

North Lanarkshire Partnership

Annual Report 2023 - 2024

Business Plan 2024 - 2025



**the
promise**



**getting
it right**
for every child
in North Lanarkshire

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Preface



Des Murray, Chair
North Lanarkshire
Chief Officer Group
Public Protection

Welcome to the North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee (CPC) Annual Report covering the period 1st August 2023 - 31st July 2024 and the Business Plan which covers the period 1st August 2024 - 31st July 2025. The report reflects our achievements and developments during the year 2023-24 and the business plan sets out the key priorities for the committee in 2024-25.

As Chair of the Public Protection Chief Officers' Group, I would like to thank my fellow chief officers in health and police services for their support in taking forward this challenging and complex agenda. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our current Independent Chair and Child Protection Committee members for their commitment to adapting, sustaining and improving our partnership's work to protect children through what continues to be a challenging period.

We are confident that our approach to protecting children is rightly seen within the wider context of children's services. Our commitment to supporting families at an early stage and supporting children and young people's mental health provides a strong foundation for how well we protect children at risk of harm.

Our inspection report published in October 2023 highlighted the strength of our partnership in North Lanarkshire in leading with a clear vision on improving outcomes for children and young people, and the dedication of our collective workforce in building effective and trusting relationships with children and their families and carers. We remain committed to harnessing the strengths across our partner agencies, including adult services, to address and mitigate the challenges and risks experienced within our communities.

On behalf of the Chief Officers for Public Protection, I endorse this, my seventh CPC annual report and business plan.

Foreword



Judith Tait,

Independent Chair,

North Lanarkshire
Child Protection
Committee

I am pleased to present North Lanarkshire's Child Protection Committee annual report, that details the committee's achievements in helping to ensure children and young people's lives are safer as a result of the collective work of our partners. It also highlights the progress in addressing identified areas for improvement. It presents local management information to provide a context to the work undertaken, and some national data trends where relevant for comparison. The report covers the period 1 August 2023 - 31 July 2024 and sets out the priorities of our business plan for the year ahead August 2024 - July 2025.

We included the outcomes from our inspection of services to children at risk of harm in last year's report given the level of inspection activity experienced during the reporting year. The publication of the report in November 2023 was an opportunity to celebrate our achievements, thank our staff and managers and ensure our areas for further development were embedded effectively within improvement and business planning arrangements.

Developments to strengthen child-focused and trauma-informed practice are highlighted through our partnership's approach to implementing Signs of Safety and Healing, embedding Safe and Together and the progression of Contextual Safeguarding, where North Lanarkshire is acknowledged as leading the field within Scotland. We endeavour to see our improvement work within the cross-cutting public protection agenda, recognising the whole-life span approaches to chronologies and understanding neglect.

The national context for child protection continues to be an incredibly busy one, with changes to policy and legislation that place demands on our collective workforce. Our services need to be agile enough to respond to emerging and fast-changing areas of risk to children and young people particularly within the online space. The strength of our partnership will continue to be vital in helping us navigate these challenges and ensure we continue to work together to help keep our children, young people and their families safe.

Annual Report 2023 - 2024

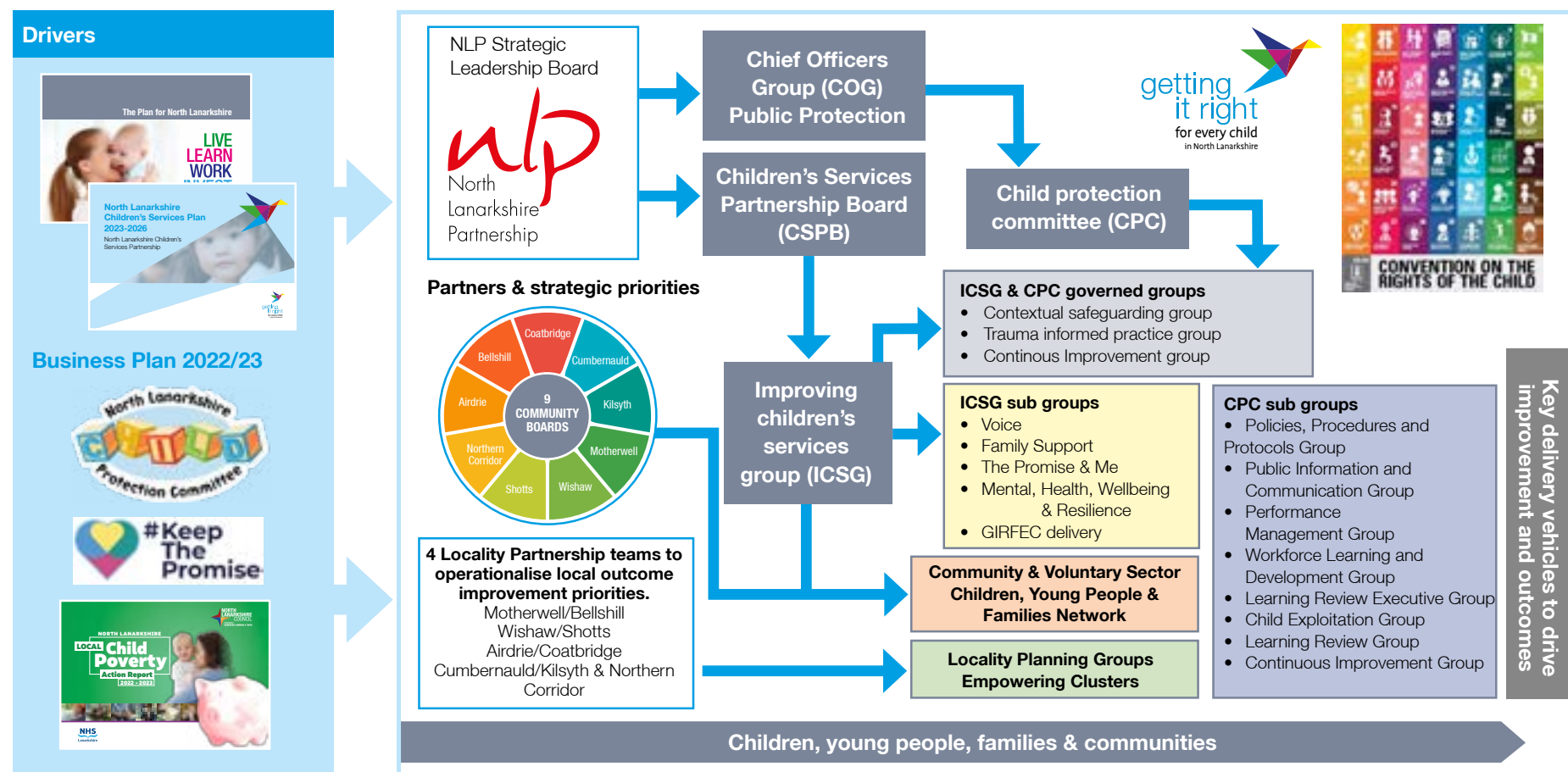


Structure and governance

The child protection committee sits within the wider context of public protection and children's services planning in North Lanarkshire. The Public Protection Chief Officers Group (PPCOG), the CPC and the Children's Services Partnership Board (CSPB) provide robust collaborative governance and strong strategic direction to protecting children and young people from harm, addressing the needs of families and adults and improving outcomes and life chances. These arrangements provide coherent governance for protecting children across the continuum of need through a high level of partnership commitment, trusting relationships and shared priorities.

The CPC provides scrutiny and assurance to the PPCOG and both have clear and well understood links to the wider community planning partnership. The CPC meets on an eight-weekly cycle alternating between face to face and virtual meetings. We benefit from consistent attendance and engagement from senior representatives across all core agencies.

Context of Children's Services



The Child Protection Committee and North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership Board (NLCSPB) provide the strategic leadership for all children's services and have a responsibility for driving improvements. The link to the Community Planning Partnership is through the Children's Services Partnership Board and through cross representation at Chief Officer level. The Child Protection Committee works closely alongside the North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership Board. Several members of the CPC attend NLCSPB meetings, and this helps promote our shared work together.

Over this reporting year the CPC, the APC and chief officers' group have been considering how to further strengthen our approach to the cross-cutting public protection and wider-harms agenda. Our CPC and APC coordinators work closely with MAPPA and domestic abuse coordinators as part of the public protection team. They report into the lead officers' group that meets in advance of PPCOG and provides a forum to consider thematic learning and business across the public protection domains. Following a supported self-evaluation exercise in 2022, chief officers widened their areas of consideration to include biannual reporting on suicide prevention and drug-related deaths.

The CPC and APC coordinators work closely to align the approaches to pan-lifespan risks and practice issues including neglect and self-neglect, and chronologies.

In addition, the COG and CPC seek to work, where relevant, with partners on a pan-Lanarkshire basis. In October 2023 we jointly held a Lanarkshire-wide leadership event to consider what more we can do to prevent deaths by suicide and as a result of substance use. There are pan-Lanarkshire sub-committees that support the work of the CPC and APC, for example in the oversight of IRD policy, procedure and activity, and the JII team and more recently with the development of Bairs Hoose.

Our committee is well-represented in national professional forums and networks, ensuring we share learning from our own achievements as well as seeking to learn from practice elsewhere.



Vision and outcomes

Scotland has an ambition to be the best place in the world to grow up so that children are loved, safe and respected and realise their full potential.

In North Lanarkshire, our wider children's services vision is to support all children and young people to achieve their potential, ensuring they are loved, nurtured, and empowered to thrive in all aspects of their lives, upholding every child and young person's rights as stated in the UNCRC. This vision is echoed by the Child Protection Committee vision that:

"All children and young people in North Lanarkshire have the right to be cared for and protected from abuse and harm in a safe environment in which their rights are respected"

To achieve our aim, we have representatives from all sectors involved in the protection of children and we work collaboratively with our colleagues to achieve our nine high level outcomes. These reflect our vision and values and the core functions of a Child Protection Committee and are outlined in our Business Plan.



High Level Outcome

01	Learning from range of sources, including research, local quality assurance activity, practice experience, performance information, and significant case reviews informs priority setting policy and practice developments.
02	Evidence informed changes to policy and practice are introduced, monitored and evaluated, and improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
03	Evidence informed, up to date procedures, protocols and guidance are available in relation to core child protection business and related priority issues, these are implemented effectively and impact on practice and outcomes.
04	The North Lanarkshire workforce is competent and confident in their individual, managerial and collective roles to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect or exploitation.
05	Relevant, up to date public information is available in a range of accessible and engaging formats to individuals and communities across North Lanarkshire.
06	The views of children and families are taken into account in relation to issues that affect them directly and in policy and practice development.
07	Collaboration and co-operation between the Child Protection Committee and other national and local multi-agency partnerships is effective.
08	National strategy and policy developments inform Child Protection Committee activity.
09	Local leadership of child protection is effective in driving improvements in child protection practice and in improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect or exploitation.



Child Protection Improvement Programme

The Child Protection Improvement Programme for Scotland was established by Scottish Government in February 2016 to help deliver the national vision for a child protection system that keeps children safer from abuse and neglect by placing the wellbeing of Scotland's children at the heart of everything it does. Scottish Government works with national and local partners including Child Protection Committees to drive improvement across the work streams. This has included the publication of National Child Protection Guidance which launched in September 2021, with a two-year implementation period. There is an emphasis on increasing participation and engagement of children, young people and their families which is woven through the guidance.



In North Lanarkshire we developed an implementation plan to drive forward the change required from the national child protection guidance. We were able to continue with embedding the safe and together model and our contextual safeguarding approach both underpinned by our trauma informed practice approach. We worked towards new child protection procedures for our workforce and clear communication plans. Our new child protection procedures were then launched in September 2023. Operationally we embedded our revised IRD guidance that was published in June 2022. As a partnership we have also been part of the national IRD training pilot, and we have benefitted from additional learning and development support from the national IRD team. These supports have been welcomed by our partnership. We have embedded the Scottish Child Interview Model on a pan-Lanarkshire basis to ensure children receive trauma informed support.

The child protection improvement programme also focuses on the use of data. From August 2023 North Lanarkshire CPC has transferred to version 2 of the national child protection minimum data set. North Lanarkshire was an early adopter of both versions of the data set. It has supported our partnership to use data to drive forward improvements and these have included safe and together, contextual safeguarding and signs of safety. Our next improvement action, informed by our use of data is exploring the use of transitional safeguarding in partnership and led by our colleagues in adult services.

Child protection activity across North Lanarkshire takes place within a national context which includes the child protection national guidance, GIRFEC, The Promise and UNCRC. Our local approach strives to ensure that the protection of children involves early intervention, so that families receive support when it is needed in line with the Promise and our work in relation to whole family support. To strengthen this further we have now begun our journey to implement the Signs of Safety and Healing approach; a core risk assessment framework bringing the family and child into the centre of decision making and safety planning. The signs of safety approach will strengthen the voice of children and their families and support our use of chronologies and natural support networks.



External scrutiny

Our partnership was notified by the care inspectorate in April 2023 that there would be a joint inspection of services for children at risk of harm. The inspection activity was ongoing from the 17th of April 2023 until the final published report on the 17th of October 2023, which falls within this reporting period.



The Care Inspectorate evaluated the impact of services for children and young people at risk of harm in North Lanarkshire as **very good**.

The main findings from the inspection were:

- The partnership has a strong multi-agency approach to early intervention, collaborative working and information sharing.
- Staff are confident in their knowledge, skills and ability to recognise, report and respond to signs of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. We work together to ensure timely identification and responses to safety concerns for children and young people at risk of harm.
- Staff demonstrate trauma informed and relational practices, which help children and young people experience supportive and trusting relationships with them.
- Children and young people have early access to services to support their mental health and emotional wellbeing, before concerns escalated. Partnership approaches were helping to identify need and secure support earlier.
- The majority of children and young people are meaningfully and appropriately involved in decisions about their lives. Staff listen to children and young people and understand them.
- Senior leaders have a clear vision, which was understood by staff. It was threaded through strategic documents, plans and outcomes. The partnership was highly aspirational and has a strategic focus to improve outcomes for children and young people.
- Collaborative leadership is strong across the partnership. Leaders are aware of strategic risk and jointly deployed resources to the areas of greatest need.

The partnership’s own self-evaluation activity had already identified areas for improvement, and this was further developed through the inspection preparation activity and feedback and findings from the inspection team. Our workforce was fully engaged in the inspection process, contributing to focus groups and scrutiny activity with a commitment to understand not only what they were doing well, but what needed to improve and why. Based on the partnership’s accurate understanding of its future priorities, no formal recommendations were made within the published report.

However, following a review of our previous CPC business planning arrangements, we re-shaped our approach to fit with the key findings for improvement and identified three over-arching priorities for the committee and its sub-groups.

Our Priorities

Priority 1

Strengthen Voice within the delivery of CPC functions.This includes how we demonstrate impact and the difference we are making to the lives of children, young people and families.

Priority 2

Strengthen joint operational practice with a focus on the quality of assessment and planning for individual children and young people. This includes striving to ensure that assessments and plans are informed by an accurate understanding of the significant events and trauma in a child’s life.

Priority 3

Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements in practice and process and strategic planning.

Quality improvement and self-evaluation

Our approach to continuous improvement recognises the need to see this work across the spectrum of services for children. The continuous improvement sub-group therefore spans activity across the CPC and children’s services planning arrangements and reports to both partnerships.

The CPC leads continuous improvement through a programme of self-evaluation and quality assurance. This includes data collection and analysis, audit activity, quarterly and annual review of the minimum data set, learning from reviews locally and nationally and learning from local and national scrutiny and inspection activity. Taken together this activity is our performance framework and informs the child protection business plan. Through our self-evaluation activity we had found many areas of strength, and these were also highlighted through inspection and areas for improvement, again these align with the findings from our recent inspection.



Implementation of National Guidance for Child Protection 2021

In October 2023 we submitted our joint self-evaluation of our implementation the guidance. Validated by the inspection findings, we assessed we were making strong progress across the implementation domains. In relation to the national picture, our position was particularly positive in the following areas:

- Including 16–17-year-olds in our local child protection processes through our contextual safeguarding approach.
- Including the following specific groups in our child protection processes:
 - pre-birth children
 - disabled children
 - migrant families
 - unaccompanied asylum seeking and trafficked children
- Recognising the importance of intensive family support and effective partnership working between children's and adult service is also an area that we felt we had developed and are further developing.
- Contextual safeguarding and extra familial harm was also rated as red in the national response however locally we have embedded this approach.
- Practitioners involved in child protection work have a clear understanding of the 2021 Guidance and practitioners involved in child protection work are skilled and confident in applying the 2021 Guidance. Both of these areas evaluated well in our staff survey, inspection staff survey, focus groups with staff and self-evaluation and inspection activity.
- Child-friendly communication materials that explain how child protection procedures work, the rights children and young people hold, and how children and young people can contribute to planning and decisions about their future.

- Child-friendly communication materials explaining child protection processes are discussed with children, young people, families' parents and carers.

The areas for further progress and development are integrated within our business planning arrangements.



Child Protection Committee Functions

The functions of Child Protection Committees across Scotland were updated in 2018/19 and are now published in 'Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities (2019)'. The core functions are grouped as follows:

Public Information, Engagement and Participation

The way we engage with the public, children, young people and families.

We aim to:

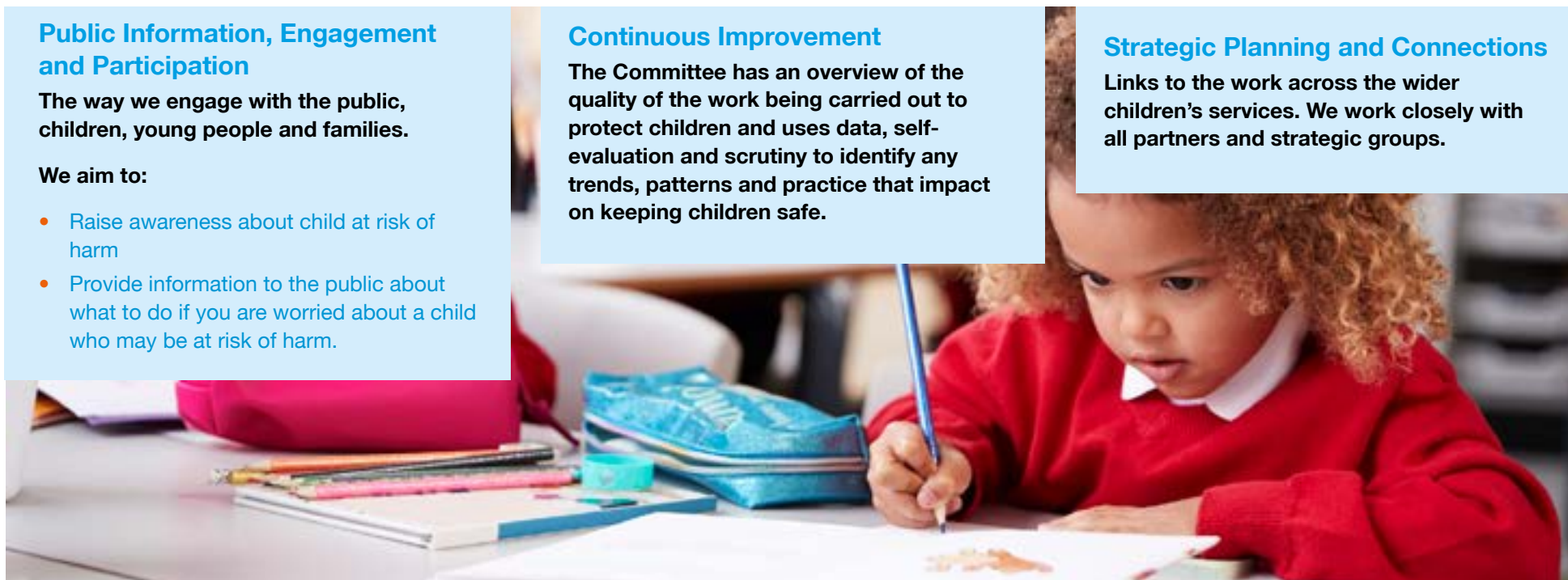
- Raise awareness about child at risk of harm
- Provide information to the public about what to do if you are worried about a child who may be at risk of harm.

Continuous Improvement

The Committee has an overview of the quality of the work being carried out to protect children and uses data, self-evaluation and scrutiny to identify any trends, patterns and practice that impact on keeping children safe.

Strategic Planning and Connections

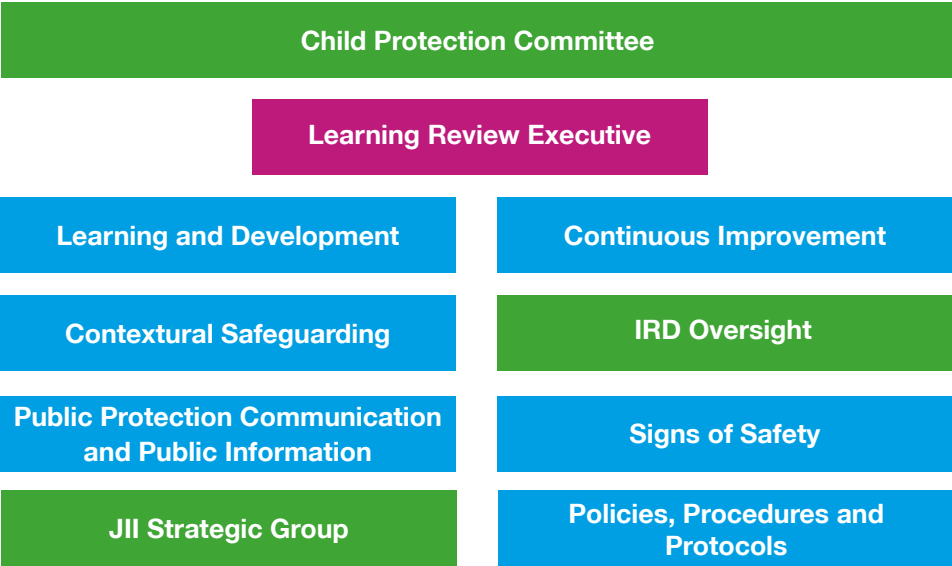
Links to the work across the wider children's services. We work closely with all partners and strategic groups.



Sub-committees

Our CPC drives improvements that link to our vision, taking account of local priorities identified through evaluative activity. The CPC works in collaboration with the Adult Support Protection Committee, VAWG and pan-Lanarkshire work to achieve its key priorities. Multi-agency sub-committees facilitate the delivery of the CPC’s core functions. In fulfilling our functions and delivering on our priorities the Child Protection Committee is supported by 9 sub-committees.

Child Protection Committee and Sub Committee Structure



Highlights of the sub-committees during this reporting period have been:

- Multi-agency implementation of the Signs of Safety approach began in December 2023 and will continue until December 2025.
- The development of a chronology working group that sits across child and adult services has been established as a direct result of our self-evaluation and external scrutiny findings.
- Full implementation of the child protection procedures based upon the child protection Scotland guidance has been fully implemented and evaluated within the partnership.
- Safe and Together has continued to be embedded within the partnership and this has included small scale audit activity.
- Contextual safeguarding has continued to evolve within the partnership, and we are now at the stage of refining our data collection and re-evaluating our young person's safeguarding panel.
- We have developed a central point where all live policies and procedures can be accessed in the form of page tiger.
- Development of a continuous audit calendar for the partnership.
- Established a children's services data working group because of realigning the sub-committee structure.
- Published the self-evaluation of our partnership.
- Continued our strong working relationship with adult services and specifically with adult support and protection to consider implementation of transitional safeguarding. This development is a direct result of learning across adult and children's services from contextual safeguarding and learning review activity.
- Strengthened the use of operational learning forums, alongside adult support and protection to consider topics such as neglect, lifespan chronologies and contextual safeguarding.
- Assessment of care toolkit training was refreshed and delivered to the partnership.



Achievements aligned to our CPC priorities

Our Priorities

Priority 1 Strengthen Voice within the delivery of CPC functions.

Priority 2 Strengthen joint operational practice with a focus on the quality of assessment and planning for individual children and young people.

Priority 3 Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements in practice and process and strategic planning.

Workforce learning and development sub-committee

The sub-committee has been focused on Priority 2 and improvement actions as follows:

Improvement 2.1: Strengthen the quality and consistency of assessments and plans.

The subcommittee has focused upon the assessment and planning multi-agency module and there has been work undertaken to strengthen areas of the module in line with the priorities of the workplan.

The subcommittee has arranged bespoke sessions to be delivered to Intensive services in relation to SMART planning.

Improvement 2.2: Strengthen the quality and consistent use of chronologies to ensure these are used routinely as part of an assessment.

This group is supporting the implementation of signs of safety.

There are key members of the subcommittee who are also involved in the chronologies working group established with focus on lifespan chronologies.

Improvement 2.3: Our learning and development opportunities enhance operational practice.

The subcommittee continues to develop and deliver opportunities to enhance operational practice.

1. North Lanarkshire child protection procedure feedback sessions have now been delivered.
 - A page tiger has been developed to support the partnership with access to the procedures.
 - An App has been developed to allow mobile access to the procedures.
 - Bespoke child protection procedure sessions have been delivered to health, CL&D and social work.
2. The subcommittee supported the development and delivery of our conference focusing on supporting people with neglect across the lifespan, and this was shared with our colleagues in ASP.
3. The learning and development programme has been extended to include a module named mind your words, to focus on communication with children and young people.
4. A new module has been developed and launched as part of our learning and development programme for care and risk management.

Some highlights of learning and development have been:

- 275 staff attended understanding child neglect
- 389 staff have completed the contextual safeguarding course
- 252 staff have attended assessment and planning
- 1225 Child Protection Awareness module

Public Communication sub-committee

Improvement 1.4: Strengthen public awareness of child protection.

The sub-committee has:

- continued to work with Motherwell Football club, this partnership enables the CPC to reach a wider audience and access members of our community that we do not routinely have contact with, this allows important messages to reach more people.
- developed a child protection calendar of activities as part of our work of the public protection communications group.
- delivered public protection conferences to address neglect and a further conference is planned to consider online safety across public protection.

Policies, procedures and protocols sub-committee

Improvement 2.1: Strengthen the quality and consistency of assessments plan

The subcommittee has focused upon the implementation and embedding our North Lanarkshire child protection procedures, developed in line with the national child protection guidance, 2021, updated 2023. There have also been evaluation sessions undertaken with the workforce to understand the impact of working with the new procedures.

The group have also supported the workforce by producing an online resource in the form of a page tiger where our multi-agency policies, procedures and protocols can be stored, ensuring the most recent version is always available to support our workforce when undertaking assessments and plans.

The group has worked alongside our colleagues in South Lanarkshire child protection committee, who led on the update, to refresh the equal protection from assault guidance the update.



Continuous improvement sub-committee

This sub-group leads on audit and self-evaluation.

The annual IRD audit has been completed, and a report has been developed and this is presented to the continuous improvement group and the CPC committee.

Multi-agency self-evaluation

We restructured our sub-committee structure and this has enabled this sub-committee to be supported by two working groups, one for data and one for self-evaluation and audit.

Our recently established data group has a focus on the national minimum data set and the solace data. The group is now in the process of scoping data across the partnership to understand what is available for the group to analyse and understand children's journeys from GIRFEC to child protection and back to GIRFEC frameworks and are creating a dashboard to support with this activity.

The self-evaluation group is responsible for updating the partnership self-evaluation and also for the audit calendar of activities and learning from this activity.

JII/ IRD Steering Group

Priority 1

Strengthen Voice within the delivery of CPC functions.

Priority 3

Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements in practice and process and strategic planning.

1.3 – The JII Team continues to seek the feedback from children, young people and their parents/ carers about their experience of JII. Given the sensitivity around the work of the team, this remains challenging. A range of tools and methods have been adopted by the team including spontaneous feedback through comments cards and discussions with interviewers, feedback leaflets available post interview, and the recent introduction of a QR code to access a structured feedback form. It is proposed that this will be developed into a credit card size take away to be given post interview and available across the workforce for children and young people, and one for parents/ carers.

1.4 – To support the continued understanding of the JII and forensic nature of this as a part of the CP Process, including decision making at IRD, the JII Team have conducted a range of awareness raising sessions across services in the partnership, including Health, social work, foster carers. There has been specific awareness raising around Equal Protection legislation to support decision making where this should be a consideration. These sessions support the connectedness of the JII Team to wider CP partner agencies.

1.3 & 1.4 – Application to the Bairns Hoose Development Fund for Lanarkshire Partnership to undertake a scoping exercise across statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations in Lanarkshire and engagement work to be undertaken with children, young people and their families. The outcome would be to provide an options appraisal for the development of the Bairns Hoose approach in Lanarkshire taking account of the resources required, service structures and change and the associated resource and cost implications. The partnership was successful in this application, with the proposed work scheduled to be undertaken concluding in March 2025. The project plan has a clear remit to seek the views and participation of children, young people and their families and raising awareness the aspirations of Bairns Hoose approach.

3.1 – The JII Team collates a data set relevant to the operations of the team. This has been updated in 2024 to reflect current practice and information required to support the JII in the context of wider CP activity, safety planning and recovery support. This is reported quarterly, with analysis informing continuous improvement work.

3.1 – Lanarkshire JII Team has been involved in a national SLWG around disability data collation. The development of a specific data set around disability has been developed and implemented both in the SCIM Data collation and interview planning documentation from Q1, August 2024. Through the operations group health and education are considering the use of this data to reflect on children coming to JII and this will support post interview considerations around recovery support.

3.3 – The SCIM for JII as a forensic interview in a wider CP investigation has a key objective of being used as evidence in chief to reduce the likelihood of children and young people giving evidence at court. Whilst information and direct correlation between the interview and outcomes in legal proceedings are challenging, the team receives information from SCRA and through national data collation of outcomes in Court proceedings. This evidences various occasions when children and young people are not required to give evidence, through guilty pleas or when hearings or trials take place the JII has been used as evidence and the child has not required to give evidence.

3.4 – The SCIM Data collation will be used to support the ongoing work of the quality improvement and performance framework and data subgroup.



Learning review executive sub-committee

Priority 3 Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements in practice and process and strategic planning.

Conducting Learning Reviews

The CPC, on behalf of the Chief Officers, have responsibility for undertaking learning reviews when it is agreed that the national criteria are met. The aim of this activity is:

- To ensure robust mechanisms are in place for the identification, consideration and undertaking of learning reviews including evaluation processes for actions resulting from the review. All of the learning achieved through the reviews, is identified and shared across the multi-agency partnership. This includes learning from learning reviews, inspection reports and other reflective learning reports.
- Action planning required from learning reviews are incorporated into the Child Protection sub committee's workplans and business plan.
- We continue to use a public protection streamlined processes for tracking and reporting learning reviews.
- The CPC has also supported partners with reflective learning work.

The Learning Review Executive Group (LREG) meets quarterly to consider notifications from partners about cases that may meet the criteria for a learning review. During this reporting year we agreed to proceed with one new notification and continued to progress two other cases for a learning review and a reflective practice review. Alongside this, we have continued to work on ensuring a coherent alignment with other review processes that sit with individual partner agencies.

The absence of a national training offer for those we ask to lead the new systems-based reviews leads to challenges in consistency of approach and a full understanding of the principles of the model across all stakeholders. North Lanarkshire commissioned a multi-agency four-day training programme in June 2024 in a systems-based model that was aimed at building capacity across CPC and APC learning review business.

Contextual Safeguarding steering group

Priority 1

We started to work with the University of Durham on a pilot project to look at the implementation of Contextual Safeguarding within a school context with a particular emphasis on how contextual work around groups of students and/or places can be integrated with the GIRFEC and planning for the wellbeing of young people. As part of this pilot work three secondary schools have been involving their young people in where they feel safe and unsafe both in school and in the community to help shape the piloting of contextual responses.

CLD in collaboration with young people from North Lanarkshire Youth Council, Promise Development Workers, and young people from the Champions Board created a peer education session to introduce Contextual Safeguarding and explain risks in the community using a CLD Youth Work approach to co-production. This is being used to support young people.

Priority 2

There has been widespread take up of the online training module in Contextual Safeguarding. Over 700 council staff across services have accessed the module to date and more staff across the partnership have completed the training. The Police have incorporated a specific input on Contextual Safeguarding to their local induction of new probationary officers. Training has been complemented by individual consultation sessions for staff to help them apply the principles of contextual safeguarding to practice and staff from across the partnership have the opportunity to learn through a refreshed multiagency practitioner forum. Specific training was provided to the schools participating in the pilot project, along with

their key partners. An operational forum, attended by over 135 was dedicated to extra familial harm. One tangible outcome of this session has been greater awareness and use of the National Referral Mechanism which has helped to protect exploited children also involved in court proceedings.

CLD focused on up-skilling of Youth Work Support Workers alongside the implementation of Detached Youth Work using locations of concern and peer assessment to enhance work with colleagues in community safety and local businesses to help keep young people safer.

Priority 3

The IRD process was updated to explicitly record concerns about young people at significant risk of extra familial harm. This led to 37 young people being referred to the multiagency safeguarding panel individually or as a group to mobilise resources to address the contextual risks. We know from research conducted by the University of Sussex, validated by the Joint Inspection, that young people have experienced a more trauma-informed and rights respecting approach when at risk of harm through this process. Data on outcomes about young people's longer-term safety requires further work. Therefore, the panel will be evaluated in 24/25, including an analysis of outcomes for young people over time.



Our children, young people and families in North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire is the 4th largest local authority area in Scotland, of the 437 data zones in North Lanarkshire, in 217 data zones more than 20% of the children are living in relative low-income families. The Plan for North Lanarkshire has provided a partnership vision to achieve growth and prosperity for all with an estimated population of 341,400.

Young People	2021 population
Age	Persons
0 – 4	17,192
5 – 11	27,707
12 – 15	16,707
16 – 17	8,145
All Ages 0-17	69,751



Our management information

To help monitor child protection activity and identify trends, the committee reviews child protection statistical information. In North Lanarkshire we have adopted the National Minimum Dataset version 2 for Child Protection. The national figures published annually by the Scottish Government provide the opportunity to ‘benchmark’ against other local authority areas across Scotland. These figures in conjunction with local child protection information collected by agencies and services working in North Lanarkshire, form the basis for child protection management information.

National Data and Local Comparison

The national data is taken from the children’s social work statistics published by the Scottish Government on 26th March 2024. This section presents data on children registered on the child protection register from 01st August 2022 until 21st July 2023.

The figures show that a total of 2,094 children were on the child protection register on 31 July 2023, an increase of 4% since 2022. 5% of children on the register were not yet born, and the proportion of children on the Register under the age of five years was 47%.



Data

Chart 1: Rate of children on the child protection

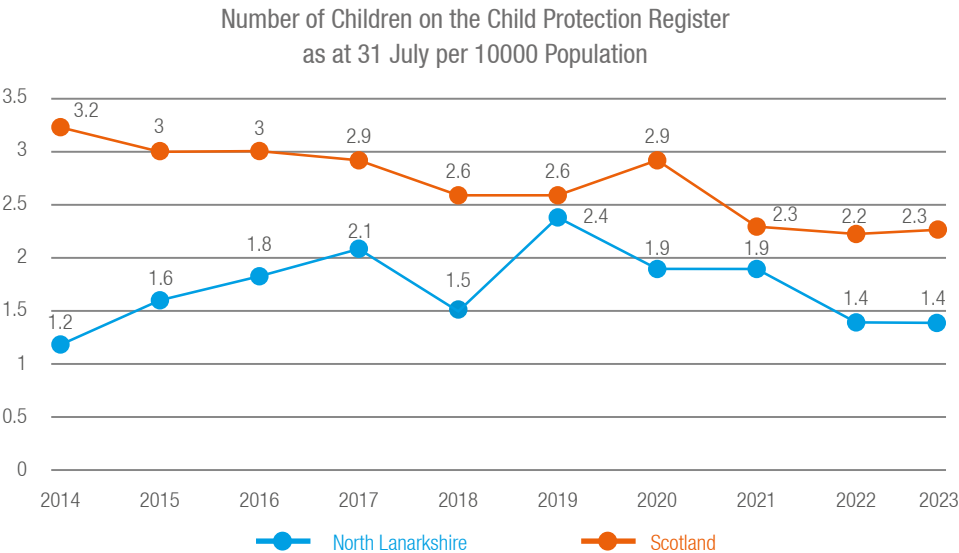
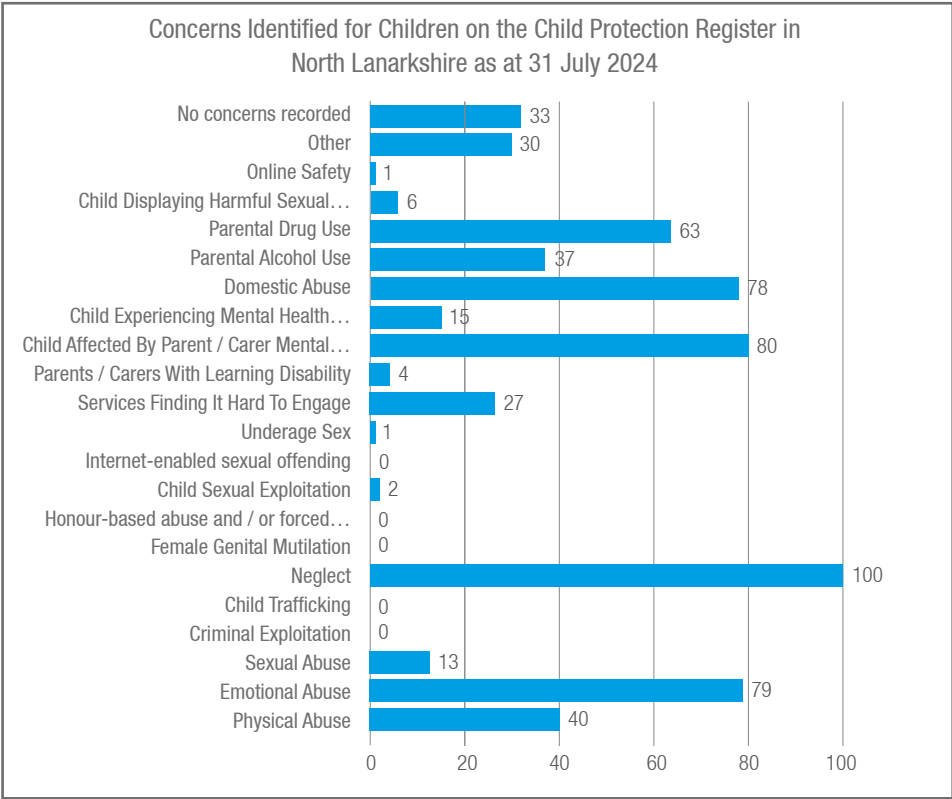
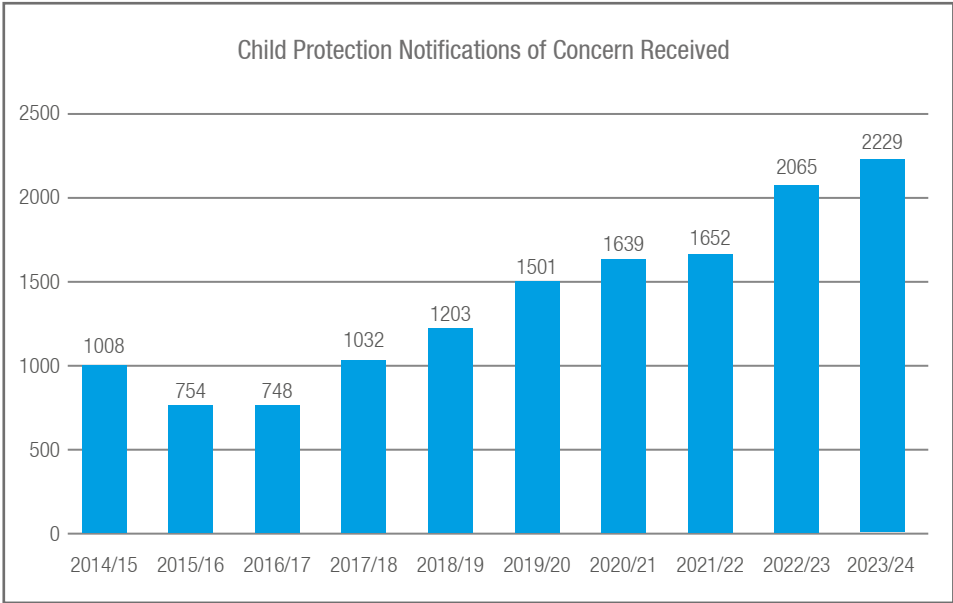


Chart 2: Prevalence of concerns



Of the total number of concerns identified, the most common concerns were: neglect, the child affected by parental or carer’s mental health problems, emotional abuse followed closely by domestic abuse. Although there were no recorded concerns of criminal exploitation within this time period, the partnership is aware that this is an area of risk that is identified through its work within the contextual safeguarding arena. As the implementation of a contextual safeguarding approach is reviewed, the use of contextual safeguarding panels should assist with more effective identification of risks from extra familial harm.

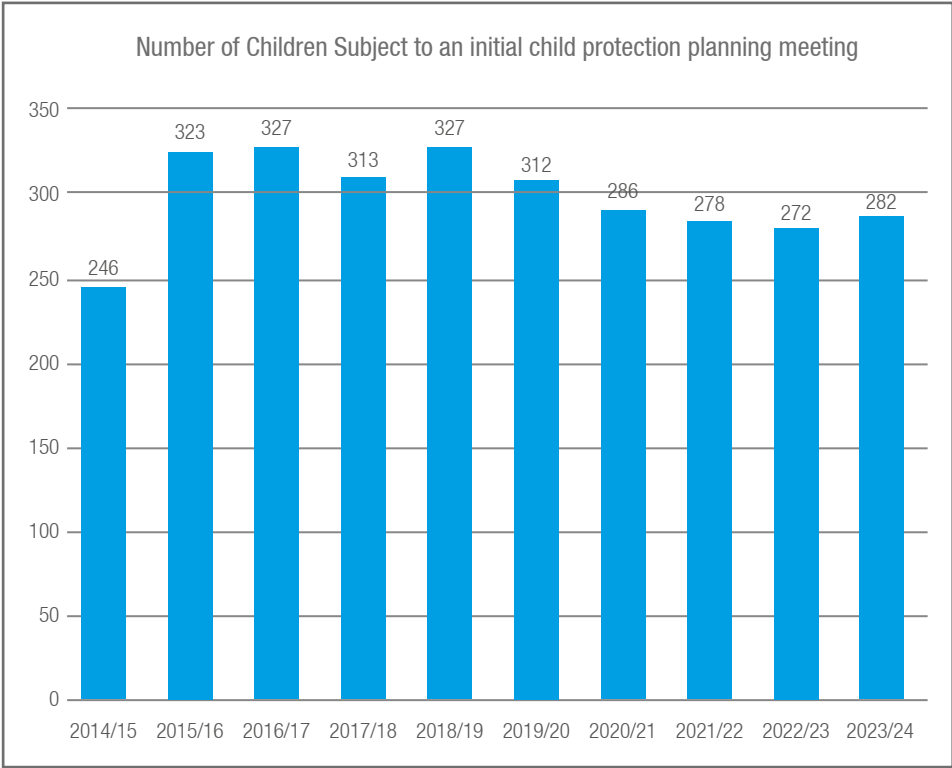
Chart 3: Notification of concerns received



The number of child protection referrals has continued to increase since 2017/2018. The referral rate has now more than doubles since 2017/18.

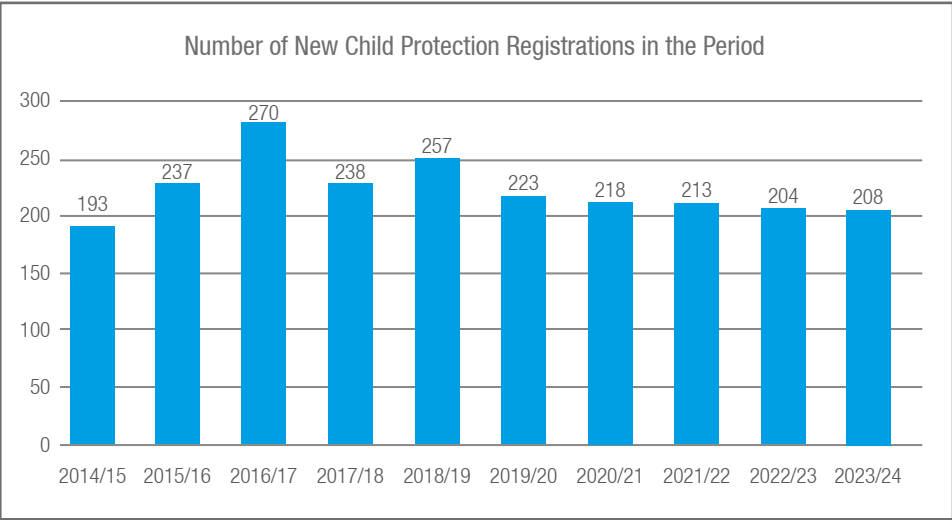


Chart 4: Number of children subject to an initial child protection case conference – 2014/15 to 2023/24



The number of initial child protection planning meetings, previously known as case conferences has remained fairly stable from 2020 until now.

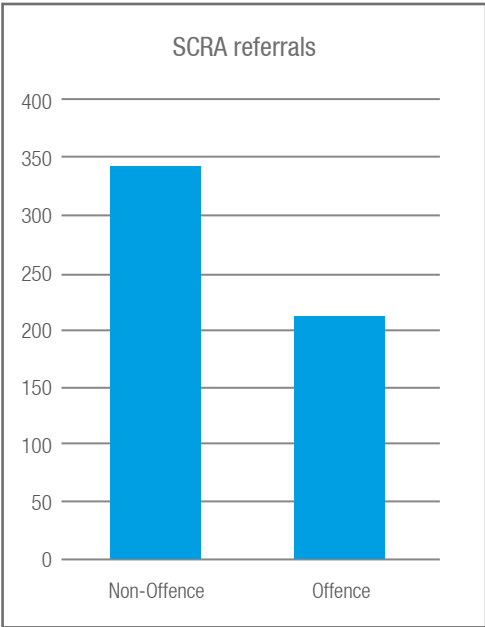
Chart 5: Number of new child protection registrations



The number of children’s names registered on the child protection register has also remained fairly stable since 2019/20, this may indicate agreed thresholds and practice in relation to new registrations.

There has been a slight increase in registration of older children aged 12 years +. What this indicates, in part, is that practitioners, supported by our commitments to keep the Promise and UNCRC and investment in contextual safeguarding, are increasingly focusing on and recognising the protection of older children and their rights.

Chart 6: Scottish children’s reporters administration (SCRA)



North Lanarkshire children referred to the children’s reporter both in relation to non-offence and offence grounds remains relatively low. Our initial work indicates that we have reduced risks at an earlier stage due to the decrease in our referrals for compulsory measures. Referrals to SCRA have been consistently lower per head than in comparator authorities over the previous years. Our work of the chief officer’s group has had a focus to ensure our staff are confident and familiar with thresholds for engaging statutory intervention at the right time to support children and families. As a partnership we are committed to monitor trends and be responsive to analysis of our data.

In conclusion, we have made progress across all areas of our business plan in its first year. We will continue to build upon what is working well to keep children safe through this the current and second year of the plan. The three priorities have driven the work of the partnership to address the areas for improvement identified through our self-evaluation and continuous improvement activities:

- Review our quality and performance framework.
- Improving parent and carer participation in service design and delivery.
- Implementation of Signs of Safety.
- Progress Bairns Hoose.
- Strengthening Whole Family Support.
- Further develop UNCRC peer education group for Make it Right UNCRC campaign.



Business Plan 2024 - 2025

Introduction

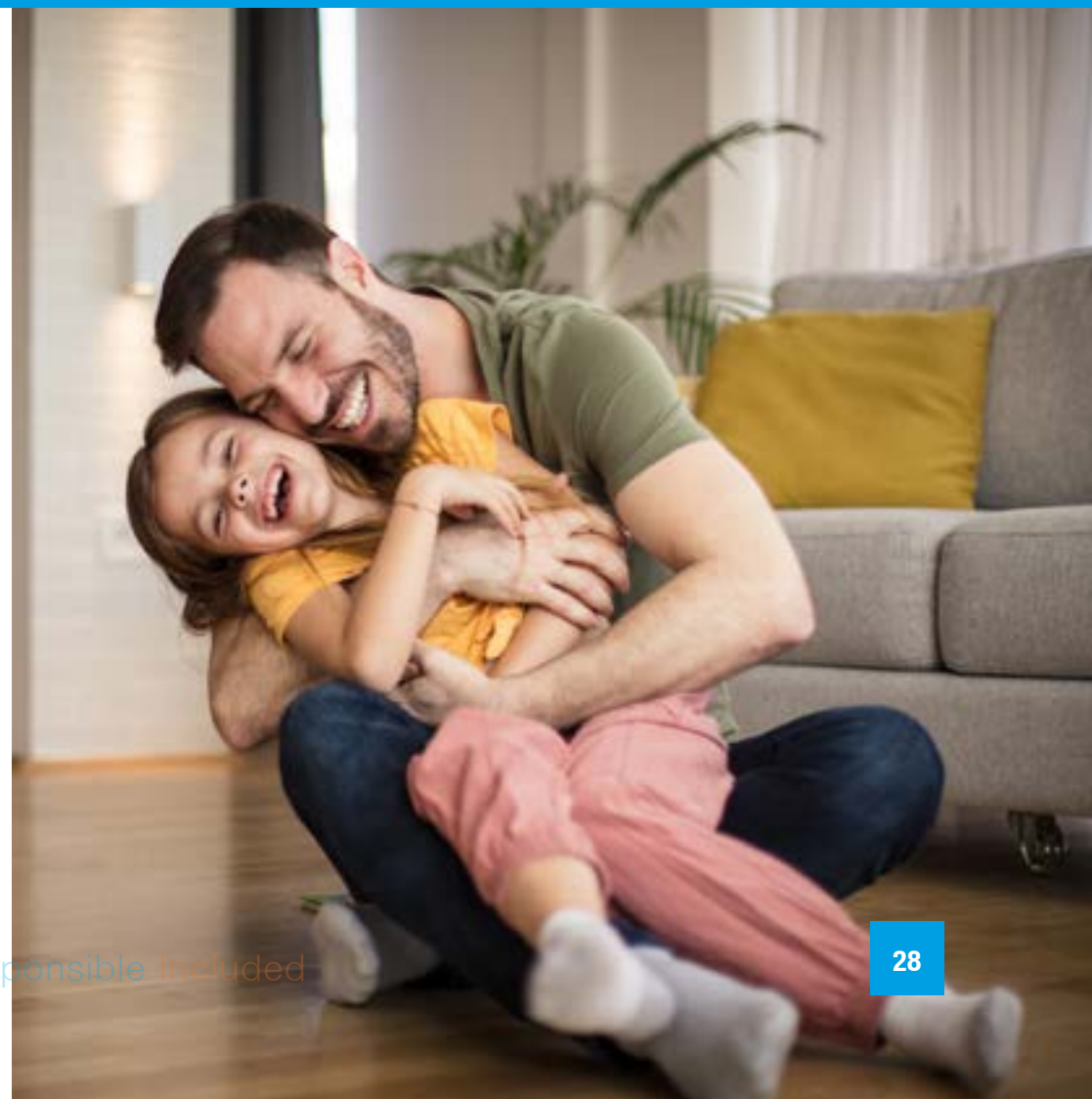
The Child Protection Committee vision is:

“All children and young people in North Lanarkshire have the right to be cared for and protected from abuse and harm in a safe environment in which their rights are respected”

Our committee has nine high level outcomes which link to our vision and take account of the functions and responsibilities of Child Protection Committees outlined in ‘Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities (2019)’.

They also take into account local priorities for the child protection committee identified through self-evaluation, inspection and other review activity, the priorities of the wider children’s services partnership and the national priorities identified in the Child Protection Improvement Programme.

Safe Healthy Achieving Nurtured Active Respected Responsible Included



High Level Outcomes

01	Learning from range of sources, including research, local quality assurance activity, practice experience, performance information, and significant case reviews informs priority setting policy and practice developments.
02	Evidence informed changes to policy and practice are introduced, monitored and evaluated, and improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
03	Evidence informed, up to date procedures, protocols and guidance are available in relation to core child protection business and related priority issues, these are implemented effectively and impact on practice and outcomes.
04	The North Lanarkshire workforce is competent and confident in their individual, managerial and collective roles to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect or exploitation.
05	Relevant, up to date public information is available in a range of accessible and engaging formats to individuals and communities across North Lanarkshire.
06	The views of children and families are taken into account in relation to issues that affect them directly and in policy and practice development.
07	Collaboration and co-operation between the Child Protection Committee and other national and local multi-agency partnerships is effective.
08	National strategy and policy developments inform Child Protection Committee activity.
09	Local leadership of child protection is effective in driving improvements in child protection practice and in improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Our priorities for 2024 - 2025

The committee's core functions are set out in national guidance:

- continuous improvement
- public information, engagement, and participation
- strategic planning and connections
- annual reporting

The committee will continue to deliver core business through the work of a reviewed and streamlined sub-committee structure. Partners remain committed to working alongside the children's services partnership board to promote and further the protection of children and young people within the context of early intervention and community planning. We will work in partnership with the adult protection committee, the VAWG group, MAPPA and pan-Lanarkshire colleagues on relevant areas of cross-cutting work.

The 2024/25 business plan continues in line with the 2023/24 business plan and presents a high-level framework for three key improvement priority outcomes that have emerged from our own self-evaluation and from inspection findings and will be the focus of work over the coming 12 months. It will be underpinned by a detailed workplan that sets out the role of supporting sub-committees in delivering these outcomes in a way that enables the CPC to demonstrate the impact of its collective activities on improving the safety of children, young people and families in North Lanarkshire. The work plan will be reviewed routinely during CPC meetings.





Priority 1
Strengthen Voice of children, young people and families within the delivery of CPC functions.

Listening to the voice of children and young people and ensuring they are meaningfully involved in decision making about their lives is enshrined in the Promise and underpins national legislation and policy and aligns with our children’s services planning arrangements. Our self-evaluation and audit activity highlights the need to improve the uptake of advocacy services and ensure we have a range of tools available and are used to demonstrate that the voices of children at risk of harm are heard and included in decisions about how they are being protected.	Implement Signs of Safety Practice model
	Strengthen role of advocacy
	Achieve greater impact of participation tools.
	Strengthen public awareness

Priority 2
Strengthen joint operational practice with a focus on the quality of assessment and planning for individual children and young people.

As a partnership we have found through self-evaluation and audit activity that our children’s records have assessment and plans however the quality of these are not consistently of a high standard. Through our external scrutiny this finding was also evident. As a partnership we plan to improve the quality and consistency of our assessment, chronologies, and plans.	Focus on improving quality and consistency of assessments and plans
	Take a pan-life-span approach to improving the quality and use of chronologies.
	Develop our workforce to enhance operational practice

Priority 3
Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements in practice and process and strategic planning.

<p>As a partnership we collect a range of data to inform our strategic direction and operational practice. Our partnership has found through self-evaluation work and external scrutiny that we need to improve the way we use data to measure and demonstrate impact and deliver improved outcomes to children and young people at risk of harm and use it to further inform service planning and development.</p>	<p>Strengthen data analysis and interrogation.</p> <p>Continue to improve young people's safety in our communities through Contextual safeguarding</p> <p>Enhance use of qualitative data to demonstrate impact.</p> <p>Implement the quality improvement and performance framework</p>
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Appendix 1

Governance and Reporting

North Lanarkshire Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce, implement, and monitor the Single Outcome Agreement. Report annually to the Scottish Government. Receive bi-annual reports from the Children's Services Partnership. 	Child Protection Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement child protection policy and strategy across and between agencies/services. Deliver on Key Functions grouped as follows: public information, continuous improvement and strategic planning. Report on a quarterly basis to the COG. Produce an annual report and business plan.
Chief Officers Public Protection Group (COG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the strategic overview for public protection, including child protection. Individually and collectively provide leadership and accountability for public protection. Receive quarterly reports from the Child Protection Committee and Children's Services Partnership (CSP). Agree the Child Protection Committee Annual Report and Business Plan and the Children's Services Report and Annual Action Plan. 	Improving Children's Services Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce, implement and monitor the Children's Services Annual Action Plan. Develop and implement an effective performance framework. Collate information for the Children's Services Improvement Tool. Receive quarterly reports from themed groups and locality planning groups. Produce quarterly reports for the Children's Services Partnership and wider communication.
Children's Services Partnership (CSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide governance across all elements of the Children's Services Plan. Report biannually to North Lanarkshire Partnership. Report to the COG. Receive quarterly reports from the Improving Children's Services Group. Report to and share minutes with the NLC Policy and Resources Committee. 	Themed Subgroups and Locality Planning Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to planning, monitoring and evaluation. Produce and update priorities and plans. Produce quarterly reports to the Improving Children's Services Group. Deliver on the actions in the ICSP. Collect information for the Children's Services Improvement Tool and use this to prompt discussion and scrutiny.

Appendix 2

North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee Membership - as of 31st July 2024

Title	Organisation
Independent Chair	North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee
Co-ordinator Child Protection	North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee
Detective Superintendent	Detective Superintendent, Specialist Crime Division
Head of Service Public Protection	NHS Lanarkshire
Chief Social Work Officer (Education, Families, Justice & Integrated Practice)	Education & Families, North Lanarkshire Council
Medical Director	Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire
Nurse Director	Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire
Associate Nurse Director	Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire
Manager, Children & Families	Education & Families
Locality Reporter Manager North Lanarkshire	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Education Officer	North Lanarkshire Council, Education & Families
Development Officer	North Lanarkshire Council, Education & Families

Title	Organisation
Service Co-ordinator (Domestic Abuse)	North Lanarkshire Council, Education & Families
Housing Services Manager	North Lanarkshire Council, Enterprise & Housing Resources
Development Officer (North)	Lanarkshire Alcohol & Drug Action Team (ADAT)
Head of Democratic and Legal Services	North Lanarkshire Council, Corporate Services
Area Convenor	North Lanarkshire Children's Panel
Principal Psychologist	North Lanarkshire Council, Education & Families
Agreed representative	On behalf of Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL)
Admin Assistant	North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee

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getting
it right
for every child
in North Lanarkshire