

Annual Report

April 2024–March 2025



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1. Introduction from the Independent Scrutineer

Since taking up the Independent Scrutiny role, I have been impressed by the commitment, professionalism, and collaborative ethos that characterise the Partnership's work. This annual report reflects both the challenges we face, and the progress made in safeguarding children and young people, while also highlighting the opportunities ahead to strengthen our collective impact.

The role of Independent Scrutineer, as outlined in Working Together 2023¹, is to provide rigorous, evidence-based challenge and assurance across strategic and operational levels. To do this we must focus on continuous improvement, ensuring statutory duties are fulfilled, and embedding learning from reviews of practice whether local or national.

Central to this is the voice and lived experience of children, young people, and their families ensuring they inform policy, practice, and strategic direction, as well as ensuring that the voice and experience of practice is heard and is reflected in practice, policy, and strategy development. The Partnership recognises this is an area where we have more to do and this work has already begun in conjunction with the other parts of the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership.

The safeguarding landscape is changing rapidly, shaped by societal and cost pressures, emerging risks, and evolving practice. In Bristol, the Partnership has responded with agility and purpose. However, scrutiny must remain sharp and forward-looking to ensure every child is seen, heard, and protected.

For the Partnership neglect remains a persistent concern. The ongoing work in this area especially in relation to the Families First Agenda is a positive step, and scrutiny will focus on whether these changes lead to timely, proportionate, and effective intervention—particularly in supporting emotional wellbeing and preventing escalation into statutory services.

Contextual safeguarding, including peer-on-peer exploitation and online harm, continues to demand attention. Our work in this area is being shaped by our recently published Child Safeguarding Practice Review where most of the work completed focussed on the 2024/5 reporting year. This Review will set the focus for our work with young people in the coming year.

Child sexual abuse (CSA) remains a priority. The CSA task and finish group provides multi-agency engagement, and the CSA pathway tools are examples of good practice. There is work to do on how we ensure awareness of the tools and training available reach front line staff effectively and this will be an area of scrutiny and focus for 2025/26.

¹ [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

The voice of the child must be more consistently embedded in our safeguarding system. Consideration needs to be given to how we ensure the voice of children and young people can effectively influence the shape and quality of all that we do. Scrutiny must ensure that their lived experiences inform service design and delivery, making practice more responsive and respectful.

The Partnership culture is collaborative, and improvement focused. However, the impact of its work must be more clearly evidenced. The review of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) undertaken last year has given us an opportunity to sharpen strategic focus and ensure structures are fit for purpose.

Embedding learning and demonstrating its impact remains an area for development. Strengthening the learning framework will be essential to ensure that insights from audits, reviews, and frontline feedback lead to tangible improvements. Additionally, scrutiny will assess how equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion (EEDI) are being addressed across safeguarding practice.

Looking outward to national learning, including the work of the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, will enrich our local approach. A stronger focus on digital safeguarding is also essential, given the centrality of online life to children and young people.

Priorities for Independent Scrutiny:

- Establishing practitioner and parent/child focus groups to capture lived experience and inform scrutiny.
- Conducting thematic deep dives into areas such as strategy meetings, police powers out of hours, and non-accidental injury (NAI) cases.
- Completing a review of MASA arrangements and supporting implementation while scrutinising progress.
- Evaluating the impact of learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and Rapid Reviews (RRs).
- Assessing the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding training, quality assurance mechanisms, and strategic leadership.
- Developing a plan for Scrutiny activity over the next 12 months.

Scrutiny will be undertaken through a range of methods including interviews, focus groups, data analysis, and peer reviews, always ensuring that the voice and experience of children and families are central.

Safeguarding is a shared endeavour that demands courage, curiosity, collaboration, and compassion. I look forward to working alongside all partners to ensure our collective efforts make a meaningful and measurable difference in the lives of children and families in Bristol.

Sally Rowe

Independent Scrutineer

Keeping Children Safe Partnership Bristol

2. Safeguarding Partners' Reflections on this reporting period

We are pleased to present the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Annual Report covering the 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, which is produced on behalf of the Partnership by the Delegated Safeguarding Partners.

Our Keeping Children Safe Board sits alongside the Safeguarding Adults and the Community Safety Board within the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership. Decision making rests in the boards, but the Partnership is overseen by a Steering Group which reviews safeguarding data, strategic themes and the work of the subgroups. This report is focused on the Partnership's work in relation to Safeguarding Children.

We want to start by taking the opportunity to thank all our front-line practitioners and managers, who work tirelessly to improve outcomes for children, families and adults with care and support needs on a daily basis. It is their commitment, dedication, and care that enables the Partnership to translate its strategic priorities into operational practice to keep children, families and adults with care and support needs safe.

The changes to the Working Together 2023 guidance implemented in late 2024 have strengthened our work together as a Children's Safeguarding Partnership this year building a clear line of sight from the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs), Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) to the work of the MASA. This has meant that colleagues across the Partnership are clear about their responsibilities with regard to children's safeguarding and there is a dedicated rhythm where LSPs and DSPs meet regularly to focus on working together.

We have continued to be supported by our Independent Scrutineer Sally Rowe who has also led our review on partnership working, establishing the Steering Group and chairing the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB). We are grateful for the support and robust challenge that she has given to us as DSPs and to the wider Partnership again this year.

This annual report provides a summary of our collective achievements as safeguarding partners, an analysis of the impact our work has had for children, families and adults with care and support needs and notes areas for development that require further work in order to strengthen multi-agency safeguarding practice and our local arrangements.

It has been a challenging year with two significant CSPRs developed across the Partnership which have brought significant learning. We have also developed the Harm Outside The Home strategy developed through the Preventing Serious Violence Board which has led to the development of our extra-familial harm services in response to serious youth violence. The role of schools has been important, and the Education Reference Group has been reviewing its role and function to feed into the prevention partnership. Transitions was the theme of our annual conference and continues to be a priority for the Partnership. More recently we were pleased to have an Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) focused visit looking at our Front Door which reported some significant improvements.

Our theme of 2026 will be to develop our Partnership work in response to cultural humility, and we look forward to learning and developing our work in this very important area together. Our Partnership strategy 'Belonging' ended in 2024 and so this year has been spent developing a new Belonging and Thriving Strategy 2025–2030 which we hope to conclude this autumn, and which will guide our work as a strategic Partnership into 2026. At the same time our safeguarding partnership work will focus on the delivery of the Families First reforms through a multi-agency safeguarding operational group which also oversees our operational safeguarding practice as a Partnership. We are pleased to have appointed a new Head of Service for Quality Assurance and Strategic Safeguarding who will lead the Business Unit to support our work for children alongside the wider Partnership.



Hannah Woodhouse
Director,
Children and Education
Bristol City Council




Elizabeth Hughes
Chief Superintendent
Avon and Somerset
Constabulary




Michael Richardson
Director of Nursing and
Quality/Deputy Chief
Nursing Officer
Bristol, North Somerset,
South Gloucestershire
Integrated Care Board



**Bristol, North Somerset
and South Gloucestershire**
Integrated Care Board

3. About Bristol

Bristol is the largest city in the Southwest and one of the UK's 11 'Core Cities'. The city's population is increasingly diverse, with residents representing at least 45 religions, 187 countries of birth, and 91 main languages. According to the 2021 census, 84% of Bristol's population is white, 6% black, and 5.5% Asian. Bristol is also a welcoming city for refugees, including recent arrivals from Syria and Ukraine, working closely with the Home Office and local partners to ensure their safety and support.

Snapshot of children who are supported by our services (November 2024)

- **10,300** children in Bristol schools receiving SEN Support
- **791** children and **542** adults receiving Early Help within localities
- **1,443** children in need of help and protection
- **791** children in care, including **95** children seeking asylum
- **217** young people supported by the Youth Justice Service
- **4,810** children and young people with SEND who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)



In the last year there have been some significant increases in our key groups of children that we support:

- 12% increase in children with EHCPs
- 6% increase in children in care (with a 14% increase in children seeking asylum)
- 12% increase in children in need of help and protection

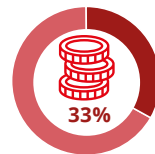
City Snapshot



30% of children are Black, Asian or belong to Minority Ethnic Group



29% of children have free school meals



33% of children live in poverty (after housing costs)

91,589 children under 18 years live in Bristol (19% of total population)

51,100 households with one or more child

64,585 pupils in our schools of whom 22.6% have English as an additional language

18,070 children under 16 live in low-income families

18,900 children live in the 10% most deprived areas in England

6,700 children were born outside the UK

6,115 children with a disability (under the Equality Act)

- Bristol had the fastest growing population of all the Core Cities in England and Wales over the last decade
- Bristol has a relatively young age profile with more children aged 0-15 than people aged 65 and over
- The population of Bristol has become increasingly diverse, and some local communities have changed significantly
- Bristol has 41 areas in the most deprived 10% in England, including 3 in the most deprived 1%. Over 70,000 people in Bristol live in the 10% most deprived areas in England, including 18,900 children

4. Introduction to Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP)

This annual report outlines the work of the KBSP from April 2024 to March 2025. It has been developed with contributions from key partners including Children’s Social Care, the Safeguarding in Education team, the KBSP Business Unit, and experts by experience across services.

The KBSP is responsible for ensuring effective arrangements are in place to coordinate, assure quality, and drive continuous improvement in safeguarding practice across Bristol. The Partnership holds statutory responsibilities for overseeing multi-agency safeguarding reviews and audits, ensuring learning is embedded across the system. While this report focuses on the work overseen by the Keeping Children Safe Board, we recognise that there has also been lots of work conducted under the Keeping Adults Safe Board and the Keeping Communities Safe Board; the Bristol Community Safety Partnership will publish its own annual report in early 2026, reflecting work undertaken throughout 2025.

In addition to the work undertaken by the subgroups, a key achievement this year has been the rollout of Family Hubs, which represent a significant advancement in Bristol’s early help offer. These hubs provide coordinated, multi-agency support to families at the right time, embedding youth work to better engage young people and contribute to safer, more resilient communities. This work aligns with KBSP’s strategic commitment to early intervention and prevention. In addition,

the Partnership has maintained a focus on its corporate parenting responsibilities. Multi-agency collaboration has led to better access to physical and mental health services, targeted action to reduce health inequalities, and the integration of trauma-informed approaches across safeguarding strategies. These efforts recognise that good health is foundational to safety, stability, and long-term positive futures.

On behalf of the KBSP and its Steering Group, we extend our sincere thanks to the entire safeguarding workforce for their dedication to the children, adults, and communities of Bristol. Their commitment continues to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of those we serve.

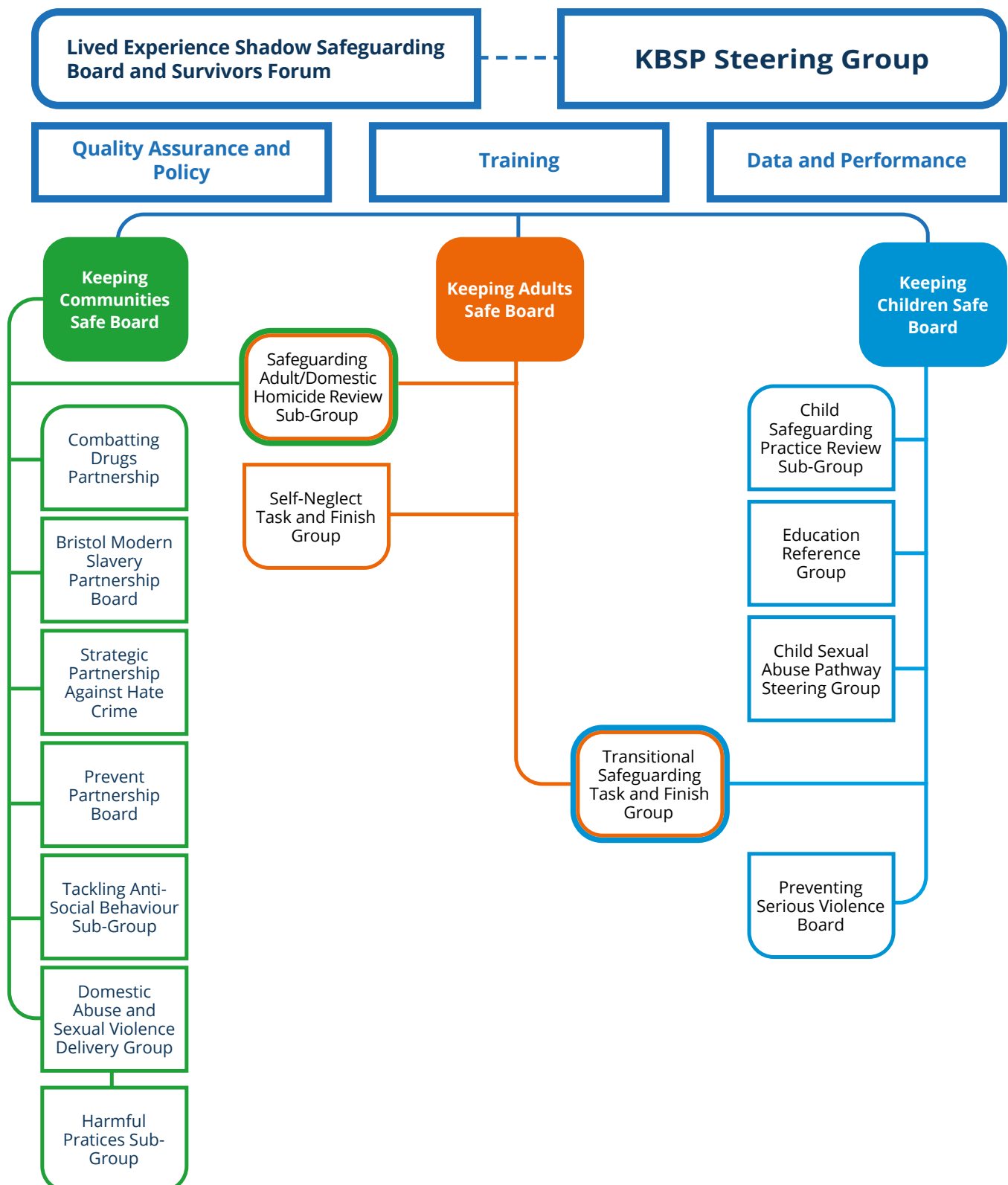
Changes to the KBSP structure

Following the formal adoption of Working Together 2023, the Partnership made both governance and practical changes to ensure compliance. The former KBSP Executive meeting has now become the KBSP Steering Group, which acts as the strategic oversight body for the Partnership. The Steering Group provides overall strategic direction and ensures agencies work collaboratively to safeguard children and young people as well as adults. It also drives improvements in frontline practice and ensures that safeguarding remains a priority across the Partnership. The Steering Group is responsible for responding to escalating concerns, addressing joint priorities, reviewing common themes and learning from statutory reviews, and approving

financial decisions. Statutory safeguarding responsibilities are delegated to the relevant boards that report to the Steering Group and hold oversight of safeguarding children, adults and communities for the city.

Bristol uses an integrated Partnership Model, which brings together statutory safeguarding duties for:

- **Children:** through the Keeping Children Safe Board
- **Adults:** through the Keeping Adults Safe Board (Safeguarding Adults Board)
- **Communities:** through the Keeping Communities Safe Board (Community Safety Partnership Board)



This integrated model reflects Bristol's commitment to a person-centred, place-based approach to safeguarding, recognising that children live in families, and families live in communities. It enables joined-up responses to complex safeguarding issues such as extra-familial harm and serious violence. Subgroups and task and finish groups sit under the relevant boards to address thematic priorities and the KBSP Business Unit coordinates and supports delivery of the safeguarding priorities.

The [KBSP Strategic Plan 2023 -2026](#) focuses on improving information sharing; embedding lived experience in decision-making; strengthening responses to serious violence, transitional safeguarding and enhancing education sector involvement in safeguarding.

The statutory partners are Bristol City Council; Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Avon and Somerset Constabulary. The group is also made up of members from other groups that work directly in the community including other representatives from health, the Avon Fire and Rescue Service, Probation Service and the voluntary sector.

Despite not being officially made the fourth safeguarding partner, there has been considerable work around improving working relationships across the Partnership with education colleagues. The reinstatement of the Education Reference Group has given a place for education colleagues to collaborate, share information and raise concerns from within the sector. With regular reporting into Keeping Children Safe, this ensures that Education

remains firmly on the agenda when working to effectively safeguard children.

To further strengthen multi-agency collaboration across the Partnership, the KBSP created a Partnership wide Information Sharing Agreement: Tier 1 for overall safeguarding and Tier 2 for Preventing Crime and Disorder, meaning that police information can be included more easily across all aspects of safeguarding which has previously been hard to attain.

The KBSP works with neighbouring safeguarding Partnerships across the region to promote a more joined-up approach to safeguarding. This includes participation in cross-boundary groups and initiatives, which are especially important for agencies delivering services across multiple local authority areas. These groups help ensure consistent responses to key safeguarding issues such as child exploitation, self-neglect, and serious violence.

The KBSP Steering Group addresses escalating concerns, shared priorities, learning from statutory reviews, and financial decisions. Leadership of the boards has also changed:

- Keeping Adults Safe is chaired by Bristol's Independent Scrutineer, Sally Rowe.
- Keeping Children Safe is chaired by the Executive Director for Children and Education (DCS), Hannah Woodhouse.
- Keeping Communities Safe continues to be chaired by Bristol Police Commander, Deepak Kenth.

Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP)

The LSPs lead and drive the changes that the government set out in Working Together 2023. All three LSPs have equal and joint responsibility for the KBSP multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. On behalf of their agency the LSPs will speak with authority, take decisions and commit them on policy, resourcing and practice matters. They are responsible for holding their own agency to account, on how effective they participate and implement the KBSP multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and are responsible for discharging their own statutory duties. In Bristol the LSPs are:

Agency	Role	Name
Bristol City Council (BCC)	Chief Executive	Nick Hibberd
Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board (ICB)	Chief Executive	Shane Devlin
Avon and Somerset Constabulary (A&S Police)	Chief Constable	Sarah Crew

Each LSP delegates operational delivery to senior officers known as Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs).

Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP)

The DSPs are senior representatives from the three statutory safeguarding partners, responsible for the operational delivery of safeguarding arrangements in Bristol. DSPs play a crucial role in ensuring the effective implementation of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. They work collaboratively to protect and promote the welfare of children, speak with authority on behalf of their respective organisations, and are empowered to make decisions on policy, resources, and practice. DSPs also hold their own organisations to account for how effectively they participate in and implement the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Agency	Role	Name
Bristol City Council (BCC)	Executive Director for Children and Education	Hannah Woodhouse
Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board (ICB)	Deputy Chief Nursing Officer	Michael Richardson
Avon and Somerset Constabulary (A&S Police)	Chief Superintendent	Liz Hughes

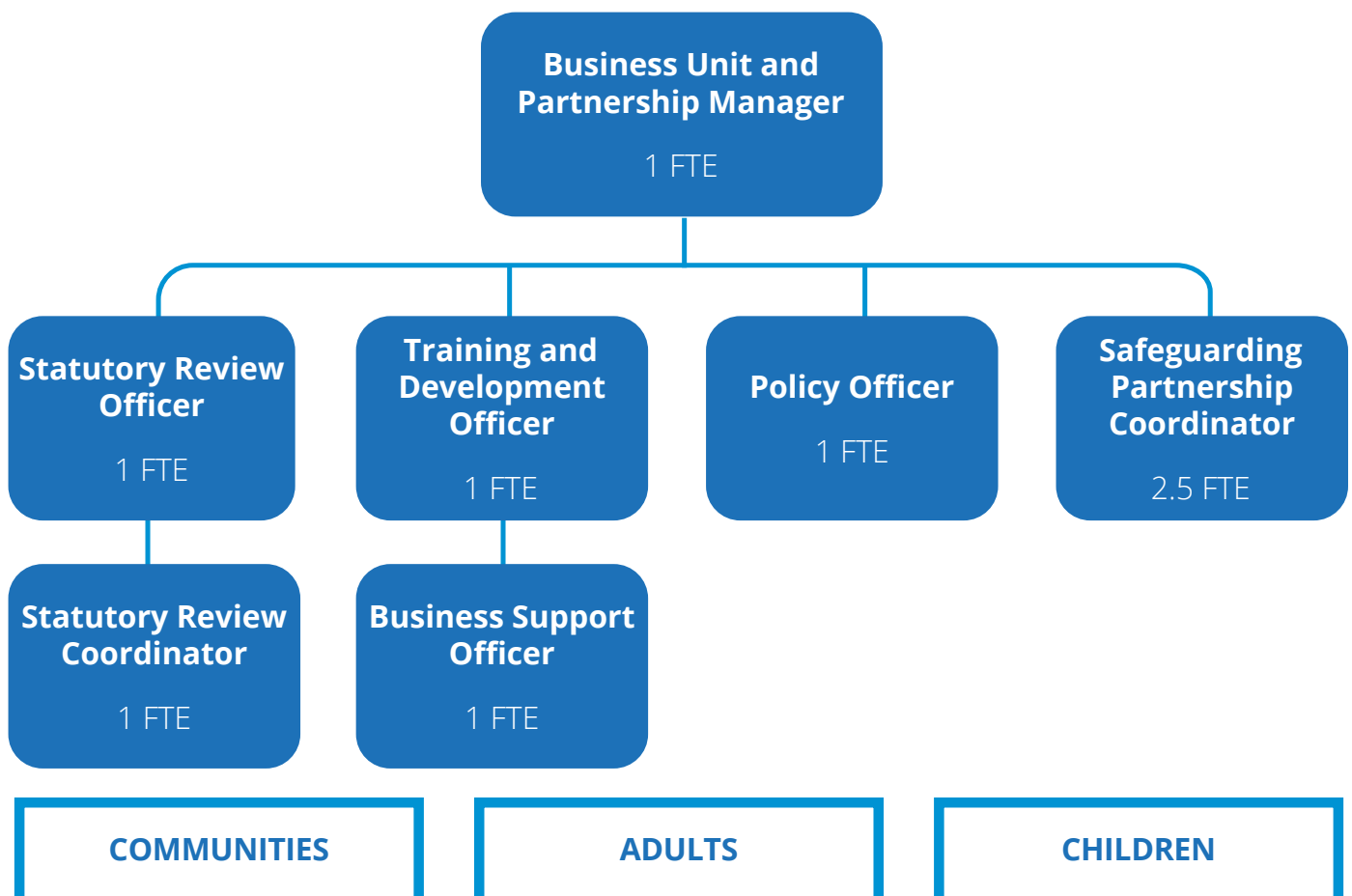
Scrutiny Arrangements

The role of the Independent Scrutineer is to ensure the KBSP is compliant with statutory obligations, act as a critical friend, and support the continuous improvement and development of the Partnership. Sally Rowe was recruited to the role of Independent Scrutineer in November 2023; she has extensive experience of multi-agency working and is able to share her views on areas of strength and weakness and potential areas for further scrutiny.

Business Unit

The safeguarding Business Unit plays a vital behind-the-scenes role in supporting the multi-agency safeguarding partnership by helping to manage and co-ordinate the work of safeguarding subgroups and

working groups, ensuring alignment with the Partnership's goals and statutory duties. They handle logistics like scheduling meetings, preparing agendas, taking minutes and maintaining action logs, especially for sensitive reviews such as CSPRs. They oversee multi-agency safeguarding training programs, ensuring that professionals across sectors are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills. They collect, collate and analyse local safeguarding data to inform audits, assurance processes and strategic planning. They serve as a bridge between safeguarding partners, to help maintain effective collaboration across agencies. They also manage the Partnership's website and digital resources, making safeguarding information accessible to professionals and the public.



Funding

The KBSP is funded through contributions from its statutory safeguarding partners and relevant local agencies. These include Bristol City Council; Avon and Somerset Police and Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB). Funding supports the KBSP's strategic priorities, including safeguarding children and adults, tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence and promoting community safety. In Bristol, Probation and the Avon Fire and Rescue Service also make annual contributions towards statutory reviews. The KBSP allocates its funds annually and is distributed to support training, case reviews and operational costs.

Financial contributions from the partnership 24/25

Agency	Contribution
KBSP budget	
Police	£47,734
ICB	£61,482
Local Authority	£161,418
Total	£270,634
Training	
Police	£5,500
ICB	£15,000
Local Authority	£30,000
Total	£50,500
Statutory Reviews	
Police	£41,161.64
ICB	£41,161.64
Local Authority	£41,161.64
Probation	£6,000
Avon Fire and Rescue	£5,000
Total	£140,484.92

5. Achievements and Impact on Priorities

Performance and Data-Informed Practice in Children's Social Care

Referral numbers remain stable compared to the previous year, indicating consistent recognition and response to safeguarding concerns. The conversion rate from strategy discussions to Section 47 enquiries is robust, and the proportion of Section 47 enquiries progressing to Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) remains above the national average. Notably, there has been a significant 53% increase in ICPCs, reflecting improved identification and response to risk. The number of Children in Care has steadily declined, suggesting effective support and permanency planning. These positive trends highlight the Partnership's commitment to data-informed decision making and ongoing efforts to ensure children receive the right support at the right time. Work will continue to further strengthen data collection and analysis to maximise the impact of safeguarding interventions.



Statutory Reviews and Oversight

Responsibility for statutory reviews now sits with the relevant boards: the Children's Board oversees Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, the Adults Board manages Safeguarding Adult Reviews, and the Communities Board handles Domestic Homicide Reviews. The chair reviews subgroup recommendations on commissioning reviews and has the final decision. Once a report is signed off by the review panel and quality assured by the subgroup, the respective board gives final approval to the report and action plan. This process has improved oversight and accountability, reducing outstanding actions and enabling faster, more effective changes for Bristol residents.

Improved Reporting and Collaboration

KBSP has enhanced its reporting templates and subgroup structures to improve oversight and track progress. This began with a 'subgroup day' where chairs from all subgroups and task and finish groups reviewed their work, strategic links, and feedback mechanisms. This exercise highlighted gaps in communication and information sharing. As a result, new reporting templates for activity, risk assessments, and six-monthly updates were introduced, ensuring more consistent feedback, greater awareness of completed work, and increased opportunities for wider professional collaboration.

Partnership Priorities and Impact

● **Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) subgroup:**

The CSPR subgroup is a multi-agency group that oversees the commissioning, monitoring, and quality assurance of Child CSPRs and Rapid Reviews. While it does not conduct reviews directly, the group ensures statutory processes are followed in line with Working Together 2023 and the KBSP local protocol. Its responsibilities include managing Serious Incident Notifications, facilitating multi-agency decision-making, commissioning independent reviews, and ensuring reviews are completed to a high standard. The group monitors the implementation of action plans, embeds the voice of the child in all decision-making, and disseminates learning across agencies and partnerships.

In 2024/25, the KBSP conducted one rapid review, which explored trauma-informed practice, cultural competency, interpreter use, and travel safety. Recommendations were made in each area, and a full CSPR was not required. Additionally, a thematic CSPR on the quality of child protection investigations was published, focusing on improving joint responses among safeguarding partners.

Two CSPRs commissioned in 2023/24 were submitted to the National Panel and are being prepared for publication in 2025/26. Learning from these reviews has highlighted important themes for the Partnership, including cultural humility, anti-racist practice, mental health and capacity, educational exclusion, and partnership responses to harm outside the home.

Key changes resulting from these reviews include re-establishing the Education Reference Group to strengthen links with education partners and repositioning the Preventing Serious Violence Board under the Safeguarding Children's Board for clearer governance and reduced duplication. The Harm Outside The Home workstream also originated from statutory review learning.

● **Education Reference Group:**

The Education Reference Group is a multi-agency group that promotes safety and welfare of children in schools, colleges and other educational settings. It was reinstated to provide strategic direction and governance for safeguarding in education across Bristol. Chaired by a city school leader, the group brings together representatives from local authority education services and schools, meeting every Bristol half term to align its work with both local and national safeguarding priorities. It plays a key role in ensuring that learning from statutory reviews is translated into practice and works closely with the Excellence in Schools initiative to strengthen safeguarding across all education phases and sectors. Alongside its core safeguarding remit, the group also supports wider efforts to break the link between disadvantage and educational attainment. While not solely a safeguarding issue, this work is critical to keeping vulnerable children and young people engaged in education and supporting them to make sustained progress—ultimately improving their long-term life chances and reducing risk over time. A key focus within this is ensuring that children and young

people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are fully included in education, with the right support in place to ensure every child has a place in learning and is safe.

There is the opportunity to connect the work of the Education Reference Group to wider links within the Safeguarding in Education Team and the broader work across the Partnership. Strong connections have been made to establish a strong line of sight including links to the Harm Outside The Home strategy work, Youth Justice Partnership Board and the KBSP Steering Group.

- **Child Sexual Abuse Steering Group (CSA):**

Established in 2021 under the KBSP arrangements, the CSA Steering Group set out to strengthen Bristol's response to CSA. Its key deliverables included developing a local Theory of Change, implementing national CSA pathway resources, and producing a city-wide CSA strategy supported by a strategic needs assessment. The group also committed to creating a multi-agency workforce development plan, building a system performance dashboard, and embedding practice changes across agencies based on learning and new approaches. The Partnership remain committed to delivering on these deliverables and there has already been significant commitment to the work around CSA, including the initial implementation of the response pathway. However, the Steering Group recognised that there was still work to be done and therefore a piece of scrutiny work was commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of the multi-agency efforts in safeguarding children in respect of CSA in

the family context and provide insights for improvement. The Partnership expects to receive the scrutiny report in the autumn and the findings will help to ensure that the Partnership are continuing to improve the response to CSA.

- **Preventing Serious Violence Board:**

The Board is formally accountable to the Keeping Children Safe Board, while oversight of compliance with Serious Violence Duties is the responsibility of the Keeping Communities Safe Board. As such, progress reports are submitted to both boards twice a year to ensure coordinated governance and shared accountability.

In 2024/25, the Board actively championed the inclusion of lived experience in decision-making, which directly influenced strategic priorities—most notably the decision not to host the Knife Angel in Bristol. Significant progress was also made in addressing harm outside the home, including the launch of the Safer Connections Multi-Disciplinary Team, operational from June 2025. Co-produced with partners and shaped by community voices, this team adopts a contextual safeguarding approach: mapping risk areas, gathering intelligence, engaging communities, and implementing environmental interventions to reduce harm.

The Board also oversaw the development of the Partnership Harm Outside The Home Strategy, due for publication in July 2025. This strategy provides a unified framework for agencies and communities, clarifies shared responsibilities and referral pathways, and commits to ongoing evaluation and improvement. This work reflects a strong

alignment between Bristol’s community safety and children’s safeguarding partnerships, enabling a coordinated city-wide response that places young people’s wellbeing and lived experience at the heart of safeguarding efforts.

● **Transitional Safeguarding task and finish group:**

The Transitional Safeguarding Group is a multi-agency group accountable to the KBSP Keeping Adults Safe Board; however, it relates to the safeguarding of children work because its purpose is to develop a coordinated safeguarding approach for young people aged 16–25, particularly those at risk of exploitation and who may or may not have defined care and support needs. Informed by the Care Act 2014 and its statutory guidance, the group aims to prevent a cliff edge in support as young people transition into adulthood. It brings together children’s and adult services, alongside other key partners, to explore how safeguarding systems can be better joined up, develop accessible guidance and procedures for the workforce, and identify multi-agency interventions. The group also works closely with police to improve responses to exploitation, including the development of a disruption toolkit and strategies to increase conviction rates. This work is underpinned by a commitment to improving outcomes for older adolescents and ensuring they are supported safely into adulthood.

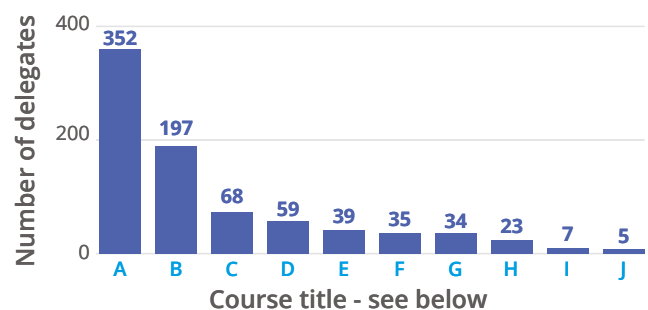
In June 2024, a new Transitional Safeguarding Protocol was adopted to support young people transitioning between services and the group are also in the process of producing promotional materials that feature lived experience to raise awareness and improve practice.

KBSP training

The KBSP delivers a range of safeguarding training across the Partnership, covering topics such as child protection, safeguarding adults, exploitation, and safer recruitment. Training is offered in a hybrid format, with both face-to-face sessions at venues across Bristol and online options. Feedback from delegates indicates that having both options is highly valued.

In 2024/25, a total of 819 people attended KBSP training. The most popular courses were “Working Together: Our Shared Responsibility” and “Advanced Child Protection for Safeguarding Leads and Specialist Practitioners.” A new course, “Safeguarding Adults Training,” was introduced this year and quickly became the third most attended, highlighting a previously unmet need.

Number of delegates attending by course



- A.** KBSP Working Together: Our Shared Responsibility
- B.** KBSP Advanced Child Protection Training For Safeguarding Leads and Specialist Practitioners
- C.** KBSP Safeguarding Adults
- D.** KBSP Child Protection For Managers
- E.** GCP2 Training
- F.** KBSP Raising Awareness of Child Exploitation; Contextual Safeguarding approach
- G.** KBSP Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding
- H.** KBSP Safer Recruitment - Children, Adults and Education
- I.** KBSP Trauma Informed Practice
- J.** KBSP Working in Partnership to Keep Communities Safe

Financially, the training programme generated £66,800 in income, with expenses totalling £11,066.80, resulting in a net balance of £55,733.20. The majority of income came from the main training programme, particularly the most popular courses.

Funded places were provided for the police, health, and local authority staff, while 551 places were taken up by a range of independent organisations, early years settings, primary and secondary schools, specialist education providers, and other community partners. The KBSP continues to see strong engagement from a diverse range of organisations.

To measure impact, the KBSP added a question to its feedback forms asking whether the course would inform future practice. Over 98% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that it would. Feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, praising the quality of trainers, the relevance of content, and the engaging delivery. Building on this success, the KBSP plans to expand its feedback process in 2025/26 to further assess the quality and impact of its training.

Some feedback from participants:

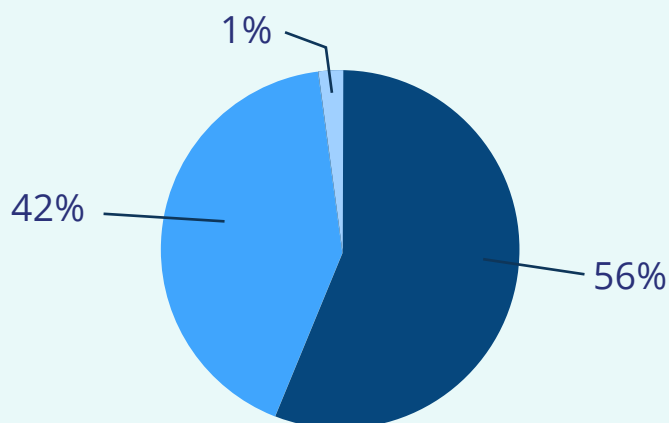
"The trainer was lovely and very knowledgeable, the resources, the workbook video and breaks were all well timed. Following a social work degree, and 5 years of practice, was the first training that considered different aspects and not just generically covering the types of abuse. Thank you, I found it very useful."

"Brilliant course with so much information about a social care system I had no idea about."

"Thank you for running an informative course. As well as supplying the links to further my knowledge and understanding."

"The facilitator is a very skilled and professional trainer - I am very impressed with the presentation and multi-media approach online."

Will the course inform your future practice?



Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. Scrutiny and Assurance

Scrutiny and assurance activities are carried out through a range of structured, multi-layered processes designed to monitor, challenge, and improve safeguarding practice across agencies. These include independent scrutiny reports, inspections, multi-agency case audits, thematic reviews and deep dives, data analysis and dashboards, Section 11 audits and peer reviews, reflective practice forums, and action plans with follow-ups on recommendations.

Scrutiny of Child Protection Strategy Meetings

During this reporting period, the Independent Chair of KBSP led a scrutiny project on Child Protection Strategy meetings, following a CSPR published in January 2024. The project involved shadowing strategy meetings, collecting data, and interviewing relevant professionals.

Key findings included:

- Evidence of thoughtful practice and responsive actions across the sample.
- Variation in the timeliness of initial meetings, often due to availability and scheduling delays—an issue also highlighted in the CSPR.
- Identification of a recent learning point from a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR): children were sometimes inappropriately used as a protective factor in cases involving parent mental health concerns.

In response, a briefing was shared with health colleagues to reinforce that children

should not be used as a protective factor. Additionally, a new Strategy Meeting Request form has been introduced to ensure the right information is provided and the correct partners attend meetings. A review is also scheduled to assess and streamline the process for booking strategy meetings.

Ofsted Focussed Visit

On 18 and 19 February 2025, Ofsted inspectors reviewed Bristol's 'Front Door' services, which handle contacts, referrals, and decisions about child protection enquiries. This visit was conducted under the ILACS framework.

Key findings included:

- Practitioners are well supported, morale is high, and there is strong commitment to improving children's lives.
- Leaders have made significant progress in staff retention and resilience, positively impacting services.
- Senior leaders' model systemic practice and actively oversee performance and quality.
- There is clear evidence of capturing children's voices, wishes, and feelings.

The main area for improvement is the timeliness and consistency of initial decision-making at the Front Door, to ensure all children receive prompt and appropriate support. Work will continue to strengthen performance management and quality assurance in this area. The findings from this inspection will inform the upcoming Family First changes launching in April 2025.

Multi-Agency Audits (2024/25)

Throughout 2024/25, the Partnership completed several multi-agency audits focusing on:

- Children and young people affected by domestic abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Mental health
- Section 11 audit

Each audit reviewed the previous six months of partner agency involvement with children and young people. Partners answered reflective questions to assess cases, identify good practice, and highlight areas for improvement as outlined below:

Domestic Abuse

- Recommendations from the audit are being actioned across the Partnership.
- The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process in Bristol is under review to improve practice and reduce risk for victims/survivors, incorporating audit recommendations. This review will also consider findings from the upcoming police MARAC peer review.
- A need for support options for male perpetrators was identified and addressed through the introduction of the Drive programme in Bristol. The KBSP Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board (DASV) has promoted the programme to the workforce.
- Following Drive's success, the Partnership is considering launching a 'Men and Masculinities' programme for low to medium-risk perpetrators in 2025/26.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- The audit highlighted the need to continue to improve a gendered response to extra-familial sexual abuse, particularly regarding recognition and support for boys and young men.
- A framework and strategy have been developed to set standards for working with extra-familial harm and to continue to raise awareness of sexual exploitation of boys and young men, including monitoring service reach.
- There were positive examples of parents/carers being supported when children returned from missing episodes.
- The audit identified the importance of regular multi-agency oversight for these cases, and ensure discussions are focused on exploitation as well as serious violence. The 'Harm Outside The Home' initiative aims to address this by providing a more strategic overview of risk.
- Concerns about the use of translators in certain cases have been noted and will be addressed in 2025/26.

Mental Health

- This audit focused on support for young people previously sectioned due to mental health concerns.
- It identified gaps in agencies' understanding of each other's roles, which were quickly addressed by connecting the right professionals.
- There was a notable difference in responsibilities between statutory partners and voluntary sector agencies.
- The KBSP newsletter featured a section on support options and referral

pathways for young people, which became the most downloaded edition.

- Across several audits, the need to promote the KBSP Escalation Policy was identified. The Section 11 audit showed positive impact, with 73–74% of 172 respondents aware of their agency's escalation and whistleblowing policies – a 15% increase from the previous year.

Section 11 Audit

- Conducted jointly with the five safeguarding children's partnerships across Avon and Somerset, using a survey completed by 142 practitioners and 23 police officers in Bristol.
- Key findings:
 - ◆ 69% attended multi-agency training.
 - ◆ 79% attended Child Protection training (introductory to advanced).
 - ◆ 71% adopted a Think Family approach; 87% of police felt confident identifying child neglect.
 - ◆ 96% accessed KBSP resources in the past year.
 - ◆ 91% knew their organisation's safeguarding lead.
 - ◆ 92% were aware of their safeguarding policy; 71% knew about the Southwest Child Protection Procedures (SWCPP).
 - ◆ 82% of police were aware of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
 - ◆ 98% of practitioners were aware of at least one KBSP safeguarding policy/ tool.



7. Engaging children and young people to hear their views and lived experiences

Between April 2024 and March 2025, the Safeguarding Shadow Board has played a vital role in amplifying the voices of children and young people across Bristol, particularly those from equality groups. The Board provides a direct platform for young people to shape safeguarding priorities and influence decision-making at both operational and strategic levels.

A key achievement this year was the creation of a youth-led knife crime awareness video for parents, produced in response to tragic incidents that occurred in early 2024. Widely shared across the Partnership and viewed over 1,000 times, this resource exemplifies the Board's ability to co-produce impactful and relevant content. The Shadow Board also influenced police training by engaging with Avon and Somerset Police on the ethics of Stop and Search, helping to shape how over 2,000 officers are trained to interact with children and young people.

Youth voice has become a standing item at the Preventing Serious Violence Partnership Board, with testimonies from young people directly informing workstream priorities and key decisions, such as the collective choice not to bring the Knife Angel to Bristol. Engagement with senior leaders, including the Director of Children's Services, led to the identification of three priority areas for the Children's Board: youth voice, mental health services, and support for those at risk of exclusion. The Shadow Board's input has also been embedded into the city's upcoming Corporate Strategy following direct engagement with councillors.

Additionally, the KBSP has contributed to the national Family Voice Project, sharing resources and best practice on effective engagement with families. The Shadow Board's work was showcased at a national webinar, further raising the profile of youth engagement in Bristol.

Overall, the Safeguarding Shadow Board has demonstrated the value of meaningful youth participation, ensuring that the lived experiences and priorities of young people are central to safeguarding strategy and practice in Bristol.

8. Looking ahead and areas of focus for 2025/26

Looking ahead to 2025/26, the KBSP faces several important developments and areas to focus on. A major milestone will be the publication of the thematic CSPR into serious youth violence in September 2025, alongside the launch of the Harm Outside The Home strategy and the implementation of a Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) structure. The focus will be on fully embedding these strategies, with ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure they are effective and responsive to community needs.

Service developments will include the launch of the Safer Connections Multi-Disciplinary Team, the development of a new Children and Education Strategy led by the Keeping Children Safe Board, and the rollout of the Families First programme, which will strengthen early help and prevention, including a new adolescent service.

Quality assurance will be enhanced through a new scrutiny plan developed with the Independent Scrutineer, regular multi-agency audits, and a continued focus on learning from practice, particularly around CSA. Communication and engagement will be improved by revamping the KBSP website, expanding social media presence, rebranding the newsletter, and introducing a targeted marketing plan for training. The Section 11 audit will also become a larger, collaborative event across the region.



Participation and youth voice remain a priority. The Safeguarding Shadow Board is leading a youth-led video project on Transitional Safeguarding in partnership with Barnardo's, while a new participation network across the Children and Families Directorate aims to standardise good practice, promote youth-led initiatives, ensure consistent reimbursement for participation, and connect professionals with relevant engagement opportunities. Academic research with the University of Bristol will creatively capture the voices of young people affected by serious violence, with findings to be shared at community events throughout the year.

In 2025/26, the KBSP will introduce new training courses on CSA Safeguarding and Community Safety, as well as combined courses on Harmful Practices and Transitional Safeguarding, responding to workforce needs and statutory review recommendations. A new Training Group will coordinate training needs and development across the Partnership, ensuring a collaborative, data-driven approach to learning and development. The overarching objectives remain to promote effective multi-agency safeguarding, develop and review relevant training, audit workforce needs, share best practice, and use data to inform business decisions. The Training Group will play a key role in developing courses, responding to statutory review recommendations, supporting programme planning, and ensuring consistency and quality in the local training offer.



A new Audit subgroup has been developed; they will conduct quarterly quality assurance audits to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding processes and procedures across children's and adults' services. These audits are informed by locally identified themes and learning from national reviews, and they aim to provide assurance to the Boards and the Steering Group that safeguarding systems are robust and fit for purpose. The findings help inform frontline practice, highlight good practice, shape workforce training, and assess the overall impact of safeguarding activity across the Partnership. Where shortfalls are identified, the group recommends actions and escalates risks or concerns to the relevant governance bodies which will enhance the effectiveness of multi-agency audits. Upcoming audits will focus on children detained in custody overnight and CSA, with findings shared to inform future Partnership activity.

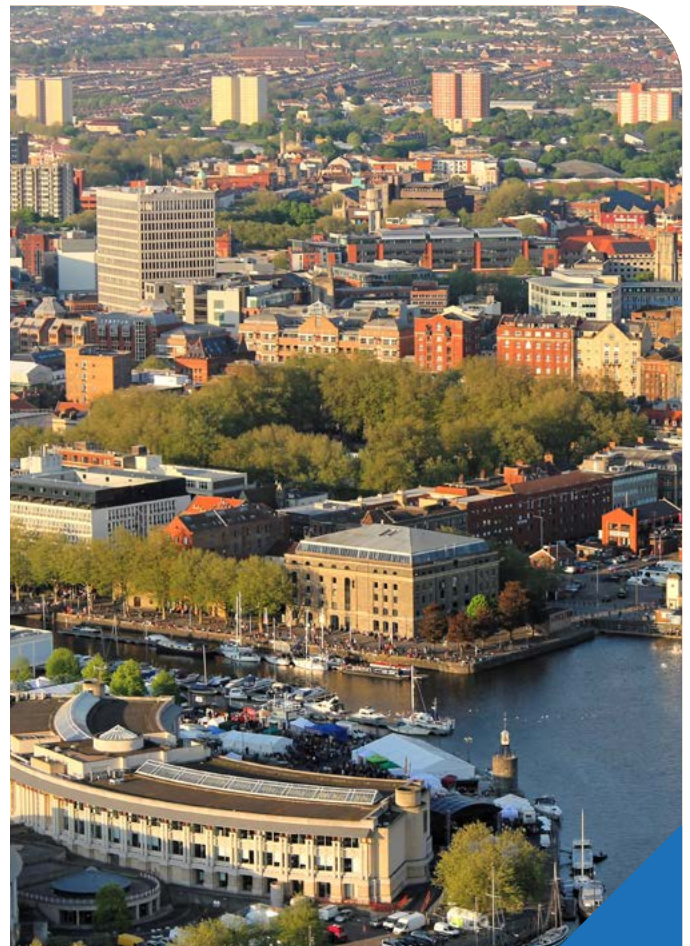
9. Conclusion

The 2024/25 reporting year has been a period of significant progress, innovation, and strengthened collaboration across the KBSP. From the development of the Safer Connections Multi-Disciplinary Team and the upcoming publication of the Harm Outside The Home strategy, to the impactful work of the Safeguarding Shadow Board and the continued evolution of our training offer, there is clear evidence of a system that is learning, adapting, and striving to improve outcomes for children, adults, and communities.

The shared commitment to co-production, data-informed practice, and inclusive engagement has underpinned much of this progress. While areas for development remain, the Partnership is well-positioned to respond with ambition and integrity. As we move into 2025/26, our focus remains on delivering meaningful, measurable change, strengthening our collective safeguarding response, and ensuring that the voices of children, young people, and families continue to shape our work. A key priority will be to build on our ability to capture and evidence the impact of our activities, developing robust methods to measure outcomes and inform future practice.

Over the next 12 months, the Partnership will continue to work on the following:

- Ensuring a consistent response to child sexual abuse.
- Capturing the voice of the child, young people and their families.
- Development of the Children and Education strategy.
- Ensuring that new KBSP multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are effective and that the Business Unit continue to support the delivery of our safeguarding priorities.
- Using data to inform business decisions in relation to training needs of the workforce and developing priorities.





Designed by Bristol Design, Bristol City Council November 2025 – BD17973