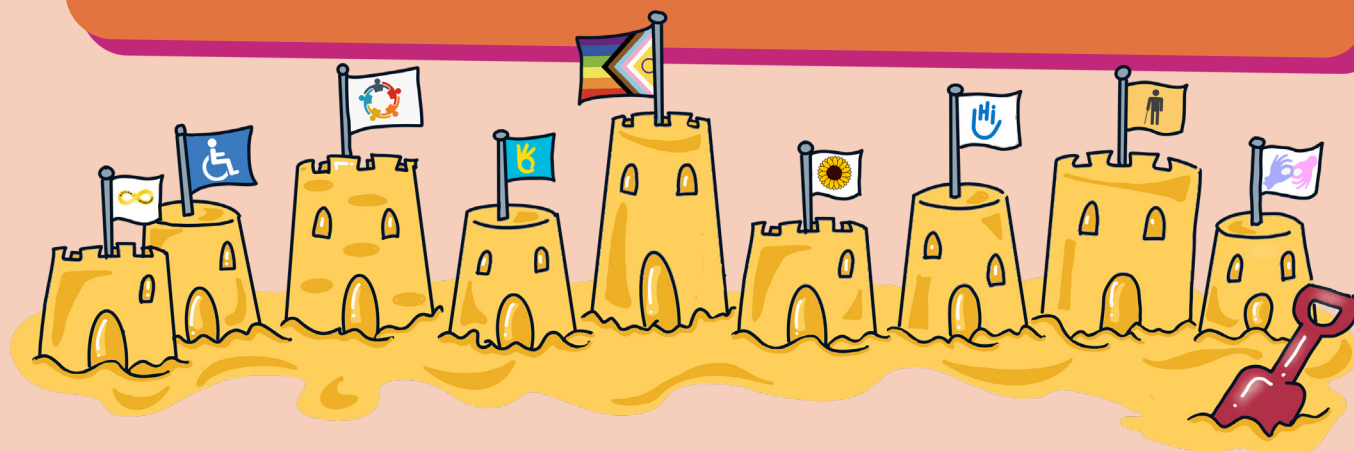
- Telling us when something is going to happen: if you don't do things immediately when you make decisions and we don't know what is going on, it is really difficult for us. People say they will do something and we are left waiting in the dark – this does not make us feel safe or valued.
- Understanding the different ways in which children communicate, and being curious about this is really important and shows us that you are willing to make the time to get to know us as individuals. What we say needs to be listened to and respected.
- Help and support should not put pressure on us or make us feel judged; help and support should be focused on what we need and often we understand this better than professionals and services. Sometimes it can feel like children are caught up in a process and, if they don't fit in with this, then it doesn't work.
- Being listened to and taken seriously: when this does not happen it can feel like talking to a brick wall.
- We need to see action being taken, for example, victims of bullying should be supported by the system, not frustrated by it. If we think that no-one is listening then there is no point in reporting it. We need to have trust in individuals and services so that we can approach them and trust them.





We also talked about online safety as the NSCP is considering how and if we need to treat this as a priority. Because we have grown up with the internet and social media, a lot of adults might think we know how to stay safe online, but we can be blindsided. Information is so easy to access now and that can make people de-sensitised to distressing messages. Children need guidance on being sensitive and respectful when using social media.

Interesting fact! What you might not know is that we think cyber bullying is not as prevalent as bullying in person. The bullies have got wise to the fact that it is easier to be caught out if you bully online.





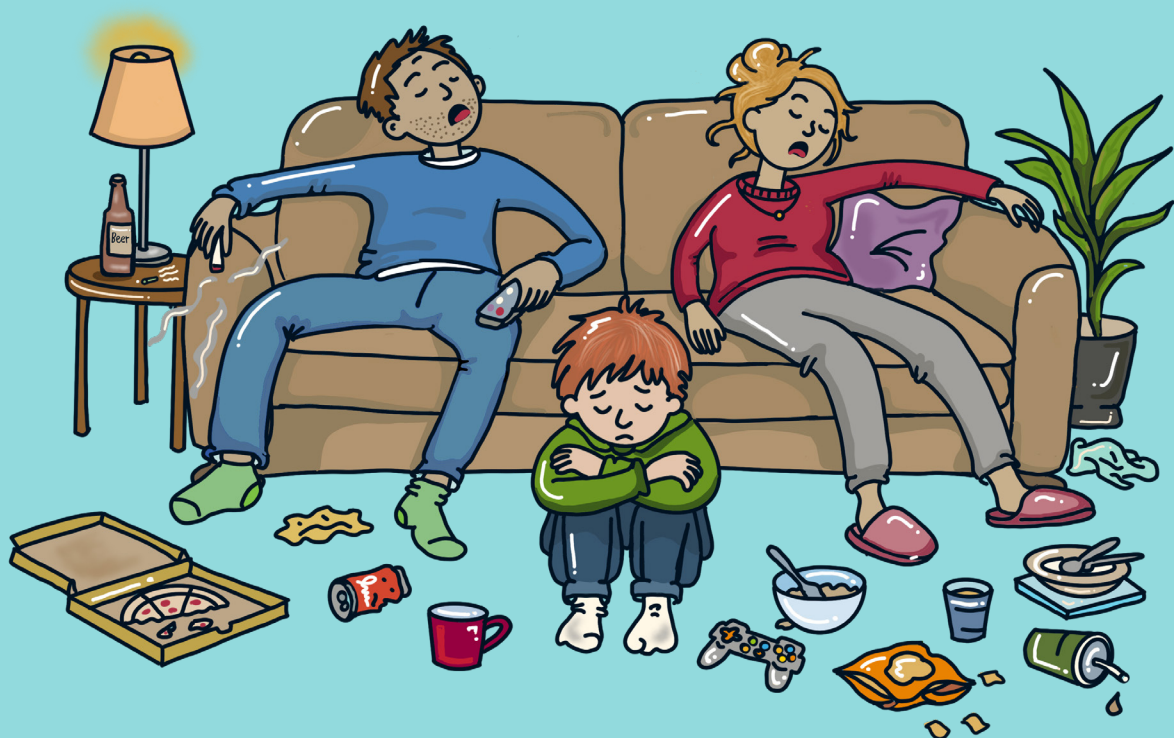
Jasmine was 17 years old when she died and had been looked after since she was a very little girl. That meant she had a lot of social workers and other professionals involved with her for a really long time. In the last two years of her life, her workers were really steady and got to know her well. The words they used to describe her are included in the word cloud which shows how much they cared for her and if you read the whole Safeguarding Practice Review you can hear her voice and what she said about them.



Here's what we thought about the learning from Jasmine's case:

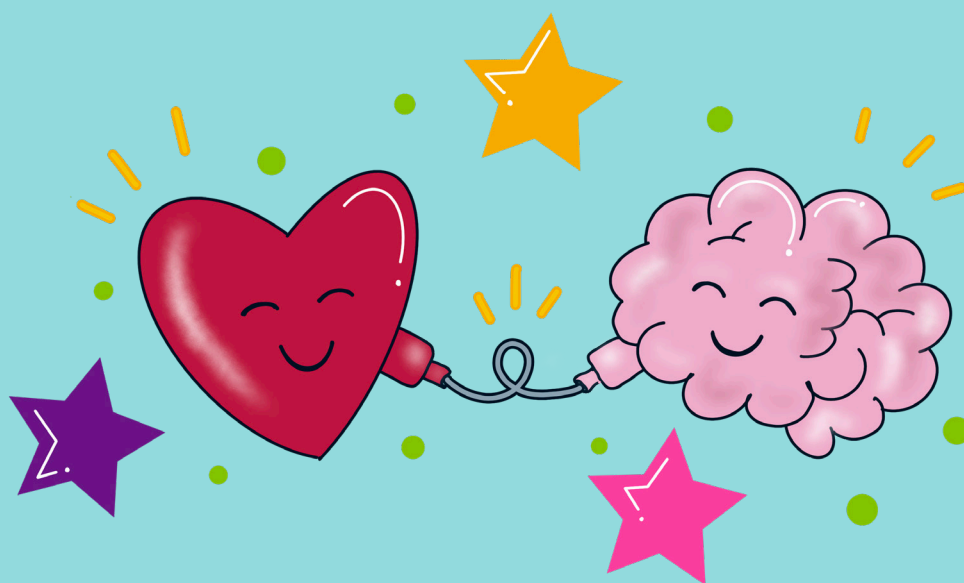
- This was a drug-related death and we think it was linked to Jasmine's early exposure to drugs and the drug culture surrounding her father. Did we understand those early attachments and how her parents normalised drugs?
- It is really important to communicate with fathers and help them to be better role models.
- Trusting relationships help children recover from trauma and keep them away from drugs - this needs to happen as early as possible.
- It is clear from the way professionals described her that she was cared for and it is good to be open and positive. We hope she felt loved.
- After Jasmine died the people who knew Jasmine would have felt really sad. It is important to have team debriefs for mental health check in's, finding learning points and feeling less alone.

This was a really sad case but it was good to know that everyone tried really hard to keep Jasmine safe.



Training and Applying the Learning

The full report also has a lot of detail about the training offer which pulls through the learning into safeguarding courses and other learning activities. This last year the NSCP delivered 185 training sessions across 33 training topics. We had a look at the training offer and want to make sure that mental health is covered in the Emotional Wellbeing Course and healthy relationships is covered in Domestic Abuse training. There may be a gap around training in online safety.

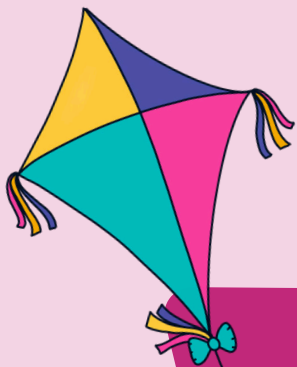


Not surprisingly, our message about training goes back to listening without interrupting and showing children that they are heard. The top three skills we want all our workers to have are to be:

✓ approachable and friendly

✓ kind and patient

✓ open and non-judgemental



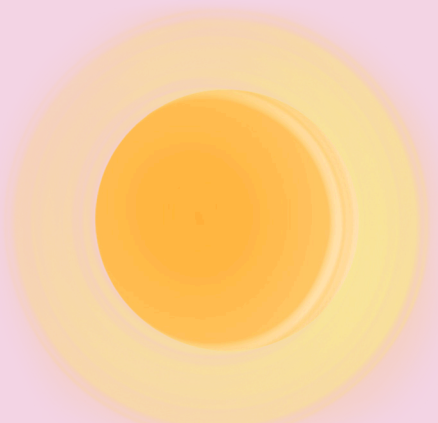
In conclusion

Thank you for reading about all of the NSCP's achievements this year. With safeguarding there is always a lot more to be done as children grow up and society changes. We don't know what lies ahead of us, but there are certain things that the NSCP wants to get better at.

Here are some of the things listed in the full report:

- Supporting the Local Authority to work through the Local Government Reorganisation.
- Ensuring the partnership's strengths underpin the implementation of reform and responding to changes in legislation such as the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act.
- Continuing to work on our priorities with a particular focus on establishing strategies and workstreams for transitional safeguarding and child sexual abuse.
- Learning from inspection, scrutiny and audit and implementing action plans.
- Continuing to utilise the performance intelligence, data and qualitative feedback to ensure we are targeting our resources correctly and addressing any gaps.
- Further developing our approach to Joint Agency Group Supervisions and sharing our processes with other areas.
- Multi-agency audits planned on domestic abuse.

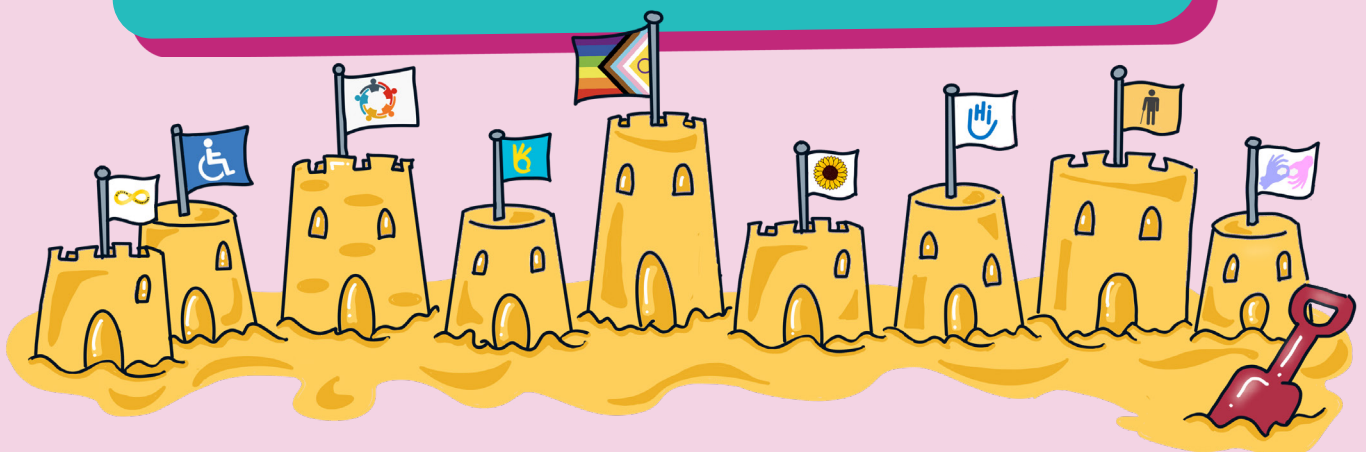




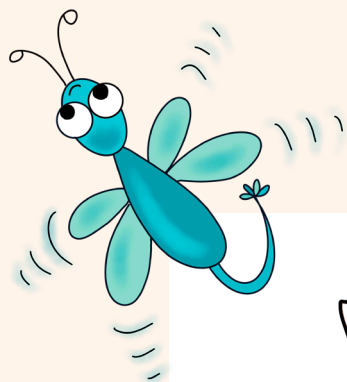
- Disseminating and implementing learning from local and national Safeguarding Practice Reviews and local Rapid Reviews.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of learning and actions against recommendations from scrutiny, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Section 11, and audits.
- Delivering on the Workforce Development Group forward plan with a particular focus on measuring the impact of training on practice through community of practice groups.
- Working directly with the children, young people and families of Norfolk to ensure that their voices are heard and they contribute directly to strengthening the safeguarding system.
- Continuing to promote and support the FLOURISH agenda.
- Continuing to promote equality and inclusion and celebrate diversity in Norfolk.



We hope that we, the children and young people of Norfolk, are fully involved in supporting the NSCP achieve its future goals.



C O L O U R



M E



Puzzles & Quizzes



Were you paying attention?

(HINT: all answers are in this report...)

1. Which four agencies, named in this report, are responsible for keeping children safe in Norfolk?

.....

2. How many scrutineers work in Norfolk?

.....

3. What judgement did inspectors give Children's Services? (Hint: one word answer)

.....

4. How old do you have to be to be a Norfolk Dragon?

.....

5. How many children go to school in Norfolk?

.....

6. In the Key Messages section of this report, what message was sticking out of the cupcake?

.....

Can you spot the difference?

(HINT: There are 12 to find...)



Answers below... no peeking!

Paying Attention answers: 1. Children's Services, Police, Health and Education. 2. Three scrutineers. 3. Outstanding! 4. A Dragon is between 13 and 25 years old. 5. 124,000 children go to school in Norfolk. 6. "We love your vibe."

Spot the difference answers: 1. Branch of tree on left missing. 2. Blue haired girl far left arm is now behind her back. 3. Food Bank words from bag missing. 4. Boys rucksack strap missing. 5. Tall boys stick missing. 6. Boy with blond bun cochlea missing. 7. Girl hair style has changed. 8. Pride girls trousers are green. 9. Front wheel of wheelchair missing. 10. Baby bottle missing. 11. Infinity flag missing. 12. Purple flower far right has changed.

The full version of the annual report
can be found on the NSCP website:

www.norfolklscp.org.uk



*There are loads of resources on there for professionals
as well as children and families!*

If you are worried about a child you can call Norfolk's Children Advice and
Duty Service (CADS) or the NSPCC's Childline to help you.
Their phone numbers are:

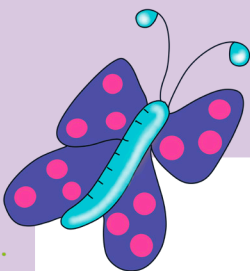
CADS: 0344 800 8020

Childline: 0800 1111

Or you can always phone the NSCP Business Unit on:

01603 223409

and they can signpost you to the best person!



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership

