

Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2018 - 2019



Foreword

As the safeguarding partners for Doncaster, as defined by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, we are very pleased to present our Annual Report 2018 – 2019 on local multi-agency arrangements to safeguarding children. This report provides an overview on what has been done to keep children safe from abuse and neglect, through delivering the requirements of the Government’s statutory Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018.

The new safeguarding partnership arrangements build on and replace those of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board. We wish to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of all those involved in keeping children in Doncaster safe since local safeguarding children boards were established in 2006.

The world is changing fast for children, families and communities, and with it the pressures and the risks that must be safeguarded against. The safeguarding of children continues to evolve at local, national, and even international levels, so we must continue to meet the challenges with an open attitude of learning. This of course extends across the partnership of all agencies and organisations working together to safeguard children, and we also need to be learning from the children, families and communities we work with.

Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group, South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster Council with Doncaster Children’s Services Trust are designated by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as ‘safeguarding partners’ for Doncaster borough, and as such we are accountable for the effectiveness of the local arrangements to keep children safe. Safeguarding is, however, **everyone’s** responsibility, and through the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership we are working together with a wide range of other agencies including health services, schools, early years settings, social care, and voluntary, community and faith organisations.

Our vision is clear:

We work together to help Doncaster children and young people to be safe!



Damien Allen
Acting Chief Executive
Doncaster Council



Paul Moffat
Chief Executive
Doncaster Children’s
Services Trust



Shaun Morley
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South Yorkshire
Police



Jackie Pederson
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Doncaster Clinical
Commissioning Group

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Executive Summary

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 designate Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group, South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster Council with Doncaster Children's Services Trust as 'safeguarding partners' for Doncaster borough, and are accountable for the effectiveness of the local arrangements to keep children safe. These new local arrangements centre on partnership working with a wide range of relevant agencies through Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP), which builds on and replace those of the Doncaster's Local Safeguarding Children Board.

National statutory guidance Working Together 2018 (Chapter 3, paragraphs 41 – 46) requires safeguarding partners to publish a report at least every 12 months setting out what has been done because of the local safeguarding children arrangements.

Local safeguarding arrangements include the following elements:

- Family life
- Universal services
- Early Help
- Statutory services – children's social care
 - Child in Need Plan
 - Child Protection Plan
 - Child in Care

The intention is that intervention will be at the lowest appropriate level, so that children and their families are not involved in safeguarding procedures if that can be avoided.

Doncaster has a population of approximately 307,374. It is the 48th most deprived out of 326 local authority areas in England, with an estimated 13,930 children and young people aged 19 and under, the number of children living in conditions of poverty is higher than the national average. Hence, a significant proportion of families in Doncaster will face significant challenges in caring for and raising their children. While we should not assume that economic and social deprivation are a direct cause of safeguarding issues in a community, deprivation is nevertheless regarded as significant among the conditions in which child maltreatment, abuse and neglect occur.

The demand for children's services in Doncaster is higher than the national average: referral rates to children's social care are higher in Doncaster than national, as are the rate of Child Protection Plans and Children Looked After. The higher s.47 Child Protection enquiries and Child Protection Conference rates are also a feature of this higher level of overall demand.

Early Help services have a key role in addressing lower levels of need and in preventing family difficulties escalating to the point where children's social care might be needed. The provision of single-agency Early Help continues to increase, though there has also been some decline in multi-agency Early Help.

The Multi-Agency Access Point received 16,698 contacts requesting a service in 2018-19, reflecting a broad awareness of needs and safeguarding issues amongst partner agencies, and the level of deprivation in the borough. Approximately a quarter of contacts are taken forward by children's social care for an assessment, and of these 30% then proceed to a statutory service (which may include child protection investigation). The level of children in need of a statutory service is declining though remains above national averages. Work to understand the true nature of the patterns of demand in Doncaster remains ongoing.

The trend is a steady decline over recent years, and there are no Child Protection Plans that have been in place for two years or longer. This suggests that effective early intervention is preventing problems from escalating to a point where child protection procedures are required.

Participation of children and young people in their Child Protection Conferences is significantly high in Doncaster, as a result of pro-active work by Doncaster Children's Services Trust. This has resulted in many benefits including more meaningful contributions and greater engagement with Child Protection Plans, reduction in length of plans, more successful 'stepdown' to Child in Need or Early Help Plans, and better engagement with other professionals including school.

Effective 'Pre-Proceedings' processes – where a there is prospect of a Care Order being sought to take a child into care – has resulted in 44% of cases being resolved through no further progression to Court, hence successfully diverting children from care.

At the end of the year, 534 children are in the care of Doncaster Children's Services Trust. The continued reduction of the number of cared for children reflects a number of successful strategies including Edge of Care interventions, Pre-Proceedings, and multi-agency working to explore all possibilities to re-unite children with parents or family members.

DSCP has received assurance of effective partnership working in respect of Children Missing from Home and Care, Private Fostering and allegations against professionals and those in positions of trust.

DSCP also reports on progress against its Strategic Priorities:

- Strategic Priority 1 - DSCP is assured that effective arrangements are in place for responding to key safeguarding risks and that there is consistently good practice across safeguarding services.
- Strategic Priority 2 - DSCP has a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the safeguarding system in Doncaster and can evidence how this is used to influence the Board's priorities.
- Strategic Priority 3 - DSCP communicates effectively to ensure that the work of the Board is well publicised, that learning is disseminated and that the voice of children, young people, practitioners and the wider community (including minority groups and faith groups) are able to influence the Board's work.
- Strategic Priority 4 - DSCP is aware of emerging issues which have implications across the partnership and works effectively to ensure appropriate action is taken.

DSCP has also delivered a multi-agency training programme across a wide range of safeguarding issues which was accessed by 2117 professionals.

Purpose of the Report

Working Together 2018 (Chapter 3, paragraphs 41 – 46) requires safeguarding partners to publish a report at least every 12 months setting out what has been done as a result of the local safeguarding children arrangements. This is in order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the safeguarding activities undertaken.

It covers the work undertaken by Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership in the financial year April 2018 to March 2019, assessing the progress made by the Board as a multi-agency partnership in delivering its Business Plan.

The report is intended for professionals in partner agencies and voluntary organisations as well as others who have an interest in the safeguarding of children and young people, and is made available to the general public via the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership's website <http://www.dscp.co.uk/>

The report will be presented to Doncaster Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel. It will also be shared with the Schools, the Children and Families Strategic Partnership Board, and the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership, all of whom have a wider remit to promote better outcomes for children. DSCP leads and influences the children's safeguarding agenda in these wider political and partnership arenas and is held to account for its impact.

What are the local safeguarding arrangements?

The arrangements that each local authority area are required to have in place are described by the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Family life - Parents have primary responsibility for their children. Public services have a duty to provide support to children and families. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance) states that *both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.*

Universal Services - All services that provide services for children and families (child care, schools, health services, sports, leisure, etc.) are expected to provide those services in an environment that is safe. They are expected to have safeguarding policies and procedures, and to train their staff and volunteers to be aware of signs of abuse and neglect, and to raise issues of concern with their agency’s safeguarding lead or refer to children’s services. They are also expected to respond to allegations against staff in positions of trust with children.

Early Help – where difficulties for children begin to emerge they may receive additional help from universal services, possibly by services co-ordinating their support to a child and family through a ‘Team Around the Child’.

Statutory Services – where there are concerns about possible or actual maltreatment, abuse or neglect, or more complex family problems, a family, a member of the public, or a member of staff from an agency involved with the child should make a referral to children’s services.

Children’s services, with the support of safeguarding specialists from agencies such as Health and Police, will consider whether there are safeguarding concerns, whether any immediate action should be taken, and will carry out a detailed assessment of need to identify what, if any, additional support may be needed. Children’s Services will then either take no further action, agree an early help action plan or work with the child and family and other agencies involved through:

- A **Child in Need Plan** – a voluntary arrangement with children and families to receive support led by a social worker along with any other agency involved with the child and family.
- A **Child Protection Plan** – a social worker and any other agency involved with the child and family will identify what needs to happen or to change for the child to be safe at home.
- **Child Looked After by the local authority** – in the exceptional circumstances where a child’s safety or welfare at home cannot be assured, children’s services may apply to the Courts for an order allowing the child to found another place to live, for example, with foster carers. Where a home situation improves, a looked after child may be able to return home to live with parents or with close relatives. In some situations, a child might eventually be adopted, or a young person may live independently once they are of an appropriate age to do so.

The elements of the safeguarding arrangements work together as a **system**. Wherever possible, responsibility remains with the child’s family, the level of support provided the level of need, and statutory interventions such as involvement of children’s services or Police are kept to a minimum.

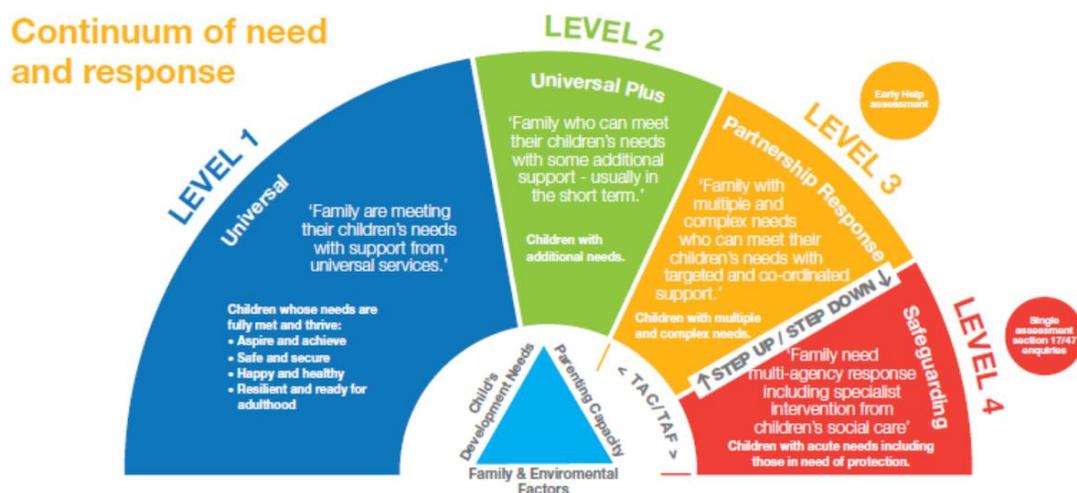


Figure 1: DSCP Levels of Need: the continuum of need and response.

An illustration of the overall system for services to children and families is provided in DSCP’s Levels of need document (November 2017) which uses figure 1 above to illustrate a continuum of need and response. In the Levels of Need diagram, ‘safeguarding’ – that is, protection from abuse and neglect – is described as Level 4. However, the diagram also shows the importance of earlier intervention and support in reducing or removing the need for children and families to become subject to safeguarding procedures. The intention is that intervention will be at the lowest appropriate level, so that children and their families are not involved in safeguarding procedures if that can be avoided.

Safeguarding partners and Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership

The local safeguarding children arrangements are the responsibility of the three 'safeguarding partners' – Chief Officers of Doncaster Council, Clinical Commissioning Group, and the Police. The safeguarding partners have agreed a structure to oversee the implementation and effectiveness of the local arrangements – this involves a much wider group of agencies that have key safeguarding responsibilities, and is referred to as Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP). This provides governance and accountability so that all agencies involved are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities and that they work together to co-ordinate all their safeguarding activities.

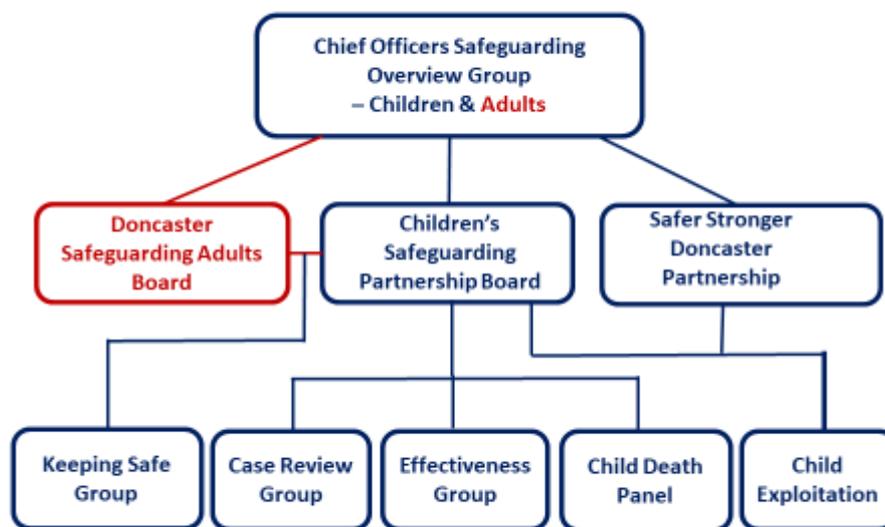


Figure 2: Structure of Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership

For further details of the local safeguarding arrangements, see the document Local Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements to succeed Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board in response to Working Together 2018 available on the DSCP website.

Links with other strategic partnerships

The DSCP works very closely with a number of other multi-agency strategic partnerships:

- Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership
- Children & Young People's Partnership and Early Help Strategy Group

There are overlapping areas of concern across these partnerships and others. Doncaster has recently put in place a Chief Officers Safeguarding Overview Partnership (COSOP) in order to ensure that there is co-ordination across partnerships and linkages with other partnerships and plans such as Doncaster Growing Together, and the plan for the strategic partnership Team Doncaster.

The local context for safeguarding in Doncaster

Population

Approximately 307,374 people live in Doncaster, in terms of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 Doncaster is:

- 48th most deprived out of 326 local authority areas in England
- 4th most deprived out of 21 local authority areas in the Yorkshire and Humber Region
- The 2nd most deprived area in South Yorkshire
- The 4th most deprived area in its comparator group
- 1 in 5 Lower Super Output Areas in Doncaster is in within the most deprived 10% of the UK.

A rise in the number of cohabiting partners, step families, lone parents and the recording of same sex relationships in the past 10 years has changed family composition in Doncaster. The latest 'Information for Doncaster' (information provided by DMBC) shows that nearly 71.9% of families with dependent children are a couple; which means nearly 1 in 3 families (28.1%) are lone parent families. The main difference between Doncaster and the national picture is the higher proportions of families that are cohabiting, particularly where this involves step-families.

The population of young people aged 0-24 is 89,500 which is 29.1% of the total population. This is the same as our comparator group and but slightly lower than national proportions at 30.2%.

The number of children in poverty in Doncaster is 21.0%, which is higher than the national average of 16.6%. This equates to around 13,930 children and young people aged 19 and under. Poverty is not distributed equally across the borough with some lower super output areas (LSOA) having over 50% of children in poverty compared to other area only having 5%.

In Doncaster, 6.2% of residents were born outside the UK. The main group outside of white British is 'white other' which equates to 3.1% of the population aged 0-24. The main language in Doncaster, for people aged 3-15, if not English, is Polish.

Doncaster is the second largest economy in South Yorkshire; a large proportion of the population is in receipt of state benefits. Approximately 3.3% of the population in Doncaster claim job seekers allowance or universal credit compared to 2.2% nationally. In the 18-24 age category, 5.5% of the population are claim job seekers allowance or universal credit compared to 3.0% nationally.

The number of 16-18 years old not in education, employment or training is 5.3% of the population as at June 2017. This is higher than the national average.

The proportion of people in Doncaster who achieve a Level 2 or level 3 qualifications by the age of 19 is 78.9% and 44.5% respectively. This is lower than the regional (81.6%) and (53.6%) and national (83.6%) and (57.5%) averages respectively.

The NSPCC have estimated that one in five children in the UK is impacted by domestic abuse. However, Growing Futures estimate that in Doncaster this is one in three children. This suggests that more children compared to the national or regional average may require additional services to achieve their best outcomes.

Ethnicity

The numbers of pupils in Doncaster are predominantly White British (34,458), and White other (2,639).

Doncaster has fewer school age children from ethnic minority groups than regional and national averages. The percentage of primary and secondary school age children from ethnic minority groups is 15.9% and 13.0% respectively. This is much lower than the regional (26.3% and 23.3%) and national (32.1% and 29.1%) averages respectively.

Health

The health and wellbeing of children in Doncaster is generally worse than the England average. The infant mortality rate of 4.8 per 1000 is higher than both the regional and national rate of 4.1 and 3.9 respectively (2014-16).

The smoking status of mothers at time of delivery in Doncaster is higher, at 13.0%, compared to the national average of 10.7% (2016/17).

Children in Doncaster have average levels of obesity: 23.0% of children aged 4-5 years and 35.8% of children aged 10-11 years. (2016/17).

Life expectancy at birth for males, in Doncaster is 77.8, lower than the regional and national averages in 2014-2016. There is a higher life expectancy for females at 81.5 however this still compares unfavourably with regional and national averages.

Family Composition

Family composition is changing in numbers, with variable arrangements rather than the traditional married family household. A rise of cohabiting partners, step families, lone parents and same sex relationships in the past decade has resulted in a very different profile of family composition in Doncaster. The latest information shows that over 71.9% of families with dependent children are couples, with almost one in three children living in lone parent families (28.1%). A key difference between the family composition profile in Doncaster and that found nationally, is the higher proportion of families that are co-habiting.

Deprivation

Doncaster is currently ranked 48 out of 326 local authorities according to the index of multiple deprivation and is fourth worst of the 21 Yorkshire and Humber local authorities (latest Government release of Index of Multiple Deprivation is 2015). One in five of Lower Super Output Areas (a geographical area with typically a population of 1500 people) in Doncaster is in the most deprived 10% nationally. This is illustrated in figure 3 below.

Overall deprivation 2015

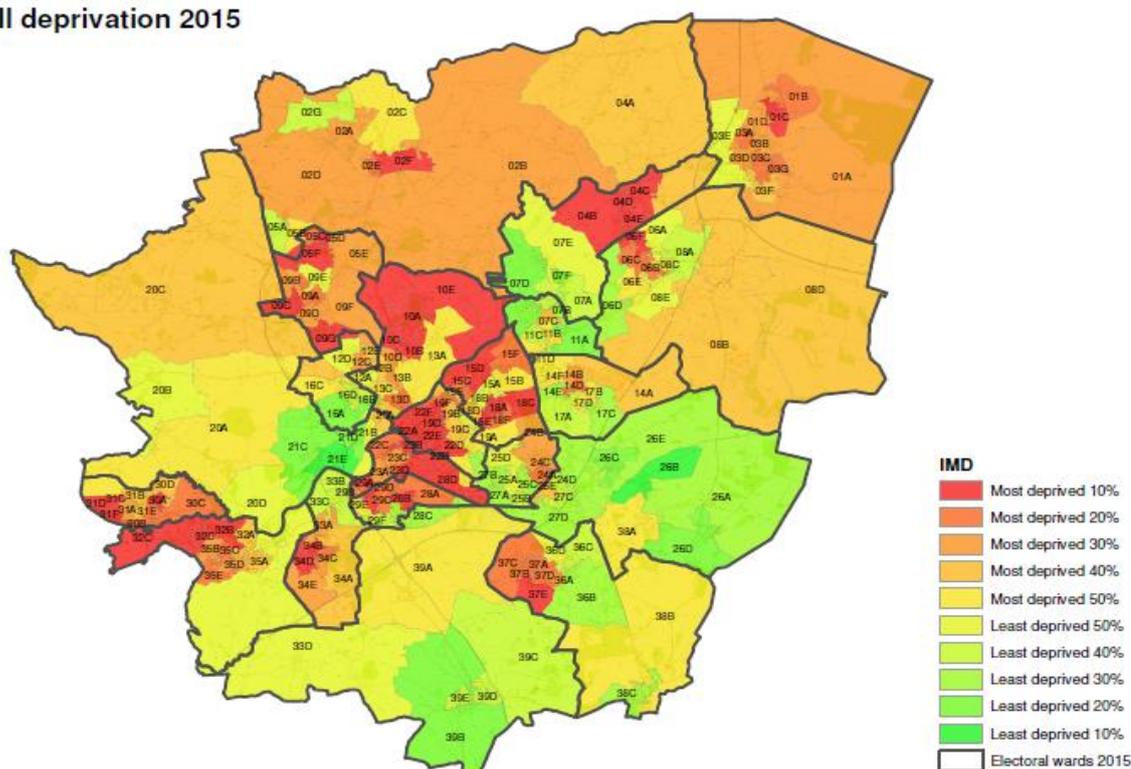


Figure 3: Deprivation levels in Doncaster Borough in relation to national figures.

Eligibility for free school meals (June 2018) is means-tested on household income, principally welfare benefits, so is a useful proxy indicator for deprivation. Doncaster is above national and statistical neighbour percentages for primary and secondary schools.

	Primary	Secondary	Special	PRU
Doncaster	16.6%	15.3%	35.6%	30.7%
National	14.2%	13.3%	36.7%	41.8%
South Yorkshire	16.4%	15.5%	38.2%	43.4%
Statistical neighbours	16.2%	14.9%	37.9%	40.0%

Table Z: % Eligibility for free school meals.

*Doncaster Councils 'statistical neighbours' – 10 local authorities with similar demographic characteristics – are Rotherham, Barnsley (both considered 'extremely close' to Doncaster), North East Lincolnshire, Wigan, Wakefield, Tameside, Dudley, North East Lincolnshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Redcar and Cleveland ('very close').

A report **By us, for us: A youth-led commission on child poverty in Doncaster**, commissioned by the Children and Families Executive Board (September 2018) concluded the following:

in Doncaster almost 1 child in 3 lives in poverty – that's over 20,000 children. Poverty affects children's lives in lots of different ways: their family may not be able to afford enough food, heat their home, buy birthday presents, or could fall into debt. Young people can lose their homes, or become victims of crime if their area is unsafe. Poverty affects how well children do in school, how healthy they are and how they behave. It also affects their future – what kind of jobs they can get and whether they end up being poor as adults.

Summary

The data above suggests that a significant proportion of families in Doncaster will face significant challenges in caring for and raising their children. While we should not assume that economic and social deprivation are a direct cause of safeguarding issues in a community, deprivation is nevertheless regarded as significant among the conditions in which child maltreatment, abuse and neglect occur.

Other research, **The relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect: an evidence review**, Bywaters et.al., 2016, states that *There is a strong association between families' socio-economic circumstances and the chances that their children will experience child abuse and neglect...The greater the economic hardship the greater the likelihood and severity of child abuse and neglect.* For example, Child Protection Plan rates in neighbourhoods among the most deprived 10 per cent in England as a whole were almost 11 times higher than rates in the most advantaged 10 per cent of neighbourhoods (Bywaters et.al. 2014). However, it should be noted that this is 'co-relation,' not necessarily 'causation,' and there will be other social and structural factors that are significant in the causation of child abuse and neglect. Nevertheless, the data in this section confirm that services for children and families in Doncaster face a significant challenge in responding to children's safeguarding issues.

Demand for children's services in Doncaster is higher than the national average: referral rates to children's social care are higher in Doncaster than national, as are the rate of Child Protection Plans and Children Looked After. The higher s.47 Child Protection enquiries and Child Protection Conference rates are also a feature of this higher level of overall demand.

Effectiveness of the Safeguarding Arrangements

Working Together 2018 requires the safeguarding partnership to use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help, and report on effectiveness in its Annual Report.

Early Help

The **Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families 2017 – 2020** aims to provide prevention and earlier intervention, by providing support to families when a need is identified or as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life. This can be from the point of conception through to the teenage years, to prevent or reduce the need for statutory services, though Early Help relates to a much wider set of outcomes for children beyond safeguarding (for example, ready for school, school absence, mental health, etc.). We might expect to see that Early Help has some impact on reducing the need for Children’s Social Care involvement, that significant proportion of safeguarding referrals to children’s services had already been known to Early Help, and that a significant use of Early Help when a child’s case is ‘stepped down’ from a Child Protection Plan, or when a child returns home from care.

During 2018 – 2019, there were 6181 referrals made for Early Help support.

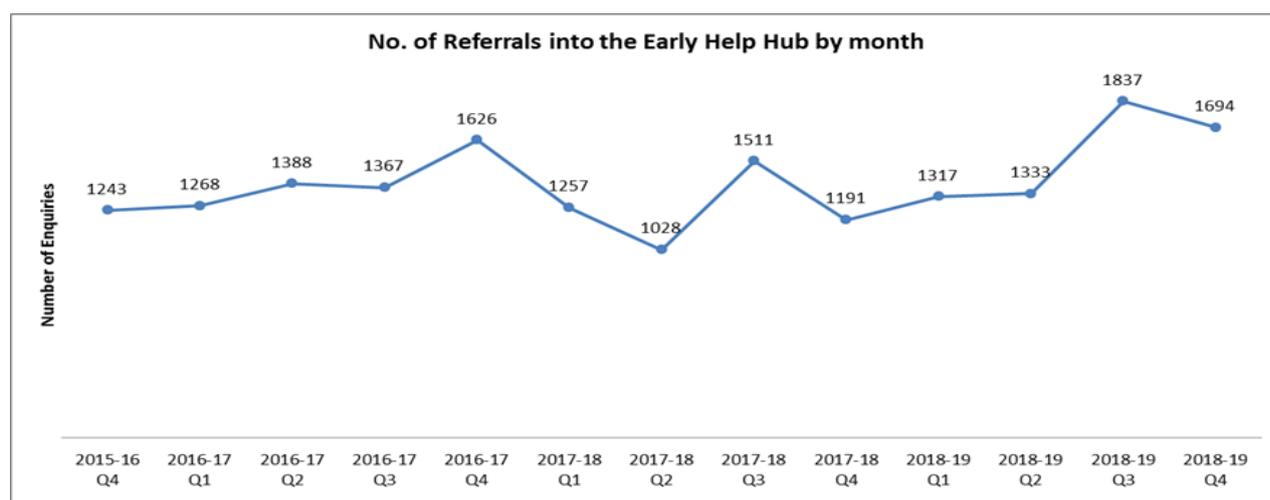


Figure 3: Referrals to the Early Help Hub

When the need for Early Help is identified by any agency, contact is made with the Early Help Hub to agree the level of intervention and who should act as Lead Professional. This Early Help ‘Pathway’ is used well by Education and the Parenting and Family Support service, with Health partners tending to use the system for more complex cases. There has been significant input from the Early Help Coordinator team and intervention from the Early Help Strategy group over the last year to encourage Health Services to play a bigger role in Early Help.

	2017-18	2018-19
Single agency Early Help	535 – 25%	1003 – 41%
Multi-agency Early Help	1640 – 75%	1429 – 59%
Total	2175	2432

Table 1: Early Help open cases at the end of the year

The use of the Single Agency Early Help (Level 2 in the DSCP Levels of Need framework) continues to increase for less complex Early Help and when former multi-agency cases progress well. Single Agency cases do not require an assessment or multiagency meeting process; this means support to the family can happen rapidly and develops practitioner capacity to work with more families. Out of the current single agency cases just over half are led by Education providers.

Multi-agency Early Help has, in contrast declined over the year; this is noteworthy as multi-agency Early Help is at Level 3 in the Levels of Need framework, which plays a role in preventing family difficulties escalating to the point where Children’s Services need to be involved (Level 4).

The Parenting and Families Support Service (PAFSS) and Education remain the main case holders for multi-agency Early help, the proportion of their multi-agency Early Help cases have remained static over the last year at 40.7% and 44.9% respectively (reference: Early Help Progress Report to DSCP, April 2019).

Waiting times for help remain an issue. The average timescale from allocation to completion of an assessment remains over the 30 day target, though has improved over the course of 2018-19. Waiting and assessment times over timescale will impact on children and their families and may affect disengagement and step up rates. The closure during the year of the waiting list for the Parenting and Family Service will have had an impact on case management and may impact the wider disengagement of partner agencies and step up of cases to children’s social care.

Over 2018-19, 2545 Early Help cases were closed, the outcomes being as follows:

- 31.2% because the Early Help Plan was completed;
- 24.9% due to family disengagement;
- 26.5% due step-up to Children’s Social Care;
- 11.7% because the assessment did not identify support needs;
- 5.8% for other reasons (move out of area, or ongoing SEND support only).

The Early Help Strategy group is investigating the level of family disengagement, and also the level of step-up to Children’s Social Care.

Social Care referrals with previous Early Help involvement have increased from 10.6% Quarter 4 2017-18 to 21.26% at Quarter 4 2018-19. This increase is due to the targeted work of the Early Help Coordinator team in promoting Early Help across the partnership and working collaboratively with organisations to train their staff. Further improvement in this data is required. Work will continue with RDaSH staff to support further use of the Early Help pathway and work with Doncaster & Bassetlaw Hospitals Midwifery service began in April 2019.

Referral for safeguarding concerns

Working Together 2018 requires that anyone who has concerns about a child’s welfare should make a referral to local authority children’s social care and should do so immediately if there is a concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so. This is reinforced by DSCP’s Training Strategy which requires all partner agencies to ensure that their staff (and volunteers) are competent in recognising the signs and indicators of abuse and respond appropriately. This would include raising any safeguarding concern with their own agency’s designated safeguarding lead, or making a referral to children’s social care.

Where referring agencies are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities and about the pathways for referral, we may expect to see referrals from a wide range of agencies arriving at children’s social care with good quality information, leading to a high conversion rate of referrals into s.17 assessments, s.47 enquiries, and Child Protection Plans.

Referrals are made to the Multi-Agency Access Point (MAAP) where initial screening and information gathering takes place.

	Total
South Yorkshire Police (including all Domestic Abuse notifications)	1479
Health	224
Education	914
Other	2101
Total	4718

Table 2: Referrals made to the Multi-Agency Access Point (MAAP) by agency.

In 2018 – 2019:

- there were 16,698 contacts received requesting a service
- 3187 proceeded to Early Help
- 4717 proceeded as a referral to Children’s Social Care
- 47% of cases proceeding as referrals to Children’s Social Care had previously had some involvement with Early Help in the previous 12 months – were on the Early Help Pathway, or had an initial or reviewed Early Help Plan.
- Children’s Social Care proceeded with 4543 Children & Families Assessments.

Doncaster has high levels of deprivation and this translates into a high level of referral for statutory services, though the rate at which cases progress from an assessment into Children’s Social Care is 30%, with more than half of referrals receiving information and advice or no further action.

	Percentage
Child In Need Plan or Child Protection Plan	30
Strategy Discussion	2
Early Help/another agency	14
Information and Advice/No Further Action	54

Table 3: Outcomes of first Children & Families Assessments by Children’s Social Care

Work to understand the true nature of the patterns of demand in Doncaster remains ongoing. Within the Children & Young Person’s Plan, work will be focussing on building family and community resilience which in the medium to long term will have a positive impact on demand for statutory services. (Children & Young Person’s Plan Impact Report 2018).

Children in Need

The Department for Education’s definition for ‘child in need’ includes children in care, children on a protection plan, children in need plans, open for more than 63 days and new referrals awaiting assessment. On average, the rate of children in need in Doncaster during 2018/19 was 401 per 10,000 population (approximately 1230 children in total). Following previous years’ trend, this is expected to remain above the national and statistical neighbour averages (see table X below) – this may be as expected given the level of deprivation and its relationship to safeguarding, as noted above.

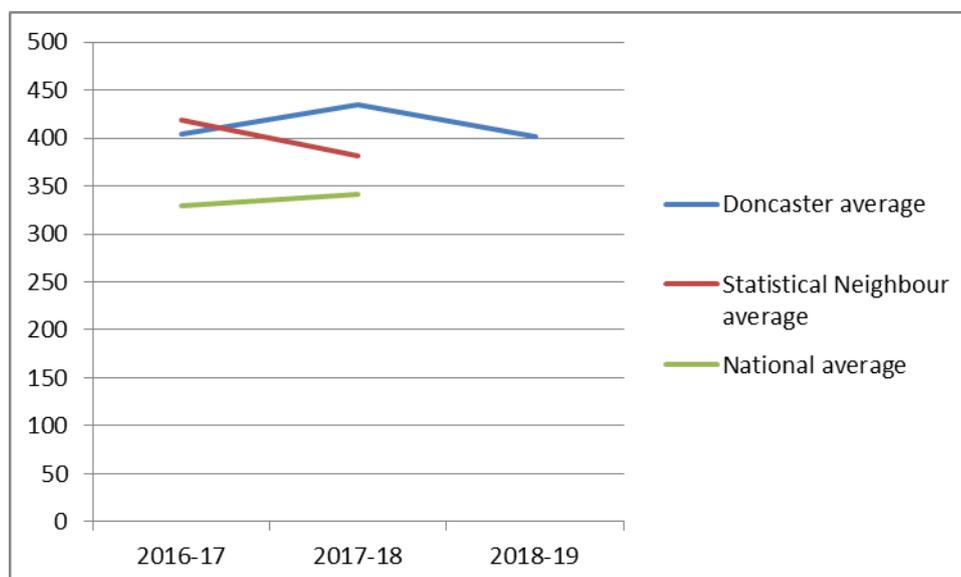


Figure 4: Children in need of care, protection and accommodation in Doncaster with statistical neighbour and national comparators.

Child in Need Plans

The ‘entry level’ service provided by Children’s Social Care is the Child in Need Plan, support agreed with a family on a voluntary basis, with a qualified Social Worker as the Lead Professional co-ordinating support from any other agency involved. Child in Need Plans may be a good way to engage a family in a constructive way without having to resort to Child Protection Procedures, which may feel threatening for the family.

Strategy Discussions and S.47 Enquiries

Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm there should be a strategy discussion involving local authority children's social care, the police, health and other bodies such as the referring agency.

Following a multi-agency strategy meeting, a section 47 enquiry is initiated to decide whether and what type of action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child who is suspected of or likely to be suffering significant harm. This is a critical decision point in the safeguarding process; where concerns of significant harm to a child are substantiated, the next step would be to convene an Initial Child Protection Conference.

- In 2018 – 19,937 children were subject to a s.47 Child Protection enquiries carried out, and of these 411 (44%) children proceeded to an Initial Child Protection Case Conference.

An analysis was conducted for DSCP of Doncaster's s.47 decision-making considering those that were progressed to Initial Child Protection Conferences and those that were not, against regional, national and statistical comparators. This indicated that demand for safeguarding services for children in Doncaster has stayed consistently above comparators for a number of years. It also demonstrates, however that at this level of demand the conversion at each stage of intervention is broadly similar with all comparators. This tends to indicate that safeguarding practice in Doncaster is no different than elsewhere.

Child Protection Conferences and Plans

- The Year 18/19 began with 374 children subject to Child Protection Plans, and closed with 300 children subject to child protection plans.

The trend is a steady decline over recent years, and there are no Child Protection Plans that have been in place for two years or longer. This suggests that effective early intervention is preventing problems from escalating to a point where child protection procedures are required. When child protection plans are required the gradual reduction in duration of these plans suggests that effective and timely planning and support for children and families is being provided. This is generally desirable as child protection procedures can feel intrusive and threatening for families, hence it is preferable to be able to engage families voluntarily at an earlier stage.

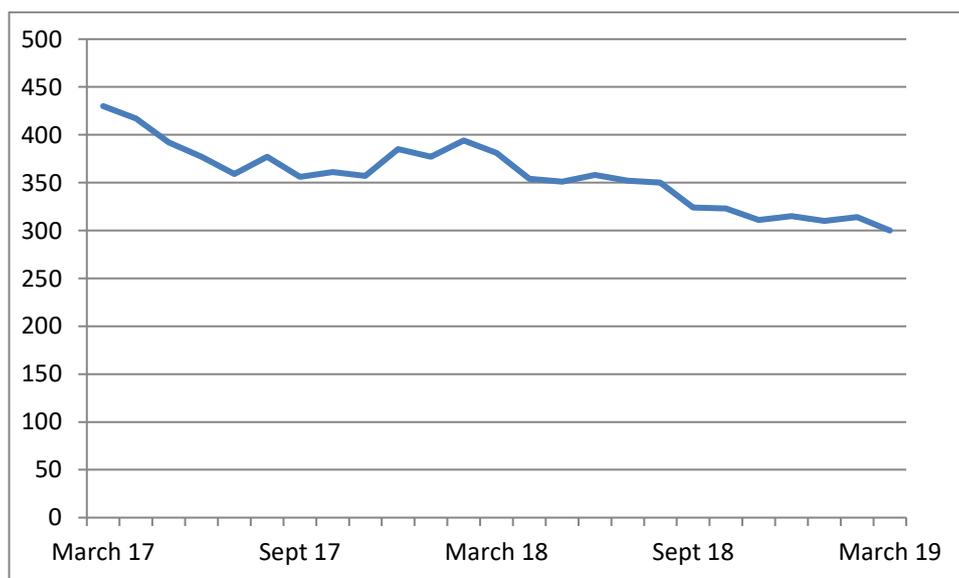


Figure 5: Number of children in Doncaster subject to child protection plans

Government published data in the **Characteristics of children in need: 2017 to 2018** show that Doncaster use of Child Protection Plans at 31st March 2018 was at a rate per 10,000 children of 56.8, which was higher than the national rate (45.3) but below that of statistical neighbours (60.3). (National data for 2018-19 is not published until later in 2019).

	Total 2016/17	Total 2017/18	Total 2018/19
Initial Child Protection Conferences (Child Protection Plans transferred from another area)	310	315	232 (20)
Review Child Protection Conferences	632	585	482
Total number of Conferences	942	900	734

Table 4: Child Protection Conferences held in 2018 - 2019 – the figures relate to families as siblings will be considered at the same Conference even though each child will have a separate Plan.

- 16% child protection plans during 2018/19 were for a second or subsequent time within 2 years, which is an improvement from 24% during 2017/18.
- For comparison, the national figure during 2017/18 for the percentage of child protection plans which were for a second or subsequent time was 20.2%, and for Statistical Neighbours was 16.8%.

Children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within a 2 year period is an area of performance that is receiving on-going scrutiny from the child protection conference service to ensure that interventions are affective and decision making appropriate.

The consistent decline in the use of Child Protection Plans may be the result of a wide variety of factors, the DCST Conferencing and Review Service having worked in partnership with other agencies and their safeguarding leads to improve the quality and proper management of plans through the Child Protection Conferences and the multi-agency core groups of practitioners that meet in between the conferences.

DCST have adopted the Signs of Safety approach to child protection, and this has enabled professionals to be very clear with families what the worries are and what needs to happen to keep a child safe. Parents' engagement in Child Protection Conferences has improved, as have the contribution of children and young people subject to plans, supported in some cases by an advocate who can support them to ensure their views and wishes are heard – see the next section below 'Participation in Child Protection Conferences.' Services within DCST – Family Group Conferencing, Edge of Care, and Multi-Systemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect – may also provide additional intensive support within the context of a child protection plan.

The Conferencing and Review Service (which provides independent chairing of the Conferences) has continued to work closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group to engage General Practitioners in the safeguarding process, though regular GP network meetings, a co-developed conference reporting format for GPs, and direct liaison between individual Conference Chairs and GPs around specific cases. This has greatly improved working relationships.

South Yorkshire Police have provided a Police Safeguarding lead to work alongside Conferencing and Review Service to increase Police engagement in the Conferencing process as appropriate. This support has also included assisting with the daily management of meetings, waiting areas, etc. particularly where there may be conflict between family members.

The Conferencing and Review Service has also maintained monthly liaison with safeguarding leads in partner agencies to promote their understanding and engagement. One example is contact with the Community Rehabilitation Company which revealed that it was undertaking a significant amount of single-agency early help with families where there was domestic abuse.

	end of 2017/18	end of 2016/17	end of 2015/16	end of 18/19
Emotional abuse	48%	14.9%	20.50%	56.7%
Neglect	39.1%	74.9%	69.24%	34.3%
Physical abuse	9.7%	4.9%	5.86%	6%
Sexual abuse	3.1%	5.3%	4.31%	3%

Table 5: Percentage of Child Protection Plan categories of abuse at end of year - Fluctuations in figures for emotional abuse and neglect reflect, at least in part, the changing recording policies in relation to the impact of domestic abuse on children in the home; taken together, emotional abuse and neglect remain the lead category for approximately 90% of Child Protection Plans.

Participation in Child Protection Conferences

Generally, children over the age of 11 are expected to be considered for invitation to their case conference, with account being given to a range of factors such as their age, wishes, and whether attendance would cause harm or distress. Practices have developed to encourage and support children and young people's attendance and participation, for example, child-friendly invitation and consultation documents, afterschool slots, more child-friendly venues, the promotion of advocacy to allow children's voices to be heard, and changes in the way that Conferences are chaired.

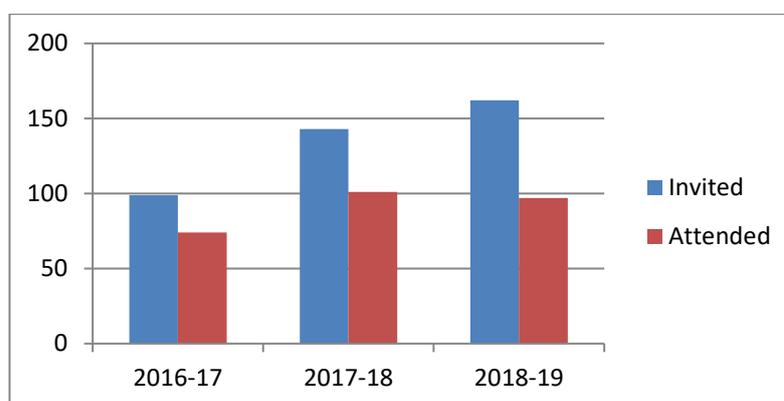


Figure 6: Total participation for 18/19 of eligible children invited to conference

As a result, there has been an increase in children and young people's attendance at conferences and at core groups, with more meaningful contributions and greater engagement with the plan. This has contributed to reduction in length of plans, more successful 'stepdown' to Child in Need or Early Help Plans, and better engagement with other professionals including school. There is also a shift in culture leading to other professionals habitually seeking the views of young people and championing their involvement and contributions. Overall, this represents a very successful area of practice.

Child Protection Plan outcomes - Pre-Proceedings

In some instances, the risk to the child remains significant despite intervention through the Child Protection Plan. In such instances, Doncaster Children's Trust may seek legal advice about applying to the Family Court for the Child to be accommodated elsewhere, at the same time making further efforts to work with the family to try to avoid this – this is referred to as 'Pre-Proceeding'.

In the year 2018 – 19, 82 cases were progressed to Pre-Proceedings:

- 19 (23%) were in Pre-Proceedings at the end of the year (31st March 2019)
- 27 (33%) progressed into legal proceedings, an application being made for a care order
- 36 (44%) no further Action – this may have been because the family responded positively to the prospect of the child being accommodated, and hence an effective intervention diverting a child from care.

When there is a risk of a child becoming Looked After, Doncaster Children's Trust may look for additional services to keep a child at home:

- Edge of Care service – intensive family support.
- Family Group Conference.
- Multi-systemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect service (MST-CAN) - three therapists, a case worker, a psychiatrist and a supervisor, are available to work intensively with all members of the family.
- Growing Futures' team of Domestic Abuse Navigators (DANs), help children and their families quickly find the support they need to stay safe and move on together.

Looked after Children

A child is 'Looked After' when they are provided with accommodation by children's social care (or a provider on their behalf) for more than 24 hours.

While many children who become Looked After will have been subject to a child protection plan, some may not have, for example, when a S.47 investigation considers that the risk of significant harm in the home environment is too high for the child to remain.

Children may also become looked after for reasons other than their protection, for example, when a parent becomes ill and there is no one else in the family network to provide care, or when a child with disabilities needs a very high level of residential care which extends beyond 75 nights in a 12 month period.

Doncaster Corporate Parenting Board works to ensure that the Council and the Doncaster Children's Services Trust effectively discharge their role as Corporate Parent for all the children and young people in its care. It works closely with our Children in Care and Care Leavers council and with the Multi-Agency Looked after Partnership to ensure the welfare of all looked after children including their safeguarding.

Doncaster Corporate Parenting Board publishes its own Annual Report.

Care Plans for Looked After Children are regularly reviewed with a multi-agency group of professionals chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer. Children and young people are encouraged to attend or participate in their Reviews, as are family members where this may be appropriate.

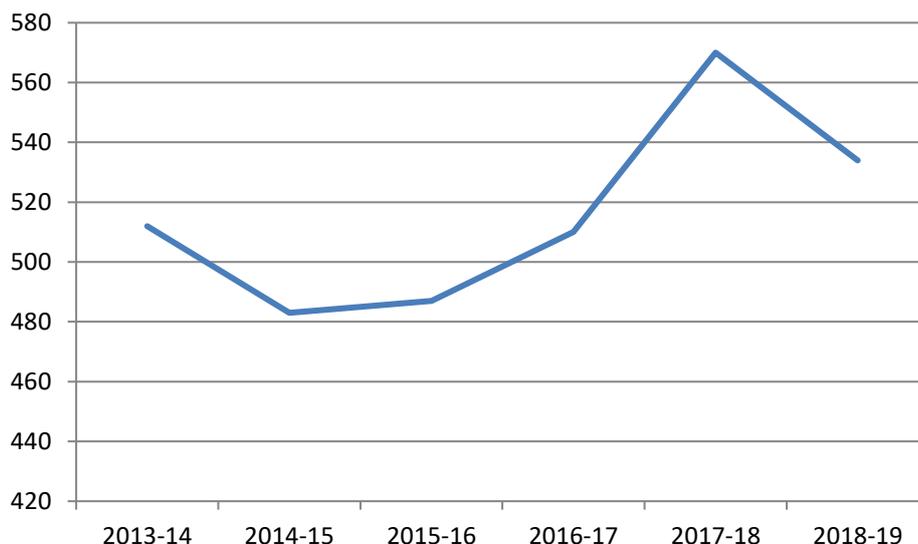


Figure 7: Children In Care 2013 – 2019 - Please note - figures for March 2019 will not be confirmed until the SSDA903 CIC Return is submitted to the Department for Education.

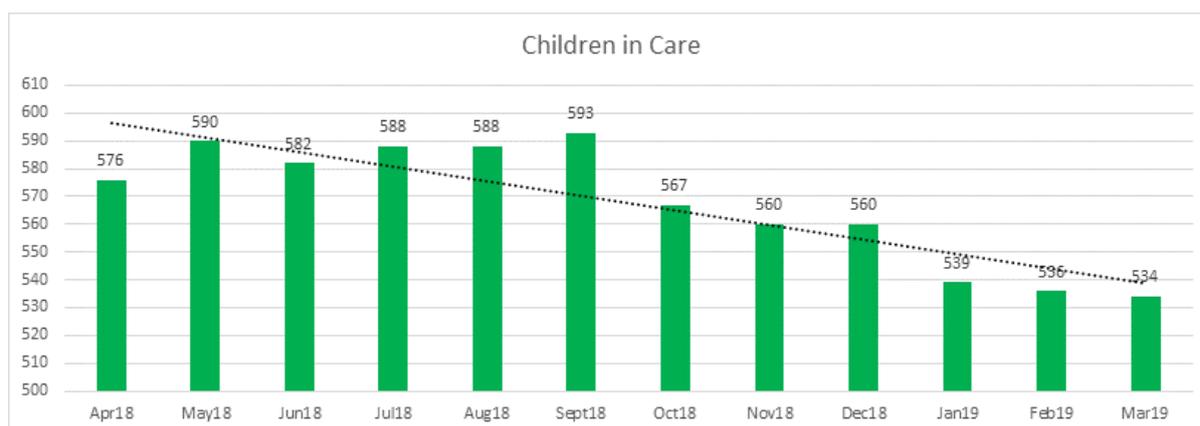


Figure 8: Children in care April 2018 – March 2019

At the end of the year, 534 children are in the care of Doncaster Children's Services, at a rate of 81.0 per 10,000 children. This is a further reduction of 26 children and young people since the end of the previous quarter, where the rate was 85.0 per 10,000 children. The current rate of children in care is higher than the national rate of 64 per 10,000 but lower than our Statistical Neighbour rate of 90.1, based on 2017 - 18 out turns. Increases in children in care have continued to be reported across the country and region and in particular with our Statistical Neighbours, all of which have reported an increase in the 2017 - 18 outturns, with statistical neighbours increasing from 82.1 in 2016/17 to 90.1 in 2017 - 18. (Figures for 2018 - 19 will not be available until later in 2019). This should be recognised as a very positive achievement for Doncaster.

	Number of Children 31 March 2018	Number of Children 31 March 2019
Interim Care Order	99	106
Full Care Order	331	317
Placement order granted	39	33
Remanded to Local Authority accommodation or to Youth Detention	1	0
Under police protection and in local authority accommodation	2	0
Under Child Assessment Order in local authority accommodation	0	1
Single period of accommodation under Section 20	97	77
Accommodated with breaks (no care episodes recorded)	1	0
Total	570	534

Table 6: Legal Status of children in care

Much work has been undertaken by a Children in Care Strategic group within DCST which is a collaboration of all the relevant services in the Trust and the Doncaster Council's Virtual School for Children in Care. This group has been reviewing cases and identifying children who can be brought back to local placements from placements out of authority and children who can leave care safely with the right support through Child Arrangement Orders or Special Guardianship Orders. Through the reviewing process no children have been identified who should not have been placed in care.

The number of children being cared for by family or connected people has seen a significant increase. This identifies that social workers are effectively identifying more family members, both within and outside Doncaster, who can safely care for children. This has ensured that many children have, following appropriate assessment, been able to remain with family members or friends and do not require the protection of a formal looked after status.

	2017-18	2018-19
Adopted – application unopposed	19	24
Adopted - consent dispensed with	12	16
Left care to live with parents, relatives, or other person with no parental responsibility	0	6
Accommodation on remand ended	0	1
Moved abroad	0	1
Care taken over by another LA in the UK	0	2
Returned home - Residence order	5	7
Special guardianship order made to former foster carers	11	20
Special guardianship order made to carers other than former foster carers	19	21
Return home to live with parents, relatives, or other person with parental responsibility as part of the care planning process (not under a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order)	31	28
Return home to live with parents, relatives, or other person with parental responsibility which was not part of the current care planning process (not under a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order)	10	12
Independent arrangement with formalised support	8	4
Transferred to adult social services	5	2
CLA ceased for any other reason	73	100
Sentenced to custody	2	1
Total	195	245

Table 7: Reason for children Ceasing Care

Children who are Privately Fostered

Private fostering is an arrangement made by a child's parents for a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if the young person disabled) to be cared for by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Children's social care has a responsibility under the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 for ensuring that the welfare of privately fostered children is promoted and safeguarded. Each child known to be living in a private fostering arrangement in Doncaster is monitored and supported through statutory visits by a social worker. The child is required to be seen alone during each visit unless this is thought to be inappropriate in which case the social worker would record the reasons for not seeing the child alone.

DCSP receives an annual report from DCST on the arrangements for privately fostered children, which has provided the following data for 2018-19:

- 9 new private fostering notifications were received.
- 5 notifications did not progress to full assessment.
- 4 notifications progressed to full assessment.
- 6 arrangements ended.

A wide variety of awareness raising activity has taken place across the year, for social care staff, with partner agencies and with community groups. In particular a private fostering awareness raising week was held between 3rd and 7th July 2018. The awareness raising and publicity activities were targeted towards the public, professionals working with children and young people and adults, communities including Faith and Culture groups. Work included leaflets being given out through the Doncaster Safeguarding Week at different locations within Doncaster, including an awareness event at Lakeside, and similar information being disseminated via social media.

It is to be acknowledged that notification has remained very low with no evidence of referrals made by parents or carers. Although low notification appears to be a national issue, the challenge is to uncover the hidden private fostering arrangements, as the children living in those unknown arrangements are particularly vulnerable and lack the protection provided through the private fostering regulations.

Children Missing from Home and Care

Safeguarding Partnerships are required to work within the **Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care** (Department for Education, January 2014), with partners from children's social care, police, health, education and other services work effectively together through a local protocol to prevent children from going missing and to act when they do go missing. The local protocol covers South Yorkshire, as South Yorkshire Police are a key agency receiving all reports of missing children.

When a child is located safe and well checks are undertaken by Police Missing Persons Investigators, and an approach to the young person is made by a Children's Trust officer to undertake a return home interview. There is close liaison with the Child Exploitation Team (regarding possible sexual and criminal exploitation), and Return Home interviews now include assessment of the risk of criminal exploitation. Although only a few cases of CE have been identified (3% of return home interviews), this is an important opportunity and has led to significant new disclosures.

For missing children or young people subject to Child Protection Plan or are Looked After, daily notifications are sent to their Conference or Review Chair for additional scrutiny.

	Number	%
Missing/absent episodes	1456	100%
• from home	829	57%
• from care placed by Doncaster	395	27%
• from care placed by other Local Authority	232	16%
Children with missing or absent	898	100%
• from home	614	69%
• from care placed by Doncaster	165	18%
• from care placed by other Local Authority	119	13%
Return home interviews - required	1007	100%
• offered	997	99%
• carried out	564	56%
• refused or non-co-operation	332	33%

Table 8: Children missing from home and care 2018–19

The South Yorkshire Police (SYP) Board representative has raised a number of concerns regarding children from other areas who are living in independent children’s homes in Doncaster. These missing from home cases involve some of the most vulnerable children and the demand on the Police force to keep them safe has been very significant. SYP have engaged children’s homes managers in the area in a monthly meeting discuss any issues, policies, procedures and what can be done collectively. Ofsted have also been invited to attend. The outcome has been extremely positive, with a significant reduction. A Memorandum of Understanding is being drawn up for all local children’s homes to sign up to, and an approach is being made to the Independent Children’s Homes Association who represent the majority of homes across the country.

Allegations against people who work with children

The role of the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) is to have management and oversight of allegations of abuse against people that work with children and covers all persons working within the children’s workforce in either a paid or an unpaid capacity including volunteers. This includes providing advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

In Doncaster the LADO service is part of the Safeguarding, Standards and Policy Unit of Doncaster Children’s Services Trust.

Work has continued to raise the awareness of the LADO role across a number of agencies and voluntary organisations. In order to reduce the number of consultations that are not pertinent to the LADO process, work has also been undertaken with the safeguarding leads for a number of agencies so that they provide the first port of call for advice within their own organisations. This has resulted in a decrease in referrals that do not meet the threshold by 7.3%. When compared to 2017/18. The number of referrals that do meet the threshold to hold a strategy meeting has increased by 3.13%. The main area of increase has been independent fostering agencies that rose by 56%. The may be due to the work undertaken to raise awareness and the training provided to these organisations by the LADO.

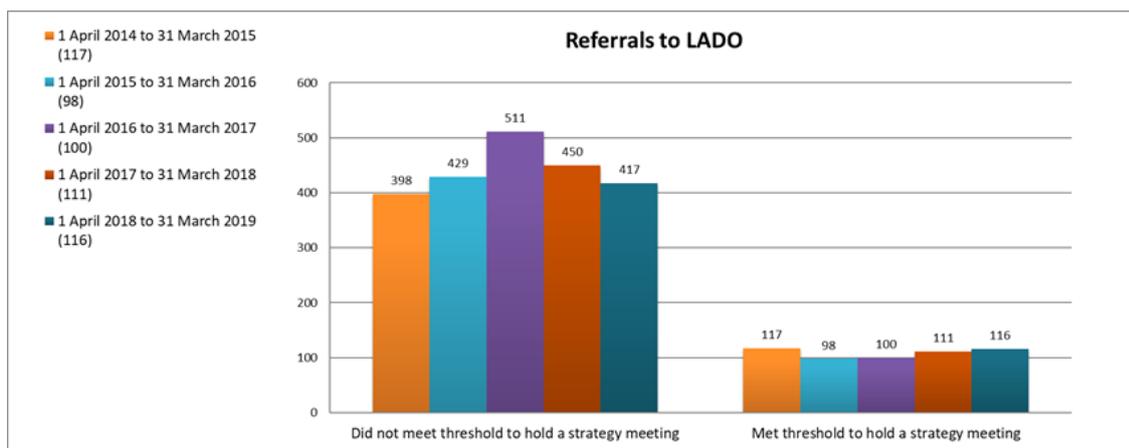


Figure 9: Referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer

In the majority of cases the allegation was substantiated indicating that referrals are generally appropriately made and thresholds for referral to the LADO are understood. The LADO process is focused on the original allegation that was made. Although the outcome may be substantiated it does not necessarily mean that the accused adult poses an ongoing risk to children.

The LADO works closely with the adult safeguarding team to ensure the right service area is dealing with safeguarding allegations whether this involves children or adults at risk of harm.

Child Death Reviews

During 2018-19 there were 13 child deaths:

- 6 were expected, for example, due to life-limiting illness.
- 7 were unexpected, that is, they were not anticipated as a significant possibility 24 hours before the death.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Expected child deaths	12	12	6
Unexpected child deaths	5	12	7
Total child deaths	17	24	13

Table 9: Number of child deaths in Doncaster by year

12 child deaths were reviewed in 2018-19, all of which were carried over from the previous year (this is not uncommon as child deaths are often delayed for example by waiting for a Coroner's report).

In reviewing the death of each child, the CDOP should consider **modifiable factors**, for example, in the family environment, parenting capacity or service provision, and consider what action could be taken locally and what action could be taken at a regional or national level. Factors identified as modifiable does not mean the factors fully explain the child death and does not indicate any implication of blame on any individual party, but they are considered to be contributing factors.

Modifiable factors and learning points arising from reviewed cases included:

- Smoking by either parent during mother's pregnancy
- Body Mass Index of mother
- Co-sleeping and parental compliance advice
- Internet safety and online information regarding self-harm
- Low birth weight of baby
- Delay in seeking medical attention by parents
- Prophylactic antibiotics
- Chorioamnionitis

This led to recommendations for action to be taken in relation to:

- Health staff training regarding safe sleeping and alcohol use, and smoking in pregnancy
- Young people's safe user use of the internet
- Cervical examination

Doncaster CDOP did not conclude that a serious case review should be carried out on any of the cases that were considered during 2018-19.

Significant progress has been made in meeting the requirements of Working Together 2018. The four South Yorkshire areas have collaborated to strengthen the existing shared learning forum that took place quarterly. This has involved developing a Memorandum of Understanding, Terms of Reference and Child Death Arrangements which was published jointly. The arrangements have been signed by the Child Death partners in each area i.e. the Local Authority and CCG demonstrating good partnership working. The governance arrangements are being reviewed for Doncaster CDOP with the aim of transferring responsibility over to the Health and Well Being Board via the Children and Young people's Partnership.

Progress against Strategic Priorities 2018 - 2019

Strategic Priority 1 - DSCP is assured that effective arrangements are in place for responding to key safeguarding risks and that there is consistently good practice across safeguarding services.

The early help strategy is effectively implemented and there is evidence of the impact this has had on outcomes for children, young people and their families.

- See Early Help section above.
- Doncaster Early Help has adopted the Outcome Star, an evidence-based tool to support and measure change in specific outcome domains of a child and family's life, hence the overall impact of the Early Help intervention. Multi-agency training is on-going, and there is significant progress made in the use of Outcome Star over the past year, for example, with 452 Outcome Stars being completed in Quarter 3.

DSCP thresholds are understood by practitioners and are embedded in practice.

- The thresholds for responses to different levels of need are set out in DSCP Multi-Agency Levels of Need document published on its website. This aims to clarify the circumstances which will require referral to a specific agency to address an individual need, when to carry out an early help enquiry and when to refer to Children's Social Care Services where a child or young person is thought to be at risk of harm, either actual or likely. Practitioners across partner agencies are acquainted with this framework through the DSCP's multi-agency retraining programme.
- A report from the All Party Parliamentary group for Children titled **Storing Up Trouble** (July 2018) highlighted, thresholds for access to children's services are not uniformly applied across the country, and there may be different perceptions of the application of thresholds within a local authority area. This is an area of policy and practice that needs ongoing attention.
- The procedure for referring concerns into the Multi-Agency Access Point (MAAP) requires referrers to distinguish contacts for Early Help (level 3 in the Levels of Need) or Children's Social Care including safeguarding (level 4). The MAAP Team report that only a small number of contacts received for children's social care are re-routed to Early Help, and even fewer are re-assigned from Early Help to Children's Social Care. Generally there are few disputes over threshold decisions made by MAAP. This indicates that the multi-agency levels of need thresholds are generally understood by practitioners in partner agencies.
- However, in early 2018, the Neglect Strategy Group commissioned an analysis of child in need cases where neglect is a predominant factor of concern and there is no evidence of early help provision. This concluded that there remained some confusion as to what is a universal service provision and what constitutes early help, and when it is appropriate to refer to children's social care. These findings are being taken on to the Early Help Strategic Group, and have also influenced the setting up of a Neglect Operational Group reporting to the Neglect Strategy Group.

Systems are in place to effectively meet the needs of victims of child exploitation, including an understanding of the scope of criminal exploitation and online abuse

- A Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2017-2019 and Action Plan is overseen by a Child Exploitation and Missing (strategy) Sub Group, chaired by a senior Police Officer who is a member of the Partnership Board.
- The multi-agency CSE team hosted by DCST consists of 3 social work posts, one health, one education worker and 2 Barnardo’s workers co-located with specialist police officer colleagues and 2 Missing Persons Investigators. Being co-located means that information can be shared in a timely way and responding to concerns can be undertaken quickly.
- Many of the issues around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) apply equally to Child Criminal Exploitation. In recognition of this the operational (multi-agency) Child Sexual Exploitation Team has widened its remit and become the Child Exploitation Team. The investigation of exploitation has improved as there is now a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) officer working within the Police’s Protection Vulnerable People department who is supported by 2 co-ordinating support officers.
- The Industry Sector Group has worked hard to train taxi drivers, private landlords and hoteliers, to raise awareness of the signs and indicators of exploitation, and how to report.
- Some young people, whilst recognising that they are being exploited, are too afraid to cease their involvement for fear of reprisals from other gang members. Some young people can only be safely supported out of involvement in CCE if they and their families are helped to move away from where they currently live.
- South Yorkshire Police report that during 2018 – 19, there were 10,847 Non-Crime Investigations recorded across South Yorkshire, of which 322 had the keyword ‘CSE’ applied to investigation records, 17 of these being within Doncaster.
- South Yorkshire Police also report that of the 5809 violent crimes with a victim under 18 years old, there were 32 investigations where the keyword ‘CSE’ had been applied to records. The predominant offence was ‘arranging or facilitating travel of another person with a view to exploitation.’

The DSCP is assured of the effectiveness of plans to tackle Domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse remains a significant issue of concern for interventions at all levels:

Early Help	Monthly average 2018-19
Early Help Open Cases	2366
• Early Help Open Cases with Domestic Abuse	229
• with Domestic Abuse and a Risk Assessment	4
Children's social Care	
Social Care Open Cases with an assessment	1901
• with Domestic Abuse	442
• with Domestic Abuse and a Risk Assessment	321
• with Domestic Abuse and a DAN allocated	29
• with "No" Domestic Abuse and a DAN allocated	23
Child in Need open Cases with Domestic Abuse	253
Child Protection Plan open Cases with Domestic Abuse	123
Children Looked After open Cases with Domestic Abuse	61
Dual CPP & CLA open Cases with Domestic Abuse	4

Table 10: Monthly average 2018-19 open Cases where Domestic Abuse is a feature

- Doncaster’s Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership has a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017 - 2121 that aims to protect and support victims, holding abusers to account through support and challenge, and grow futures for children and young people through prevention and recovery. A key outcome is for families who are vulnerable to or experience domestic abuse are identified earlier and receive effective support to stay safe.
- The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership Production of a new sexual abuse strategy and action plan, and a new domestic abuse action plan.
- DCST has recruited a team of Domestic Abuse Navigators (DANs) to tackle cases involving domestic abuse. They apply a whole family model of practice, working with victims, perpetrators and children. Support to children & young people is informed by the latest evidence-based therapeutic techniques. They have been so

effective that no families have been re-referred after working with them. This will have a positive impact on the outcomes of all those they support.

- Doncaster Council has provided a range of Domestic Abuse training, open to other agencies:
 - Domestic Abuse Awareness
 - DASH Risk Assessment and MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences)
 - Stalking and Harassment
 - Young People Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence
 - Coercive and Controlling Behaviour
 - Honour Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) -
 - Supporting Male Victims of Domestic Abuse
 - Supporting Children Living with Domestic Abuse (primary age)

1,160 practitioners in Doncaster attended multi agency domestic abuse training.

Doncaster Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership have also reported on the following achievements for 2018:

- The MARAC and IDVA service supported 372 victims at high risk of serious harm or death.
- The Domestic Abuse Caseworkers at Doncaster Council provided direct support, advice or information to 1,146 people throughout 2018.
- 1,160 practitioners in Doncaster attended multi agency domestic abuse training.
- Doncaster Children's Services Trust launched a new programme for young people who are abusive towards their parents/carers - called 'Getting On'.
- The Trust also launched a new Caring Dads programme so that fathers who abuse can be supported to recognise the value of responsible parenting and measure impact on change.
- South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company launched a new voluntary perpetrator programme.
- 924 victims of sexual abuse were supported by Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service (DRASACS).
- New training courses on coercive and controlling behaviour and stalking were launched.
- The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government awarded Doncaster Council and partners £98,000 to support victims of domestic abuse.
- Work started on a new Domestic Abuse Hub with co-located Police and Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors as part of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). which This will increase capacity, allows for much better information sharing for more complex cases and make it easier for victims and practitioners to access services.

Practitioners are able to respond appropriately to the early signs of Neglect and evidenced through multi-agency audits

- Neglect is a persistent failure to meet a child's physical and / or psychological needs and which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development.
- DSCP has developed a Neglect Strategy (2016) aiming to ensure the early recognition of neglect and improved responses to it by all agencies, so that life changes of children are promptly improved and the risk of harm is reduced. This is led by a Neglect Strategic Group, which is part of the Team Doncaster Children and Young People's Partnership.
- A key part of the strategy is a Neglect Toolkit: Tool for the assessment of Neglect, adapted from The Graded Care profile designed by Dr Leon Polnay and Dr O P Srivastava, Bedfordshire and Luton Community NHS Trust. As there has been limited use of this tool, the Neglect Strategy Group is considering rebranding and relaunching.
- Use of the Neglect toolkit within Early Help cases has increased from 3% in July 2018 to 30% Q4 2018-19.
- In early 2018, the Neglect Strategy Group commissioned an analysis of child in need cases where neglect is a predominant factor of concern and there is no evidence of early help provision. This concluded that there remained confusion as to what is a universal service provision and what constitutes early help, and when it is appropriate to refer to children's social care.
- DSCP provides training entitled Childhood Neglect - Recognition and Multi-Agency Response.

Services are in place to support young people's mental health and the impact of these services can be seen in a reduction of hospital admissions for self-harm and attempted suicide

- There have been two child deaths as a result of suicide and at least two incidents that could be described as near misses that have come to the attention of the DSCP. Each case is sensitively responded to by well-established local child death arrangements and a number of cases were referred to the DSCP Case Review Group and learning reviews have taken place. Doncaster also has a Suicide Prevention Group and a suicide prevention action plan. In addition, contagion concerns have been a factor in two of the suicides and protocols for responding in these situations do not yet appear to be well embedded in practice. The DSCP Case Review Group has signed off revisions to the contagion protocol.
- For general hospital inpatient emergency admissions for self-harm, there has also been a decreasing trend throughout the 4 years. There were 130 self-harm admissions in 2015/16 and the number has decreased to 112 in 2018/19.
- There continues to be improvements to children and young people's mental health as reflected in the reduction in T4 acute in-patient admissions and hospital admissions for self-harm. The rationale is largely due to improvements made within the Local Transformation Plan, in particular the introduction and support offered by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Intensive Home Treatment Service.
- In addition, each primary and secondary school in Doncaster has an allocated CAMHS locality worker who provides consultation, support and specialist CAMHS knowledge/ intervention. From September 2018- March 2019 the team collectively completed 1,921 consultations (planned and unplanned) with school staff and families. Of those consultations, 22 young people were stepped into specialist CAMHS pathways, thus evidencing the transformative and successful move towards reducing the number of children and young people accessing specialist CAMHS due to increasing our service offer in relation to early intervention and prevention.

The DSCP is assured that services provided to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are effectively safeguarding the children they support.

- This area of safeguarding practice has not received attention during 2018 – 19, though there have been preparations for an Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspection of local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of SEND children and young people which took place in May 2019.

There is a plan in place to address the issues raised as a result of children being placed in Doncaster by external Local Authorities

- South Yorkshire Police (SYP) have raised a number of concerns regarding children from other areas who are living in independent children's homes in Doncaster. These missing from home cases involve some of the most vulnerable children and the demand on the Police force to keep them safe has been very significant. SYP have engaged children's homes managers in the area in a monthly meeting discuss any issues, policies, procedures and what can be done collectively. Ofsted have also been invited to attend. The outcome has been extremely positive, with a significant reduction. A Memorandum of Understanding is being drawn up for all local children's homes to sign up to, and an approach is being made to the Independent Children's Homes Association who represent the majority of homes across the country.

Strategic Priority 2 - SP2 DSCP has a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the safeguarding system in Doncaster and can evidence how this is used to influence the Boards priorities

DSCP data set provides the Board with appropriate information to enable it to identify the key safeguarding issues in Doncaster

- The Quality & Performance Sub-Group continues to explore the use of data and intelligence to inform the Partnership Board about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, in response to the publication of the national statutory guidance Working Together 2018. A revised data set and reporting process has been agreed and will be implemented during 2019 - 20.

DSCP disseminates the lessons from case reviews, audits and complaints to practitioners and can evidence the impact this has had on practice

- There have been capacity issues within the DSCP's Business Unit, and as a result there has not been the resource to undertake multi-agency audits. However, learning from the previous year's audits have continued

to be disseminated in the form of practice briefings. Also, preparations were made for an audit of cases of child sexual abuse conducted in the first quarter of 2019-20 using the methodology from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). Lessons from the use of the JTAI methodology will inform the future quarterly DSCP auditing programme.

- No cases were referred to the Serious Case Review Panel.
- During 2018 – 2019, DSCP has responded to the publication of Working Together 2018 and the transitional arrangements in preparing to work with the National Panel for safeguarding child practice reviews (replacing serious case reviews). The DSCP Case Review Group will now oversee a rapid review of any case meeting the criteria for a 'serious child safeguarding case'. They will also notify the National Panel of the rapid review outcome and any decision for a local child safeguarding practice review is appropriate, or whether they think the case may raise issues which are complex or of national importance such that a national review may be appropriate.
- No cases were referred to the DSCP Case Review Group that met the criteria for notification to the National Panel.
- Following a Learning Lessons Review for a four-year old child T, a practice briefing was issued advising practitioners to negotiate with parents to check on the conditions in a child's bedroom, and also not to assume that other agencies would have already done this.
- Following another Learning Lessons Review, a practice briefing was produced and disseminated to promote the use of the DSCB "resolving professional differences protocol."
- Other Practice Briefing focused on Early Help Assessment and communication with siblings in specialist foster placement.
- Complaints Officer for Doncaster Children's Services Trust has reported that no issues arising from complaints had needed to be escalated to the DSCP or disseminated across the partnership for learning.
- The DMBC Education Service (Learning Standards and Effectiveness) handles all Ofsted complaints related to schools, and where these may have a safeguarding component there is close working with Learning and Opportunities: Children and Young People Safeguarding Manager. The Safeguarding Manager works closely with schools' designated safeguarding leads, and disseminates communications from the DSCP.

DSCP members have an understanding of the issues affecting front-line practitioners and can evidence how this has influenced the development of services

- Partnership Board meetings receive reports on data, intelligence, and audits from the Quality and Performance Sub-group, and case review learning from the Case Review Group.
- The Case Review Group's Learning Lessons Review promotes the participation of frontline practitioners and provides the DSCP with a detailed insight into issues and experiences in safeguarding casework. The Practice Briefings mentioned above are examples of the output of this process.
- The DCSP's Safeguarding Practitioner Forum meets quarterly and is well attended by the multi-agency workforce. It is chaired by the DCSP Independent Chair, so facilitates issues and perspectives from frontline staff to be input directly into DSCP's business.
- DSCP two multi agency conferences in 2018-19.
- Keeping children Safe Online was very well received with a total of 180 people in attendance. There was a key note speech from national campaigner Jim Gamble, and dramatic performance from Narelle Summers and Ian Baxter highlighting the key issues from a serious case review.
- The conference "Towards a Deeper understanding of Domestic Abuse was also well received, featuring presentations on Honour Based Abuse from Suzanne Jackson DI, SYP, and young adult Natasha K Benjamin reflecting on her experiences of witnessing family violence.

Strategic Priority 3 - DSCP communicates effectively to ensure that the work of the Board is well publicised, that learning is disseminated and that the voice of children, young people, practitioners and the wider community(including minority groups and faith groups) are able to influence the Board's work.

- a) Partners demonstrate how they are communicating with children and young people and how this influences service provision:
- Safeguarding partner agencies have responsibilities under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 as detailed Working Together (2015 and 2018) chapter 2 Organisational Responsibilities. This includes having 'a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services.' The last section 11 audit was carried out in 2017 – 18 and was reported on in the last Annual Report. Current plans for the section 11 audit, including reporting on the culture of listening to children,' are to move to an online reporting system during 2019-20.

- Doncaster Children’s Services Trust has made extensive use of young advisors since its inception, with involvement for example in Trust recruitment, set-up of children’s homes and providing training on the experience of children in care. In addition, there is a Children in Care Council, and a Speak Out Loud activity group for children in need and on Child Protection Plans, both of which provide good opportunities for consultation and involvement in the development of safeguarding practice.
 - Doncaster Council’s Local Office of the Children’s Commissioner has also recently employed 10 young advisors to consult with other children and young people – particularly those considered ‘harder to reach’ - on service and practice developments.
- b) DSCP ensures community groups such as Faith and cultural groups and sports clubs understand safeguarding issues and can demonstrate that they have key safeguarding standards in place as identified by the DSCP
- Engagement with the voluntary and faith and culture sectors further developed into the Keeping Safe Forum, to ensure that the sector is well represented in the Forum which serves as a voice and influence sub-group for both the Adult and Children’s Boards.
 - Community, faith and cultural groups and sports clubs are also invited to DSCP training events and conferences.
- c) DSCP partners demonstrate how they are ensuring that the children’s workforce is appropriately trained
- DSCP partner agencies will be providing evidence of compliance with this duty in future section 11 audits.
 - DSCP partners are expected to make use of the DSCP multi-agency training programme and resources, or provide or commission their own single-agency safeguarding training.

Strategic Priority 4 - DSCP is aware of emerging issues which have implications across the partnership and works effectively to ensure appropriate action is taken.

The DSCP has in place arrangements to safeguard children in line with the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

- Consultation and development work took place during 2018 to develop structures compliant with the Children and Social Work Act’s statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, and at the same time to develop a closer relationship with Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership. The new local arrangements – replacing Doncaster’s Local Safeguarding Children Board with Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) is published in June 2019 and is available on the DSCP website <https://dscp.org.uk/>

DSCP promotes opportunities for working across geographical areas where this would provide a more cost-effective response or improvement to current working arrangements

- Doncaster is part of the South Yorkshire sub-region, a natural area for cross area working as it is the footprint for the Police Service.
- The Child Death Overview Panel, formerly the responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, is developing arrangements for new operations across South Yorkshire so that learning from child deaths is based on a larger sample size.
- Doncaster has also contributed to the work of a sub-regional Child Criminal Exploitation Group with neighbouring local authorities.

DSCP promotes opportunities for working with other strategic partnerships where this would provide a more cost-effective response or improvement to current working arrangements

- As part of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, a Chief Officers Safeguarding Oversight Group takes a broad view of the cross-working and co-ordination of Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership, Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board, and Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership (community safety).
- DSCP has recognised many common themes shared with Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board. Under new arrangements brought in in response to the Children and Social Work Act, both partnerships now meet on the same day, with joint as well as separate agendas and the same convenor. It is expected that this will allow for the emergence of further joint areas of concern and action. Both safeguarding partnership have also worked together on an annual safeguarding fortnight, with activities and communications to raise awareness about safeguarding and protection issues with the general public and professionals.
- DSCP is working closely with Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership on the nationally emerging issue of child criminal exploitation, sharing a joint Child Exploitation strategic group.
- DCSP is has a close working relationship with the Children and Young People Partnership around strategies for Early Help and for Neglect.

- During 2019-20, priorities will be to also develop awareness and practice in relation to young people's online identities and on-line safety.
- Further development in the area of contextual safeguarding issues and transitional safeguarding, particularly picking up the link with the Doncaster Place plan theme around vulnerable adolescents.

Workforce Development

The Board has a strong commitment to multi-agency training and continues to invest in developing a multi-agency training pool to assist with delivery. The DSCP training programme covers a wide range of safeguarding issues based on a training needs analysis of the Partnership's priorities and the demands of partner agencies. Individual training places are provided at no charge, the programme being funded by annual partner contributions to the DSCP.

	Places	Attendance
Delivering Early Help :Role of the Lead Practitioners (2)	328	191
Introduction to Early Help and Thresholds for Intervention	809	610
Child Exploitation (CSE+ CCE Included)	314	198
Signs of Safety 2-Day	117	60
DSCB Neglect Strategy and Toolkit	274	195
DSCB Spring Conference- Keeping Children Safe Online	190	116
An Overview of the Typologies of Domestic Abuse	60	20
Early Help Outcomes and Plans and Closures (3)	250	101
Signs of Safety Roadshows	460	261
Signs of Safety 3 Day Practice Champion Training	12	3
Childhood Neglect: Recognition and the Multi Agency Response	150	67
Issues raised by men who sexually offend against children	120	37
Understanding the complexities of Domestic Abuse	280	16
Children and Young People with sexually harmful behaviour	48	19
Managing Allegations Against Professionals - Local Authority Designated Officer	50	12
An Introduction to 'Getting On' Programme	60	11
DSCB Autumn Conference - Understanding Domestic Abuse	190	149
Early Help Supervision	60	13
Engaging the Abusive Parent	30	10
A Tension of Services: Domestic Abuse and the Three Planets Model	30	3
Self-Harm & Suicide Awareness	31	25
Total	3863	2117

Table 11: DSCP Training programme sessions 2018-19

This represents a sizable contribution to workforce development across the partnership, and as attendance is multi-agency, the programme also supports the development of good working relationships between frontline practitioners across agencies.

All DSCP courses are evaluated via online surveys for participants' perceptions of the potential impact on practice. Some sections of the evaluation data is included below:

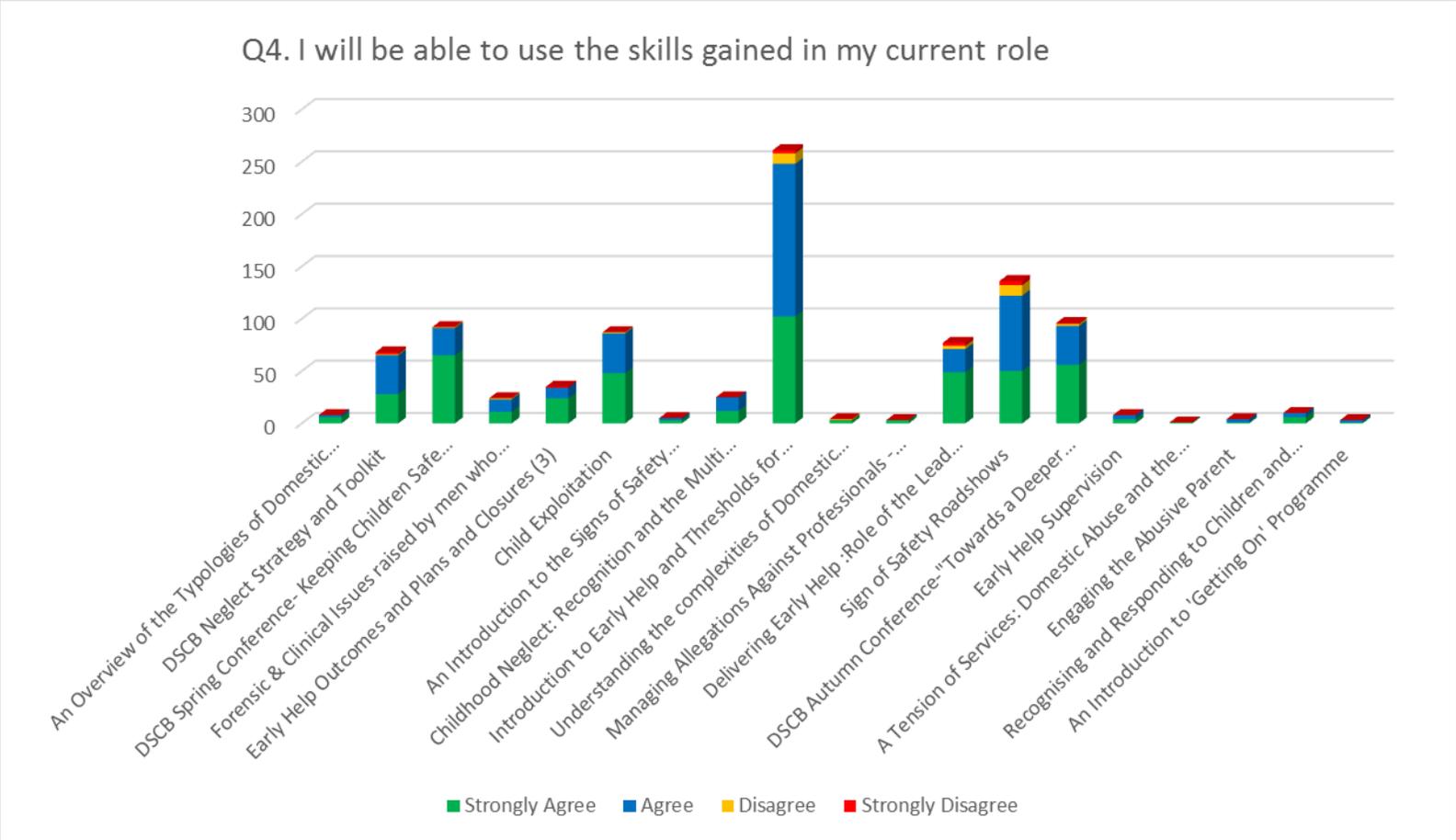


Figure 9: Evaluation returns from DSCP training sessions 2018 - 19

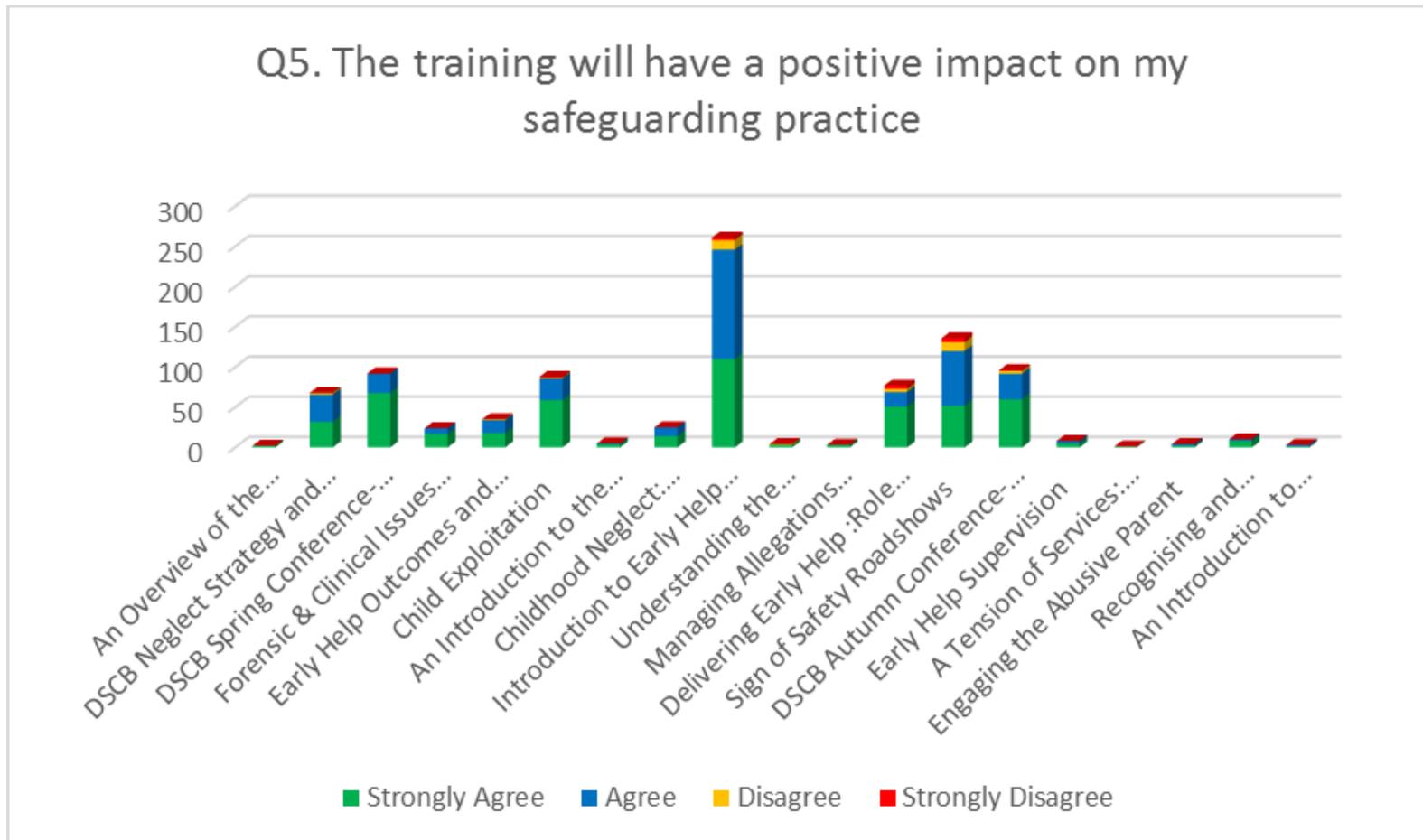


Figure 11: Evaluation returns from DSCP training sessions 2018 - 19

Analysis of impact on practice sometime after training has not been feasible due to capacity, but remains an aspiration for DSCP.

Independent Convenor's Review of the Effectiveness of Partnership Working

The most significant change to happen during the year has been the developments of new partnership arrangements for the overview and governance of the Safeguarding Children Partnership. This has resulted in much more streamlined arrangements being established that include recognising and harnessing the close relationship with safeguarding adults arrangements. The objective of establishing these new arrangements was to improve the governance of partnership working whilst making the process less onerous and more efficient for the partners. These changes risked losing or alienating those outside the core partnership Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Children's Services Trust, South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster CCG. However other arrangements that were put in place, as part of the changes, to support wider partnership engagement appear to have worked reasonably well. However this is something that I will keep under review.

I am the Independent Convenor of the newly established Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership. My roles include ensuring that the partners meet their statutory responsibilities and work together in an effective partnership. I am pleased to say that these new arrangements appear to be meeting their objectives. I am also pleased to report that I have seen many examples of the partners working together effectively.

A particularly good example is the problem of children, placed by other local authorities, missing from small private children's homes. In addition to placing vulnerable children at risk this problem was having a significant impact on police service resources, but it became clear that this population also impacted the provision of other services. South Yorkshire Police (SYP) led the response to this risk. Rapid reductions in the number of missing children were achieved following SYP developing partnership arrangements with these small organisations. Furthermore a more strategic approach was established using the planning powers of the local authority, a good example of a system led approach.

Another important realisation was the importance of building 'learning loops' into cross-agency procedures when, almost by accident, the power of feedback led to a significant improvement in practical processes for safeguarding.

I have also been impressed by the increasing focus on prevention, including helping children and families avoid the need for formal safeguarding interventions. Not only is this very desirable from the point of view of child wellbeing but it is also a more efficient way of safeguarding children. However there is a risk that the increased effectiveness of these approaches will lead to complacency and disinvestment of the services that are achieving the desired improvements.

I welcome the change in policy that has led to children of families where there is domestic abuse having their needs recorded as emotional abuse rather than neglect. Not only is this way of clarifying harm more meaningful it also lays the ground for addressing the main impact of domestic abuse on children which is not just distress but also long-term emotional and psychological dysfunction which too often results in frank mental health problems. There is early work ongoing, led by the Director of Public Health, on reducing 'adverse childhood experiences' which are understood to be the mechanism by which the harm has its effect. This work was initiated through the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board, and is a good example of how the shared issues that cross children and adult safeguarding are increasingly addressed in a more systematic way.

I believe that there is evidence that partners increasingly look to one another when working on strategic safeguarding issues. I see this behaviour, which includes the assumption that challenges are always shared across agencies, as particularly positive.

I am also pleased that the systems that partners have developed for the engagement of safeguarding practitioners appear to be working. Direct contact with those individuals charged with making safeguarding work is important in order to keep the work of the Partnership truly child focused.

In addition to the development priorities outlined in the joint safeguarding development plan there is a need to ensure that board support arrangements are strengthened. This may include joint working with the support arrangements for the Safeguarding Adults Board. There is also a need to formalise new arrangements for the Child Death Overview Panel arrangements. It seems to me that this would be best achieved over a South Yorkshire footprint.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Woodhouse', with a horizontal line above the first part of the name.

Dr John Woodhouse (GMC 2959711)
Independent Convenor

“Keeping Children and Adults Safe in Doncaster”

Principles:

- Always put the wellbeing of the child, young person or adult first
- Ensure services address the impact of adverse childhood experiences across the life stages
- Promote a culture of creativity and curiosity
- Promote whole family working

Strategic Priority 1

ASSURE EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Strategic Priority 2

LEAD AND SHAPE SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE

Strategic Priority 3

ABILITY TO RESPOND TO CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES

Strategic Priority 4

COLLABORATE, TRUST AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

DSCB DSAB Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2019-21

We will seek to;

1. Ensure the voice of the Child / Adult informs all that we do
“Nothing about me without me”
2. Listen to the voice of the front line practitioner
3. Ensure learning from critical incidents and serious cases is embedded in practice
4. Receive assurance through multi-agency practice audits across the partnership
5. Ensure that everyone working with Children and Adults is adequately trained and competent in safeguarding.
6. Ensure there is an effective multi-agency assurance process in place
7. Have Performance Frameworks that enable the Adults Board and Children’s Partnership to see what is happening
8. Promote the use of person centred models based on asset / strengths based practice.
9. Promote and be assured of whole family approaches to;
 - Prevention and early intervention
 - Exploitation
 - Mental Health and wellbeing
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Neglect / Self-neglect
 - Contextual / Organisational issues
10. Explore the benefits of an all-age Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub
11. Develop a clear escalation process for resolving professional differences across the partnership
12. Engage the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector ensuring that *“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”*.
13. Ensure safeguarding is core to all strategic and partnership work in Doncaster.
14. Work across Children and Adult partnerships identifying further opportunities to work more closely together
15. Have an effective Communication and Engagement Strategy in place

Board Partner Financial Contributions and Expenditure 2018/19

Working Together 2018 states that “The safeguarding partners should agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which should be equitable and proportionate, and any contributions from each relevant agency, to support the local arrangements. The funding should be transparent to children and families in the area, and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews”.

Expenditure 2018/19	£
Staff costs (including agency worker cost)	191,091
Independent Chair costs	13,034
Survey Monkey licence	280
Virtual College e-learning	9,418
Display Boards for Safeguarding week	35
Association of Independent LSCB Chairs membership	1,500
Tri-X online multi-agency procedures	6,800
Conference costs and associated costs	9,593
Performance Fee for DSCAP meeting	500
Meetings costs - room hire & refreshments	5,482
Conference room refurbishment	3,500
Printing & stationery	6,214
Yorkshire & Humberside Safeguarding Trainers conference fee	125
British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect	164
Future arrangements for the Board	9,000
Miscellaneous	19
Total Expenditure	256,755
Income 2018/19	
Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group	97,880
South Yorkshire Police	26,000
Probation Service	1,565
Doncaster Council	146,930
Total Income	272,375
Out-turn	+15,620

It should also be noted that partner agencies support the DSCP work through ‘in kind’ support, for example the commitment of staff time to sub-groups and working groups, use of meeting rooms, and staff joining the training pool. In particular, Doncaster Children’s Services Trust hosts the DSCP Business Unit, and in doing so provides in-kind support through management and office services.