

Blackpool Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) Annual Report 2025–2026



Contents

Foreword from MASA Chair and DSP's	1
A message from our Independent Scrutineer.....	2
Introduction	4
How are we meeting national safeguarding expectations?	5
Our Vision.....	6
MASA Finance	8
Growing up in Blackpool	9
Our Safeguarding Priorities 2025–2026.....	10
Priority One - Neglect	11
Priority Two - Domestic Abuse.....	16
Priority Three - Contextual Safeguarding	20
Our Partnership Audit Programme	24
Families First Partnership Programme.....	26
Blackpool's Commitment to Tackling Child Sexual Abuse.....	27
Elective Home Education (EHE).....	28
Coproduction and Participation.....	29
Family Story: Early Support for Communication Development Learning and Reflection...	30
Workforce Development, Communication and Engagement.....	31
Working with dads and men in families.....	35
Pan Lancashire CSPR Group	36
CDOP Annual Update Summary (2025–26).....	37
Our MASA Development Day.....	39
Next Steps for MASA in 2026–2027	40

Foreword from MASA Chair and DSP's

On behalf of the MASA Partnership and my fellow Designated Safeguarding Partners (DSP's) I am proud to present the MASA Annual Report for 2025–2026. The report reflects an exceptionally busy, ambitious and impactful year for safeguarding partnership working in Blackpool. Over the past twelve months, MASA has continued to grow from strength to strength, delivering a significant volume of work, that demonstrates both the increasing maturity of our governance arrangements and the depth of our shared commitment to protecting children, their families and carers across our town. This has been a year marked by energy, innovation and collective developments. I want to thank all partners for their sustained commitment and sharing our Blackpool Families Rock values and culture. Together, we continue to undertake substantial progress against our strategic priorities.

Highlights include the continued strengthening of our data and effectiveness arrangements, so as leaders we have a clear insight of the effectiveness of our partnership workforce supporting families at the earliest stage. The implementation of new and refreshed partnership strategies regarding neglect, domestic abuse and contextual safeguarding, and meaningful progress in embedding the Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Pathway and Strategy. Our partnership audits methodologies have significantly matured and received positive feedback, and the workforce learning activity has become increasingly confident and sophisticated, enabling us to move beyond process into a clearer understanding of impact and lived experience.

A further significant achievement has been our progress on coproduction and participation. In Blackpool, our partnership is commitment to ensuring that children families and carers lived experience is at the heart of how we design, deliver and evaluate our safeguarding practice. Equally important is hearing the voice of our workforce and supporting them to be skilled, confident and feel valued by our leaders. As a partnership our investment in training, reflection learning from audits and reviews via a trauma informed approach remains central to our ambition to ensure that families experience good partnership support at the earliest stage.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the North West Regional Improvement Pilot Project (RiPP), whose support this year has helped accelerate progress across several of our priorities across the North West region. Their contribution has been particularly valuable in strengthening our approach to data, coproduction and participation, and in supporting the implementation of the Child Sexual Abuse Pathway and Strategy.

As MASA Chair, I am confident that we are approaching 2026 - 2027 with strong foundations, shared purpose and a clear direction of travel. I want to thank all partners, practitioners, leaders and the children and families who have shared their lived experiences, who have all contributed their time, expertise and insight to our MASA developments over the past year. Together, we continue to develop a strong safeguarding partnership that learns and develops, with the voice and experiences of Blackpool's families at its heart.



Vicky Gent
Director of Children's Services

A message from our Independent Scrutineer

This has been a productive and progressive year for the Blackpool Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA), with partners continuing to demonstrate a strong commitment to collaborative safeguarding and system improvement. Building on established governance arrangements, the partnership has maintained clear lines of accountability and has further strengthened its approach to multi-agency working in line with the expectations set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. There is clear evidence of engaged partners, constructive challenge, and a shared ambition to improve outcomes for children and families across Blackpool.

Independent scrutiny activity over the past year has focused on key priority areas including child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, neglect, and early help. This has involved a combination of thematic review, partner engagement, and consideration of both local, regional and national learning. Scrutiny has provided assurance in a number of areas, particularly in relation to the strength of frontline practice, the commitment of practitioners, and the development of trusting relationships with children and families. At the same time, scrutiny has supported the partnership in identifying areas for further development, particularly in relation to evidencing impact, strengthening data quality, and ensuring consistency in multi-agency practice.

A notable area of development has been the partnership's response to child sexual exploitation and abuse. Work undertaken during the year demonstrates a clear commitment to embedding learning from national reviews/enquiries, the North West Regional Improvement Partnership Programme (RIPP) and local audit activity. The development of the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) represents an important step in strengthening the

partnership's approach to exploitation, with increasing focus on improving data quality, enhancing intelligence sharing, and developing a more comprehensive understanding of both victim vulnerability and perpetrator behaviour. This work is supported by collaboration with regional partners through the RIPP, particularly in relation to the development of a more consistent and robust dataset.

In relation to domestic abuse, scrutiny has highlighted a range of positive developments across the partnership, including effective early identification, targeted support for victims, and a growing emphasis on prevention and early help. Schools, early years settings, and health services continue to play a vital role in recognising and responding to children affected by domestic abuse. The partnership has also demonstrated a strong commitment to training and workforce development. Alongside these strengths, scrutiny has identified opportunities to further strengthen

the partnership's approach, including continuing to embed a shared understanding of children as victims of domestic abuse, enhancing multi-agency risk assessment processes, and further developing a coordinated performance framework to support strategic oversight.

Governance arrangements across MASA remain a key strength. A structured approach to independent scrutiny has been further embedded during the year, with the introduction of a cyclical model of scrutiny, assurance, and partnership response. This approach, where key questions are posed, tracked, and revisited, has strengthened the partnership's ability to demonstrate learning, accountability, and continuous improvement. Engagement across subgroups and delivery groups is positive, with partners contributing meaningfully to the work of the partnership and demonstrating a clear commitment to shared safeguarding responsibilities.



As part of my role, I have engaged with a range of partners across the system, including attendance at MASA Board meetings, delivery groups, and direct discussions with practitioners and managers. This has provided valuable insight into both strategic developments and frontline practice. I have also maintained links with regional scrutineer networks, supporting the sharing of learning and alignment with wider regional and national developments.

Looking ahead, the safeguarding landscape continues to evolve. Anticipated developments linked to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 will further strengthen expectations around multi-agency accountability, data transparency, and evidencing impact. In addition, early learning from the Southport Inquiry Phase 1 reinforces the importance of professional curiosity, effective information sharing, and the need for systems to respond proactively to patterns of vulnerability and risk. These developments are aligned with some of the areas already identified through local scrutiny and provide a clear direction for the partnership moving forward.

In summary, Blackpool MASA continues to demonstrate strong foundations, effective leadership, and a clear commitment to learning and improvement. The partnership is well placed to build on this progress over the coming year, with a continued focus on strengthening the use of data, evidencing the impact of multi-agency activity, and ensuring that the voices and lived experiences of children and families remain central to safeguarding practice.



Stephen Chapman
Independent Scrutineer
for Blackpool MASA



Introduction

The third annual report of Blackpool's MASA reflects the collective commitment of organisations and individuals across Blackpool who work together every day to safeguard children, young people and families. Over the past year, partners have continued to demonstrate strong leadership, shared responsibility and a clear determination to learn, improve and make a positive difference.

The report celebrates the dedication of practitioners and leaders across all agencies, highlights the impact of coproduction and collaborative working, and shows how learning, data, innovation and the lived experiences of children and families are shaping safer, more responsive services. It also sets out how the partnership is responding to both ongoing and emerging challenges, with a strong focus on early help, coproduction and improving outcomes for children and their families. Working Together, Blackpool MASA present a confident, ambitious partnership, driven by shared values, strong collaboration and a clear focus on improving outcomes and experiences for children, families and communities across Blackpool.



How are we meeting national safeguarding expectations?

Updated in February 2026, the Blackpool Multi Agency Published Safeguarding Arrangements set out how statutory safeguarding partners – Blackpool Council, Lancashire Constabulary and the Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB – continue to work together to safeguard children. Our governance structure below sets out how in Blackpool our MASA works closely with our Safeguarding Adult Board and BSAFE Community Safety Board, so all agencies support families and our local communities. Following the review of the refreshed governance structure in October 2024, two new elements have been established: the Education Strategic Delivery Group (July 2025) and the Family First Strategic Delivery Group (October 2025), both designed to better support the partnership's strategic priorities.

February 2026 saw further progress with the introduction of an updated Pan Lancashire Information Sharing Protocol (ISA), a refreshed multi agency audit process, and a revised Blackpool specific professional escalation procedure. A joint Children and Adults Voice Group was established in February 2026 to ensure that lived experience meaningfully informs decision making and service development. Working in partnership with the North West Hub and Participation People, a participation focused engagement event took place in March 2026, feeding directly into the MASA development day.



Our Vision

All members of Blackpool's MASA are committed that children and young people are Blackpool's future. We want to ensure that all children experience a great education and are supported by our partnership at the earliest opportunity, so they can thrive, feel healthy, happy and safe in their families care, and have opportunities to be ambitious about their future. When children and families need additional support, our vision is that they are supported to remain living within stable homes and loving families wherever possible.

Our Principles

In Blackpool we are committed to co-production with families that we serve in our local community. Our partnership culture and values continue to be based on our co-produced 'Blackpool Families Rock' principles.

Governance and Connectivity

During the last year, further focus has been on integrating Blackpool's MASA governance arrangements alongside the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) and the BSafe Community Safety Partnership (BSafe). In 2026, Blackpool's safeguarding partnerships strengthened their joint working through shared Strategic Delivery Groups, including those focused on domestic abuse, contextual safeguarding, and new for this year, coproduction and participation. These groups report across MASA, BSAB and BSafe, ensuring aligned governance, strong partnership connectivity and consistent oversight, supported through oversight of the Safeguarding Executive Board.

Leadership and Strategic Direction

Blackpool MASA's Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP's) are:

- Neil Jack - Chief Executive Blackpool Council
- Sacha Hatchett - Chief Constable of Lancashire Constabulary
- Aaron Cummings - Chief Executive Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Our Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP's) are:

- Vicky Gent - Director of Children's Services (DCS) Blackpool Council
- Hassan Khan - Chief Superintendent, Divisional Commander Lancashire Police
- Jane Scattergood - Chief Nursing Officer ICB

Independent Scrutiny Arrangements

The Independent Scrutineer, Stephen Chapman, has continued to provide oversight and challenge this year, scrutinising key priorities including Domestic Abuse, Contextual safeguarding arrangements and CSRs, reporting to MASA and the Executive Board, and strengthening regional learning through the RiPP Scrutiny Network.



Who makes up our MASA Board?

The following organisations are members of Blackpool's MASA

- Lancashire Constabulary
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Blackpool Council - representatives of Children's Services and Public Health
- Education Settings
- Blackpool Teaching Hospital (BTH)
- Lancashire & South Cumbria Foundation Trust
- National Probation Service
- Blackpool Coastal Housing
- Blackpool Council's Elected Member Portfolio lead for Children's Services
- Better Start

We have also welcomed a range of third sector organisations into both MASA and our Strategic Delivery Groups, strengthening partnership representation and widening the breadth of expertise across our safeguarding arrangements.

Executive Board

The Blackpool Safeguarding Executive Board is chaired by the Blackpool Council's Chief Executive (Council LSP) and is attended by MASA's Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP's), the MASA, BSAFE and BSAB Chairs, MASA Independent Scrutineer and Elected Members. The Safeguarding Executive meets quarterly, to oversee the partnership governance arrangements, ensuring that all agencies are working effectively together to safeguard children and young people, families, adults, carers and our local communities and are effectively undertaking their statutory functions.

Pan Lancashire Alliance

A Pan Lancashire meeting of Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) is held twice a year, bringing together the Chief Executives of Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire Local Authorities, the Chief Constable of Lancashire Constabulary, the Chief Executive of Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, and the Independent Scrutineers.



MASA Finance

Agency	Contribution	% Contribution
Children Social Care	£142,321	38%
Adult Social Care	£77,643	LA total 59%
ICB	£92,852	25%
Police	£57,510	16%
Total	£370,326	100%

The return of £408,000 reserves at the start of 2023–24 from the previous PAN Lancashire governance arrangements provided Blackpool’s partnership with a strong financial foundation. By allocation of the reserves of £100,000 / year over the following four years, we have been able to support the ongoing work of MASA, BSAB and BSAFE in a planned and sustainable way.

Our commitment to co-production is evidenced by the investment of £20,000 to co producing a new Domestic Abuse First Contact model with families, practitioners and people with lived experience, ensuring families lived experiences directly shape our new three year Domestic Abuse Strategy. A further £5,000 supported Blackpool Football Club coproduction work with children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE), leading to a new EHE Procedure and Action Plan that better reflects children’s lived experiences. We have also committed £1,900 to a joint MASA/BSAB Transitional Safeguarding Workshop facilitated by Research in Practice, to strengthen practice across both children’s and adults’ partnership agencies and support children and adolescents to be happy, healthy and safe when they become adults. Together, these investments are helping us build stronger partnerships, improve safeguarding practice, and deliver better outcomes for children, families, carers and adults in Blackpool.



Growing up in Blackpool

Growing up in Blackpool is a very positive experience for the vast majority of children. However, there are some children who face significant challenges. These challenges are reflected in the data we collate. We know and recognise the importance of supporting families at the earliest possible stage.

There has been a reduction in the number of Early Help Assessments completed over the last 12 months. In 2025/26, 860 Early Help Assessments were completed, with 86% undertaken by workers in the Early Help and Support Teams. In comparison, during 2024/25, 1,178 Early Help Assessments were completed, with 88% undertaken by workers in the Early Help and Support Teams.

The evidence shows that Early Help is being delivered through the partnership in Blackpool. However, audits and data indicate that the majority of documented Early Help work is carried out by Children's Services. We now have an Early Help Central Record in place, which enables us to better support the partnership in recording and evidencing the Early Help work it undertakes. Through our MASA arrangements, we are working with partners to increase both the focus on and the importance of completing Early Help Assessments.

Strengthening this partnership approach will help us address some of the other challenges experienced by children and young people in Blackpool. There is evidence that progress is being made. Youth Justice, and specifically the number of first-time entrants, has been a particular concern for the partnership. Together, we have worked hard to develop systems such as Early Intervention Panels, and these are showing signs of success. We have reduced our rate of first-time entrants to the

Youth Justice system from 295 per 10,000 to 277 per 10,000. This reduction has occurred at a time when the national picture has shown an increase in first-time entrants.

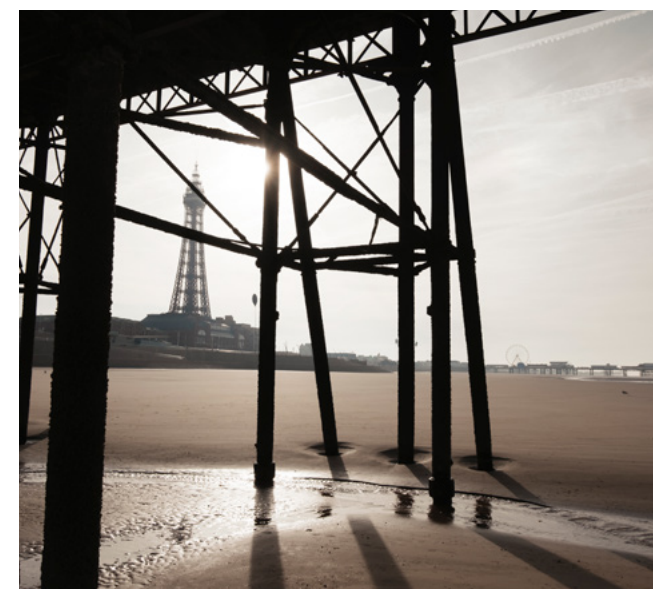
In Blackpool, we take a multi-agency approach to supporting children and young people who are at risk of exploitation. This is primarily delivered through the multi-agency Awaken Team. We continue to develop and improve this service. In particular, we have focused on outreach work within the night-time economy. This work has been effective in promoting an early intervention approach and has had a positive impact on reducing the number of children requiring support from Awaken.

The number of children requiring statutory Children's Social Care support has, however, increased. Specifically, we have seen an increase in the number of children requiring the support of a Child Protection Plan. To address this, we are actively implementing the Family First reforms. We believe these reforms will have a positive impact on reducing the number of children requiring Child Protection Plans in the future. What we can say, however, is that the effectiveness of our Child Protection work is improving. Children are now less likely to require a subsequent Child Protection Plan than in previous years, with the percentage of repeat Child Protection Plans reducing from 29% to 27%.

There remain challenges in relation to the number of children coming into care in Blackpool. We have seen an increase in the rate per 10,000 population, rising from 184 per 10,000 to 192 per 10,000. A significant proportion of children entering care are newborn babies, accounting for 31% of all children entering care. This figure has historically been significantly higher than national averages.

We have continued our Born into Care work, which focuses on ensuring more effective and more compassionate support for babies and their parents. We have also established our Wave Team. This new team works with parents who have experienced recurrent care proceedings and repeated removals of children from their care. This remains a significant challenge in Blackpool. Our aim of reducing the number of children entering care is also supported by the implementation of the Family First reforms.

As a partnership, we will continue to work together to ensure that children and families in Blackpool receive effective support that leads to positive and sustained change.



Our Safeguarding Priorities 2025–2026

Our strategic priorities are:

- **Neglect**
- **Families Experiencing Domestic Abuse**
- **Contextual Safeguarding**

MASA has continued to make strong progress against its priorities through the Strategic Delivery Groups, with the Effectiveness Group playing a key role by improving the way we use data to understand need, monitor impact and shape better multi agency safeguarding practice.

In addition, this year, we have also focused our work on:

- Safeguarding Effectiveness
- Implementation of Families First Partnership (FFP)
- Implementing the North West Child Sexual Abuse Pathway
- Children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE)
- Participation and Co-Production
- Communication and Engagement
- Workforce Development progress against priorities



Priority One - Neglect

Progress against priorities

Our Focus

- The review and launch of the Neglect Strategy 2025–2028
- Continued delivery of GCP2
- Embedding GCP2 and GCP2a into training and practice

What our partnership have done to achieve this

Children's Services

Neglect continues to be a prominent factor in supporting children and families via Child in need and Child Protection Plans. Children experiencing longer term plans (18+ months) are now routinely reviewed, to better understand the child's lived experience and prevent children from experiencing drift, ongoing harm and prevent them from needing to be brought into our care where at all possible. Practice Development Leaders (PDLs) have strengthened the quality of assessments through coaching on chronologies, cumulative harm, professional curiosity and identifying disguised compliance. PDLs have embedded GCP2 into Family Safeguarding Service practice via reflective group sessions and 1:1 coaching, ensuring the assessment analysis links to clear, outcome focused plans and measurable improvements for children.

Police

Policing in Blackpool have seen recorded cases of neglect fall to levels since seen in 2023. This shows a decrease in recorded cases in comparison with 2024.

- The Constabulary continues to operate specialist Child Protection Teams who principally manage investigation surrounding familial abuse and neglect. They manage and attend strategy meetings with partners and conduct joint visits. The training and accreditation of these officers is mapped to ensure they are qualified or 'working towards' 'Specialist Child Abuse Investigators' by the College of Policing.
- Significant change has been ongoing in the past year in Vulnerability portfolios, and this includes Corporate-led reviews with the Vulnerability Governance Unit
- This has included the review of our Missing From Home investigations – leading to the implementation of a series of recommendations – adopting the national Child Missing from Care Framework which involves the Philomena Protocol – designed to support prevention of missing episodes and a better response by care staff and other agencies when a child in care setting goes missing.

The implementation of the Vulnerability Hub has brought together our safeguarding business of DVDS, CSODS, MARRAC, ICPC/RCPC and Strategy meetings into one team with greater resilience and less duplication of effort to create efficiencies

The current implementation of the MASH Review recommendations will enhance how the force delivers its safeguarding and information sharing practices consistently and efficiently across the county in a future-proofed model, with improved oversight and performance monitoring to track timeliness and sharing activity to keep children safe.

Blackpool Teaching Hospital

- BTH has maintained a strong focus on the early identification of neglect through its Safeguarding Children duty function, which received 327 neglect related contacts during the reporting period.
- Children experiencing neglect received timely, trauma informed child protection medicals assessments completed by the paediatric and safeguarding team. Neglect was frequently identified alongside other safeguarding concerns, strengthening multi agency understanding of cumulative harm.
- The introduction of the child protection medical paediatric resource and Consultant of the Week 2 has improved timeliness of responses, attendance at Strategy Discussions and access to medical opinion within core hours, supporting more effective multi agency decision making.
- Midwifery Services remain a key contributor to early identification of neglect of unborn babies at the earliest stage.

Blackpool Coproduction Team

- Development and implementation of the Waves offer, coproduced with parents with lived experience, midwifery, social care, early help and specialist services. The model focuses on reducing recurrent removals at birth and improving the safety, experience and outcomes for babies and parents where separation does occur.
- Establishment of the Waves Team provides specialist, trauma informed support to parents who have previously experienced care proceedings and separation from their babies. The team works from pregnancy onwards and continues after birth, including where babies are removed.
- Embedding lived experience parent supporters as a core part of the offer.
- Early, specialist intervention during pregnancy, supporting parents to understand risks, engage with assessment processes and address factors linked to neglect, abuse or incapacity before birth.
- Robust workforce support and supervision model, including trauma informed induction, reflective and clinical supervision, clear boundaries and psychological safety arrangements, ensuring safe and ethical safeguarding practice.
- System wide workstreams within Born into Care (recurrent care, relationships and transitions, legal system, mapping and lived experience) which collectively strengthen how the system responds to babies at risk and their parents.

Probation

Increased staff awareness of child safeguarding through:

- Mandatory safeguarding training
- Regular safeguarding focus within team meetings
- Introduced and embedded a mandatory child safeguarding check across all relevant cases
- Strengthened partnership working with Children's Social Care through:
- Regular meetings to review safeguarding practice and referral quality
- Partner attendance at probation team meetings
- Developed an Information Sharing Agreement enabling risk assessments to be shared with referrals

Better Start

- Delivered multi-agency Oral Health Training to the Blackpool workforce who support babies, young children and families, including Early Years practitioners, Family Hub staff and community-based professionals.
- Training focused on recognising poor oral health as a potential indicator of neglect, including dental caries, pain, poor attendance, and developmental impact.
- Embedded safeguarding messaging that consistent poor oral health and dental neglect can constitute a safeguarding concern

What difference have we made?

Children's Services

Feedback from children, young people and families (May–Dec 2025) highlights:

"She explained everything well and helped me see things differently"

(Parent, Early Help)

"We needed structure... it helped us realise what was happening"

(Parents, AST)

"We feel included in all meetings and know what is going on always"

(Family, Early Help)

"Everyone comes to our home, and they have become part of it... the ultimate goal what is best for the children"

(Kinship Carer)

"Professionals have worked together effectively... making a significant positive impact on our family's wellbeing"

(Parent, AST)

Police

There has been a notable increase in quality of missing child risk assessments, response and daily grip of investigations.

- More children are being graded as 'high risk' missing persons indicating through the training programme fundamentally a better appreciation of risk when there are factors such as CCE or CSE, or where repeat cases cause cumulative concern.
- Police resources have received training on missing persons including a 'voice of the missing person video' – we are starting to see improvements in how 'voice of the child' is recognised and recorded.
- The VGU Hub has following implementation through better sight of CSODS applications, a consistent method of evaluating and creating the disclosures and as such we are in a better position to understand the demand and measure performance. These are managed in a timely fashion.
- The police continue to work with partners to implement the new ICPC/RCPC and Strategy Meeting processes. ICT developments are enhancing these areas and removing labour intensive research phases.
- We now provide DVDS Claire's Law disclosures within statutory time scales of 28 days – a significant improvement on the position 12 months previous.
- We are better managing the MARRAC referral demand and brought the referral queue to a level which allows assessment, scheduling and preparation for MARRAC in 3-4 weeks.
- The outcome rate for child neglect at West (inclusive of all areas) for 2025-2026 was 14.9%.
- Data indicates that 18.5% of the population in West (inclusive of Fylde and Wyre and Lancaster) is made up of children. It is therefore incumbent on police and other agencies to ensure the workforce is equipped to recognise and respond to child neglect and child cruelty cases.

Blackpool Coproduction Team

- Improved engagement of parents with safeguarding processes, particularly those with histories of trauma and previous child removal, reducing avoidance and last-minute decision making.
- Earlier identification and response to risks linked to neglect and harm, including parental overwhelm, mental ill-health, unmet support needs and unsafe relationships.
- Greater emotional safety for parents, enabling more honest conversations about difficulties that may affect a baby's care, rather than concealment or disengagement.
- More humane and trauma-informed safeguarding practice, improving parents' understanding of processes and reducing re-traumatisation at critical points such as pre birth assessment and birth planning.
- Strengthened protective factors for babies, through increased parental insight, improved engagement with support and clearer multiagency planning.
- System learning about recurrent care, shifting practice from reactive removal to preventative, relational and evidence informed responses.

Practice evidence from Born into Care demonstrates:

- Clear articulation of principles that prioritise trust, transparency, trauma awareness and early intervention.
- Integration of learning from recurrent care and lived experience into a new offer for parents.
- Multiagency alignment around earlier assessment and support during pregnancy.

Waves delivery evidence shows:

- Sustained engagement with parents who have previously disengaged from services.
- Improved consistency of contact and communication during pregnancy and post birth.
- Increased parental confidence to seek help and discuss risks openly.

- Qualitative feedback from parent's highlights:
- Feeling listened to, respected and treated with dignity.
- Improved understanding of safeguarding processes and decision making.
- Reduced feelings of isolation and fear when engaging with professionals.

Workforce and governance evidence includes:

- Clear supervision, recording and safeguarding escalation processes.
- Use of reflective, qualitative recording to evidence parental progress and safeguarding insight.
- Oversight through Born into Care steering group, Better Start executive board and safeguarding partnership boards.

Probation

- Improved staff awareness and understanding of child safeguarding responsibilities
- Increased identification of safeguarding concerns and appropriate referrals
- Improved partnership working and communication with Children's Social Care
- More informed decision-making through better information sharing
- Audit data demonstrating increased completion rates of safeguarding checks
- Feedback from Children's Social Care evidencing improved referral quality
- Records of multi-agency meetings and joint practice discussions
- Increased compliance with safeguarding processes

Probation - Example of impact for a family

A Probation Officer identified indicators of neglect during a home visit, including poor living conditions and concerns regarding a child's lived experience and development. Following a referral, initial assessment by Children's Social Care needed to fully capture the risks due to changes in presentation.

Demonstrating professional curiosity and a child-centred approach, the Probation Officer requested a joint follow-up visit, enabling a more accurate assessment through shared observations and effective information sharing.

- This resulted in the child's lived experience being fully understood, the implementation of an appropriate safeguarding plan, and timely multi-agency support to reduce risk.

Better Start

- Increased practitioner confidence reported through training evaluations.
- Improved professional understanding of the link between oral health, neglect and child development.
- Increased confidence among the Early Years workforce to identify early signs of dental neglect and take appropriate action.
- Strengthened early intervention by promoting prevention, routine monitoring, attendance awareness, and timely support for families.
- Clearer professional understanding of when oral health concerns move from advice and support into safeguarding action.
- Encouraged a whole-system, trauma-informed approach to oral health and safeguarding.

Next Steps

Children's Services

Thematic audit on neglect in 2026 to understand the quality and consistency of long term practice.

- Improve responsiveness and communication, particularly around delays or worker absences.
- Ensure families consistently receive plans, assessments and meeting minutes.
- Strengthen transparency so families understand decisions, especially when plans change (e.g., CIN → CP or family time arrangements).
- Reduce worker changes to support relationship based practice.

Police

- The 6 MASH recommendations remain a priority for the next 3 months to ensure consistency of our delivery and service to vulnerable families.
- The force "Think Again" campaign will be launched in the next 2 months – this is part of a 12-month vulnerability campaign in partnership of VGU and Media team. It will include promotional awareness raising material on voice of the child/teen/adult vulnerable victim.
- The force has signed up to be a pilot for the College of Policing to run a new 2-day FLPPS course (First Line Public Protection and Safeguarding). This is to be delivered to all our front-line staff in the next 6 months and will include key objective including Professional Curiosity, Voice of the Child, the effectiveness and impact of our first contact, use of Language and Victim Blaming. Whilst vulnerability training is extensive in the force this will bring these key learning points together.

Blackpool Co-Production Team

- Further embed the Born into Care principles, ensuring consistency across maternity, early help, children's social care and legal pathways.
- Expand Waves capacity to support more families affected by recurrent care proceedings and separation.
- Strengthen evaluation and impact measurement, including outcomes for babies, parental engagement, recurrence rates and qualitative lived experience insight.
- Continue systemwide learning, including exploration of problem-solving baby court models and improved pre birth decision making.
- Sustain lived experience roles, ensuring parent supporters continue to shape practice, service design and safeguarding responses.
- Plan for long-term sustainability beyond current funding, embedding Waves as a core part of Blackpool's safeguarding system

Probation

- Maintain and further improve compliance with safeguarding checks
- Continue strengthening staff knowledge through training and team-based learning
- Further develop multi-agency working and joint practice discussions
- Continue to improve quality and consistency of referrals

Better Start

- Continue to deliver and embed Oral Health Training across the Blackpool workforce to strengthen early identification of neglect and unmet health needs.
- Further strengthen the link between oral health, safeguarding and early help, ensuring practitioners remain confident in recognising when dental concerns meet safeguarding thresholds.
- Support Early Years settings, schools and Family Hubs to sustain and expand preventative initiatives, including supervised toothbrushing and promotion of fluoride use.
- Continue to promote a trauma informed and strengths based approach when supporting families, recognising the impact of adversity, deprivation and domestic abuse on routines and access to dental care.
- Increase awareness and use of local support pathways, including Text Teeth, Family Hubs and Better Start Community Connectors, to reduce barriers to accessing dental services.
- Use feedback, confidence scales and workforce engagement to continually adapt and improve training delivery, ensuring it remains responsive to local safeguarding priorities and emerging learning.

Neglect Strategy

On 16 October 2025 a multi-agency launch event took place to introduce the refreshed Blackpool Neglect Strategy for Children, Young People and Families, alongside the updated Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board guidance on responding to self-neglect. The event brought together 182 professionals from across all age workforce, with 74% engaging in the live evaluation tools used on the day. Feedback demonstrated clear increases in professional confidence, with reported ability to recognise and respond to neglect improving from 7.3 to 8.2, and confidence in addressing self-neglect rising from 6.6 to 8.4 following the workshops. This reflects a strong appetite across the workforce for trauma informed practice, early intervention, and a consistent “think family” approach.

The updated strategy includes extensive local data on prevalence, repeat concerns, Early Help and statutory trends, and indicators of cumulative harm. This will support ongoing monitoring of patterns, gaps, and the impact of partnership work. Combined with insights from the launch event, the partnership will be able to track improvements in professional confidence, assessment quality, escalation rates, and the timeliness of support. The Workforce Development Sub Group will issue follow-up questions in 3–6 months to assess how learning has been embedded and what measurable changes are emerging.

Qualitative feedback showed professionals intend to strengthen holistic assessment, use tools such as GCP2/ GCP2a more consistently, deepen professional curiosity, and improve communication with families. Staff also emphasised reflective practice, multi-agency coordination, and ensuring the voices of children, adults and families shape planning and review. Participants noted that these changes should lead to better wellbeing, increased trust in services, improved identification of need, and stronger, earlier support that prevents escalation and promotes safety.

The wider impact of this work is significant for Blackpool

By raising awareness, aligning practice, and embedding a shared safeguarding framework across the whole partnership, the event represents a key step towards reducing neglect and self neglect within the community. More confident and better connected practitioners can identify concerns earlier, respond more effectively, and provide support that keeps families together wherever safe to do so. Over time, this coordinated approach is expected to contribute to stronger multi agency outcomes, healthier and more resilient communities, and a more consistent, compassionate safeguarding response for the people of Blackpool.



Priority Two - Domestic Abuse

Our Focus

- Strengthening partnership identification and early intervention
- Building workforce confidence and capability
- Recognising and responding to children as victims in their own right

What our partners have done to achieve this

Children's Social Care

- Coproduction of MASA's Domestic Abuse Action Plan updated following a child-focused development day drawing on Blackpool children's "Tell Nicole" work with the national DA Commissioner.
- Over 280 staff have attended two-day intensive DA training.
- Funding for the DRIVE high-risk perpetrator intervention has been extended by two years.
- Ofsted's focused visit (Oct 2025) recognised improved access to specialist DA and addiction services and rising staff confidence.
- A thematic audit (Dec 2025) highlighted strong practice: comprehensive screening, holistic assessments, robust child-focused safety planning, strong direct work, effective police collaboration and strong managerial oversight.

Police

- Op Encompass has undergone technical enhancement to ensure referrals from officers are far more likely to reach the correct school/destination. This now includes Early Years.
- Audit and learning cascaded around seeing/recording the child as a (associated) victim of domestic abuse where present at DA incidents
- DVDS, Think Again campaign as above
- All domestic abuse now dealt with in Response Investigation Teams or Detective Vulnerable Adult teams – provides consistency and improved victim centred, suspect focussed investigations.
- Op Drive is a unique perpetrator programme that works across many services to tackle the most persistent high harm and medium harm perpetrators by offering support, eliciting behaviour change and disrupting their activity. In quarter 3 there are 16 open cases from 77 referrals into the programme. Q2 shows that abuse involving physical abuse decreased following intake and exit from the programme.
- Police have participated in the co-production workshop exploring Blackpool's initial response to domestic abuse.
- Police are actively involved in the task and finish group around elected home educated children. This work will raise the profile of children who do not attend school. Police and other agencies are exploring ways that we can ensure children thrive in home educated environments, feeling happy, healthy and kept safe and free from harm.

- To more holistically and more effectively respond to victims of domestic violence providing a first-class service to victims, their children, wider family and communities through our approach and interactions.

ICB

- There has been focused work from the ICB safeguarding team regarding raising awareness of Non- Fatal strangulation (NFS). NFS can be witnessed/experienced by children in the home, peer on peer abuse, in sport or martial arts, through social media (examples have been noted of breath hold or black out/tap out challenges) and in sexual relationships.
- The ICB has also contributed to the inclusion of NFS in Police Education for Lancashire Constabulary Awareness of this potential harm to children, young people and adults has constituted the development of awareness training presentations and the delivery of training sessions throughout the year.
- The presentations have been adapted for use to suit the audiences being delivered to and following best practice evidence and guidance.

Blackpool Teaching Hospital

- Police safeguarding referrals shared via the Request fro Support Hub increased quarter on quarter across all risk levels, strengthening the shared safeguarding response to children affected by domestic abuse.
- The Safeguarding Children's nursing duty team provided specialist advice and support to domestic abuse enquiries, including MARAC related activity, ensuring that risks to children were consistently identified and escalated.

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) & Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) provision within the Emergency Department and maternity services continues to support an effective “front door” approach. The visibility and accessibility of the IDVA within these services enables earlier identification, timely referral, and proportionate safeguarding responses for children and families experiencing domestic abuse.
- Quarterly referral data demonstrates sustained engagement from frontline health services, reinforcing the role of health as a critical safeguarding partner within MASA arrangements.
- The highest number of referrals are coming from ED and maternity services. The visibility of the IDVA/ISVA in these departments is key and results in a timely and proportionate response which continues to have that ‘Front Door’ response.

Blackpool Coproduction Team

- Delivered a 10 week coproduction project focused on improving initial interactions in domestic abuse and recognising the link between adult survivor safety and children’s safety.
- Established a lived experience advisory group of women affected by domestic abuse, meeting weekly and shaping every stage of the work.
- Co designed a Culture Change Model for initial interactions, shifting focus from individual practice to organisational culture, leadership, supervision, workload and psychological safety.
- Strengthened multi agency alignment through engagement with Blackpool’s Safeguarding Partnership Boards, ensuring learning informs both children’s and adults’ pathways.
- Embedded MSP principles throughout, including listening to what matters to people, shared decision making, strengths based and trauma informed practice, and transparency with shared accountability.

Probation

- Delivered mandatory domestic abuse training to all staff
- Embedded a mandatory domestic abuse check within case management processes
- Active participation in MARRAC, contributing to multi-agency risk management
- Regular focus on domestic abuse within team meetings

What difference have we made?

Children’s Services

Ofsted’s focused visit in October 2025 found ‘improved access to specialist domestic abuse and addiction support services for parents, and staff say they have increasing confidence in their knowledge and practice through access to professional consultation and advice from these service professionals,’ however we know we needed to do more to improve our work around domestic abuse.

In December 2025 an external audit on the quality of our practice around domestic abuse in Children’s Social Care showed

- Comprehensive screening with detailed clear managerial direction and detailed analysis
- Good overall understanding of domestic abuse, safe decision-making, holistic assessments and good use of history
- Overall high standard direct work using specialist tools and resources (particularly Early Help) with children seen and spoken to regularly
- Domestic abuse specialists support safety planning, risk assessment and direct work
- Plans respond to all risks and safety planning is robust, child-focussed, collaborative (some good work with the police), and plans are regularly reviewed
- Management oversight is strong, decisions are clearly explained

Children’s Services Family feedback emphasised:

- Valued practical support such as advocacy with police, safety planning and emotional reassurance.
- Some gaps in specialist service communication (e.g., IDVA contact) and delays in receiving key documents.
- When workers were sensitive, proactive and persistent, families felt safer and more empowered.

“You helped me make changes to give us both a calm and safe life free from violence.”
(Parent, IRO).

Police

- Op Drive – to reduce the impact that high and medium harm has on families and children who experience domestic abuse and to reduce the number of repeat and new incidents involving high harm perpetrators.
- Workforce development to create an empathetic highly skilled workforce who are able to respond to and understand the intricacies of domestic abuse.

ICB

Increased awareness of professionals regarding Non-Fatal Strangulation to highlight this type of domestic abuse and the serious health consequences of this. The training evaluations have been positive and demonstrated increased awareness and changes to practice amongst professionals.

Blackpool Teaching Hospital

- Quarterly referral data demonstrates sustained engagement from frontline health services, reinforcing the role of health as a critical safeguarding partner within MASA arrangements.
- The highest number of referrals are coming from ED and maternity services. The visibility of the IDVA/ISVA in these departments is key and results in a timely and proportionate response which continues to have that 'Front Door' response.

Blackpool Coproduction Team

- Improved system understanding of risk to children
- Shifted organisational thinking from procedural compliance to relational safeguarding, recognising that emotionally safe, consistent first responses are a protective factor for children.
- Strengthened trust and confidence between survivors and services
- Increased workforce confidence and clarity
- Created a shared, coproduced vision of "what good looks like"

Lived experience feedback showed clear and consistent messages that:

- Initial interactions determine whether survivors continue to engage with services.
- Emotionally unsafe responses can lead to withdrawal, escalation of risk and reduced protection for children.
- Consistent, compassionate responses increase willingness to accept support for both adults and children.

Practitioner evidence demonstrated:

- Increased awareness of how system pressures influence safeguarding outcomes for children.
- Greater confidence in trauma-informed practice

Coproduced outputs including:

- A Culture Change Model identifying the organisational conditions required for safe initial interactions.
- Clear articulation of survivor defined principles: curiosity, emotional presence, nonjudgement, clarity and consistency.
- Shared ownership across safeguarding partners
- Governance and oversight through the MSP Strategic Delivery Group ensured transparency, learning feedback loops, and alignment with safeguarding priorities across all three partnership boards.

Probation

- Improved identification of domestic abuse within cases
- Increased staff confidence in responding to domestic abuse Strengthened multi-agency approach to managing domestic abuse risk
- Improved safeguarding of children affected by domestic abuse

Example of impact

During induction, a Probation Officer identified a Domestic Abuse case where the individual was reluctant to disclose information about children. Through professional curiosity and appropriate checks, it was identified that the individual had contact with children and was in a new relationship with a parent.

- Further enquiries established that Children's Social Care were not aware of the individual's presence in the household, and that previous safeguarding arrangements were based on the earlier relationship ending.
- A referral was made, resulting in the identification that children had been exposed to domestic abuse. This led to the implementation of an appropriate safeguarding plan, enabling coordinated multi-agency oversight, protection of the children, and support for the non-abusive parent.

Next Steps

Children's Services

Review and relaunch domestic abuse tools and practice guidance to improve consistency:

- Introduce a Practice Development Leader post focused on DA and neglect
- Strengthen reflective supervision to emphasise impact on children.
- Improve planning so it is more consistent, collaborative and child specific.
- Strengthen integration of specialist DA workers' contributions within Family Safeguarding teams.

Police

- Develop the MARRAC model to be consistent across the county – there is currently variance per local authority.

ICB

- Look to develop clinical assessment pathways in Emergency Departments and Primary Care.
- To promote the use of Snomed coding in primary care medical records to aid data recording and enable accurate information sharing across health care systems.
- To consider the roll out of awareness training to optometry services to alert regarding potential of NFS with presentation of petechial haemorrhage.

Blackpool Coproduction Team

Pilot the Culture Change Model within domestic abuse and safeguarding pathways to assess impact on:

- Engagement of survivors with children
- Earlier identification of risk
- Multiagency responses to children living with domestic abuse

Embed learning across safeguarding systems, including:

- Workforce development and training
- Supervision models
- Leadership expectations
- Multiagency policy and practice guidance
- Scale the approach beyond domestic abuse to other safeguarding themes where trust and early engagement are critical to protecting children.
- Continue meaningful lived experience involvement, ensuring children's safety remains informed by the realities of family life and survivors' experiences rather than organisational assumptions.

Strengthen MASA evidence by:

- Using reflective practice, qualitative feedback and MSP outcome measures
- Demonstrating how system culture change leads to improved safeguarding outcomes for children

Probation

- Maintain and improve compliance with domestic abuse checks
- Continue staff development to improve confidence and response to domestic abuse
- Strengthen links with MARAC and partner agencies
- Enhance quality of information shared to support safeguarding decisions

Domestic Abuse Strategy Refresh

The Domestic Abuse Strategy Development Day planned for April 2026 will bring together a wide range of Blackpool partners, including representatives from Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Health, Police, Housing, specialist domestic abuse services, data and analytical leads, lived experience partners, and members of BSAB, BSafe and MASA governance. The session will build on a shared

understanding of Blackpool's domestic abuse landscape, how we meet our statutory duties, and will co design the priorities, principles, and outcomes that will underpin the new Domestic Abuse Strategy and DA Delivery Plan. The strategy will be explicitly underpinned by the 3 Me's approach ensuring that every element of the strategy reflects the lived realities and contexts of those affected. A key focus will be the recognition, set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 that children are victims in their own right when they see, hear, or experience domestic abuse. By reviewing local data, lived experience insights, and system learning, participants will identify the issues, gaps, and opportunities that require collective action.

Domestic Abuse Initial Interactions Co-Production Project

This project set out to strengthen Blackpool's safeguarding system by involving local people, practitioners, and partners in designing better services through meaningful and inclusive coproduction. Over the last six months, the project which met every week for 10 weeks, created a structured space where adults with lived experience, carers, frontline staff and strategic partner leaders worked together to explore safeguarding challenges and develop practical solutions. Through a series of facilitated workshops and task and finish sessions, participants-built trust, shared insight, and ensured that voices often underrepresented in decision making played a central role in shaping the work. A key part of this project was to establish a lived experience advisory group, ensuring direct and continuous input from women with lived experience of domestic abuse. Their insight shaped every stage of the work, including defining the problem, identifying risks to children, and articulating what safe, effective responses look and feel like for families. Guided by the Act - to - Innovate coproduction model, the work has moved from defining the problem to understanding the local and national picture, before codesigning realistic, evidence informed recommendations. A test and learn phase (2026) will allow these ideas to be tried out and refined in real settings.

The impact of the project

- Improved system understanding of risk to children: The project surfaced how poor initial adult responses can directly increase risk to children
- Shifted organisational thinking from procedural compliance to relational safeguarding
- Strengthened trust and confidence between survivors and services
- Increased workforce confidence and clarity
- Created a shared, coproduced vision of "what good looks like", supporting more consistent safeguarding practice across agencies working with adults and children affected by domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Practice Guidance

This new multi agency practice guidance provides a clear, trauma informed framework for identifying, assessing and responding to both parental conflict and domestic abuse across all ages. The guidance will support professionals to understand the difference between conflict and abuse, recognise risk early, and take coordinated action to keep adults, children and families safe. The guidance brings together national legislation, including the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which recognises children as victims in their own right alongside local Blackpool pathways, tools and evidence based approaches. With The Three Me's at its heart, the guidance ensures no one's voice is lost and that every perspective is understood. The practice guidance acts as both a framework and a practical toolkit to strengthen whole family responses, reduce harm, and improve outcomes across Blackpool. To underpin our DA developments, we have produced a 7-minute briefing on the '3 ME's' to support consistent understanding and application across the partnership.

Priority Three - Contextual Safeguarding

Our Focus

- Launch of the updated Pan Lancashire Multi-Agency Protocol for Children who go Missing
- Development and launch a new Contextual Safeguarding Strategy
- Strengthen partnership responses to exploitation and peer on peer harm

What our partners have done to achieve this

Children's Social Care

- The Adolescent Service integrates Youth Service, ADASH, Leaving Care, homelessness support and NEET services.
- HMIP inspection (June 2025) identified strong partnership work between YJS, ADASH and Awaken, including joint visits and harm reduction interventions.
- Awaken continues to be recognised (JTAI 2024 & LGA 2025) as an impressive, flexible service offering support up to age 25, including out of hours outreach.
- A new Education Family Support Worker is strengthening prevention and intelligence gathering in schools.

- A thematic audit (Sept 2025) found high quality, timely Return Home Interviews with effective trigger and safety planning.
- Youth Service works closely with the Youth Provision Partnership, ensuring access to trusted adults and youth participation mechanisms (Youth Parliament, Youth Council, school symposiums).
- Youth Service contributes to youth anti-social behaviour prevention, including partnership work with Blackpool FC.
- ADASH provided targeted 1:1 support to 365 young people in 2025 and delivered ADAPT prevention programmes to over 200 school pupils.
- 54 Early Help staff trained in contextualised safeguarding in 2025.

Police

- The force has dedicated Child Exploitation teams in each division who work closely with partners (currently co-located in Blackpool Awaken Team)
- The force has dedicated Internet Child Exploitation Teams (ICE) in each division who manage online abuse and or provide guidance to other officers investigation offences appropriately allocated (lower seriousness).

- Op Makesafe activity continues in each division with visits to hotels and other premises to raise awareness and support training/guidance.
- Operation Beaconport (the national Group-Based CSAE – so called 'grooming gangs') enquiry is ongoing and the force is working with national leads to review our investigations, and also with our local partners.
- The missing persons training referenced above supports improvement in our response to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Police have been actively involved in creating the strategy and vision for what contextual safeguarding means for children, young people and adults who live, work or visit Blackpool.
- A number of operations have taken place involving the night time economy and potential risk of individuals to exploitation. These have complimented the Vigilant approach and has targeted licensed premises and late-night restaurants such as McDonalds.

ICB

- Growing concern about the detrimental physical and mental health impacts and related contextual safeguarding issues for children and young people of Ketamine use. ICB Designated Dr/Blackpool Paediatrician Dr Nigel Laycock has co-produced a “[you tube](#)” video with a local lived experience individual to highlight the risks of Ketamine use. The video has been shared widely across the partnership and is being shared in local school assemblies (yr 9 and above) and colleges. Schools are also asked to share the video link with parents to further increase knowledge and education within the local community. PCOs will attend PHSE lessons once the school has shared the video to further enhance the messages of risk of ketamine use. The video is being distributed to Children in Care and their Care homes.
- Training has also been provided to community and hospital pharmacies, GP practices and hospital staff with a particular emphasis within Emergency Department and Urology where it is likely that children and young people may present with urinary issues.
- A local GP/ Named Dr for safeguarding is supporting the roll out and awareness raising to Primary care GP colleagues.

Blackpool Teaching Hospital

- BTH continued to deliver Awaken and Youth Justice Service (YJS) provision throughout the year, supporting children and young people at increased risk of contextual harm. Referrals remained consistent across quarters, with joint nursing teams providing targeted health input.
- The Emergency Department (ED) Navigator service contributed directly to preventative work through delivery of Knife Savers training to YJS staff and partner agencies, supporting wider system understanding of serious youth violence and risk reduction.



What difference have we made?

Children's Social Care feedback from Young People highlighted:

“I can be honest... you help me feel safe”

Appreciation of workers who advocate for them

“stick up for us” and ensure their voices are heard.

One Young Person said support helped them
“open up and make a difference by learning from your team.”

Another said, ***“You’re straight forward with me... you don’t lie to me.”***

Awareness is increased across Blackpool within the community and professionals of the risks of ketamine use. Audits of the usage of health pathways and outcomes could be a future measure of impact.

ICB

Multi agency Ketamine Community forum will continue to drive this work. A Clinical subgroup with a local health lead is commencing that will lead on pathway development and clinical guidance.

Blackpool Teaching Hospital

Expanded ED Navigator capacity in 2025 increased engagement with children, young people and adults at risk, and supported joint operations with Lancashire Police. This has strengthened multi agency responses to contextual safeguarding concerns, including cases involving very young children.

Next Steps

Children's Services

Multi agency audit on Ketamine use in Summer 2026. Sharing young people's feedback on Youth Justice experiences.

- Launch of the 2026–2029 Youth Justice Board Plan.
- Delivery of a multi agency Prevention Partnership Panel with the Police & Crime Commissioner.

Blackpool Teaching Hospital

Secured funding will enable continuation of the ED Navigator service, supporting MASA priorities around prevention, disruption and partnership working.

Probation

- Strengthened staff awareness of safeguarding risks (including contextual harm) through training and team discussions
- Improved quality of referrals to Children's Social Care, ensuring wider risks are identified and shared

Pan Lancashire Multit-Agency Protocol for Children who go Missing

The [Pan Lancashire Multit-Agency Protocol for Children who go Missing](#) has undergone extensive review, incorporating the Philomena Protocol to ensure a consistent approach across Lancashire. The updated guidance is scheduled for launch in 2026.

Blackpool's All Age Contextual Safeguarding Strategy

From 2024 to 2026, organisations across Blackpool have come together to develop the town's first all age Contextual Safeguarding Strategy, led jointly by MASA, BSAB and BSafe. This strategy recognises that exploitation can affect anyone, not just children. The same factors that put children at risk, such as unsafe friendships, online harm, pressure or coercion, neighbourhood vulnerabilities and wider social inequalities, can continue to impact young adults and older adults too. The strategy has been built using information from local services, national learning, and most importantly the lived experiences of children, young people, adults, families and frontline staff.

What This Strategy Means for Blackpool

For children and young people

- Earlier identification of risk
- Safer digital and community spaces
- Consistent, relationship based and trauma informed support

For adults

- Clearer safeguarding pathways under the Care Act
- Better multi agency planning
- Support that focuses on autonomy, empowerment and proportionality

For communities

- More awareness and prevention campaigns
- Better hotspot mapping to target risk areas
- Stronger information sharing between agencies
- A united effort to make Blackpool a place where exploitation cannot thrive

How the Strategy Is Trauma-Informed

Trauma can affect people of any age. Bad experiences like violence, neglect, or being hurt online can stay with someone as they grow up. Adults can also carry difficult experiences from their past. This strategy understands that people need kind and careful support throughout their whole lives.

The plan focuses on helping people feel safe, trusted, and listened to. It says that workers should build good, steady relationships and use language that does not blame anyone. People should not have to repeat their painful stories over and over.

Our Four Key Priorities

1. Prevention and Early Intervention
2. Protecting Children, Young People and Adults
3. Being Informed and Engaged
4. Relentlessly Pursuing Justice

Next Steps

- Publish a co designed all age exploitation pathway
- Strengthen information sharing and develop multi agency insight dashboards
- Deliver updated training based on national practice principles
- Complete localised contextual risk mapping
- Launch a town wide communications and engagement plan with community partners
- Provide regular progress updates to MASA, BSAB and BSafe Boards

How We Will Measure Success

- A clear multi agency action plan with owners, timelines and RAG ratings
- Regular insight dashboards tracking demand, risks, hotspots and outcomes
- Feedback from children, adults, families and practitioners
- Quality assurance through audits, case reviews and reflective learning
- Measuring community awareness, resilience and confidence to report concerns
- Annual reporting to ensure transparency and ongoing improvement

This year, we have also focused our work on

- Safeguarding Effectiveness
- Implementation of Families First Partnership
- Implementing the National Child Sexual Abuse Pathway
- Children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE)
- Participation and Coproduction
- Workforce Development and Communication and Engagement
- Working with dads and men in families



Safeguarding Effectiveness

Significant progress has been made this year in strengthening the partnership's approach to data and performance. Working collaboratively with the North West Regional Improvement Partnership (RiPP), Blackpool MASA has developed a dedicated MASA dataset and has consistently contributed completed RiPP datasets for each of the previous three quarters, alongside a submission of the Safeguarding Effectiveness return. The partnership is also maturing its domestic abuse, contextual safeguarding, and neglect datasets to ensure there is a clearer quantitative and narrative position in relation to multi-agency activity and impact. This includes strengthening datasets to incorporate a wider range of measures already available across the partnership, for example the use of relevant health data to support a more nuanced understanding of children experiencing neglect of their health needs. In parallel, a MASA outcomes framework is in development and will be presented to the MASA Board in April as a starting point for discussion, supporting a more consistent and outcome-focused approach to evidencing the impact of safeguarding arrangements. This year, a new Think Tank approach was introduced and piloted, with a view to strengthening the partnership's ability to be curious, interrogate data more deeply, understand what sits behind emerging patterns, and collectively identify where action can have the greatest impact on improving practice and outcomes and turn insight into meaningful improvement.

Our Partnership Audit Programme

Over the past year, Blackpool's multi agency audit programme has continued to mature into a collaborative, and insight driven system for learning. Building on thematic audits including the Request for Support Hub, Group Based Exploitation, and Elective Home Education the partnership has deepened its shared understanding of how agencies work together and where practice can be strengthened. These audits consistently highlighted the importance of whole family thinking, timely and compassionate information sharing, and clear, updated processes that support consistent and emotionally attuned decision making across. As a result, partners are increasingly aligned in their approaches, ensuring that children, young people, and families experience coordinated, relational support.

A significant development this year has been the embedding of the Partnership Reflective Audit Days methodology. This approach has shifted the audit process from a retrospective review to a dynamic, real time learning environment where practitioners can explore the quality of their practice in supporting families and safeguarding children together with curiosity and respect. The sessions encourage open reflection, challenge assumptions safely, and create space for practitioners to understand the lived experiences of families more deeply and have received very positive feedback from partners. This trauma informed, collaborative format has strengthened transparency, reduced siloed thinking, and enabled the partnership to identify systemic issues more quickly and respond with greater agility and sensitivity.

The first multi-agency 'Think Tank' and audit of Child Protection activity, focused on how decisions are made at the start of safeguarding enquiries and whether threshold decisions for Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) are applied consistently.

The audit also highlighted the importance of accurate threshold application, making sure decisions are timely, proportionate, and supported by clear evidence. Families with multiple children and additional needs often faced complex challenges. The findings emphasised the value of coordinated support through Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) alongside targeted Early Help. A consistent "Think Family" approach, supported by effective information sharing, was identified as essential in understanding cumulative risks. A key theme was the need for stronger oversight of children living under Special Guardianship Orders, ensuring regular reviews and clearer involvement from Children's Social Care. The audit also reinforced the need for timely Child Protection planning, high-quality chronologies from all agencies, and complete assessments, particularly in relation to health needs and missed medical appointments. These findings will inform multi-agency action planning aimed at strengthening consistency, improving oversight, and enhancing partnership responses to safeguarding children.



Preparation is well underway for the forthcoming joint board Domestic Abuse Audit, which will bring together Children's Services, Adult Services and Community Safety in a single, trauma informed approach. This audit is an important opportunity to understand how well Blackpool's partnership supports families experiencing domestic abuse. Using the "3 Me's" approach – Me as a victim, Me as a perpetrator and Me as a child.

The audit will look at how agencies identify risk, respond to concerns and work together to reduce harm as early as possible. It will also review the quality of support offered to adults and children, the consistency and emotional safety of safety planning, and how effectively services help to break cycles of abuse. By identifying any gaps in practice, barriers to sharing information compassionately, and opportunities for earlier help, as well as recognising examples of strong, relationship based work already happening, the audit will provide valuable learning. This will help strengthen joint working across the system and ensure that families affected by domestic abuse receive timely, coordinated and sensitive support.

To continue improvement and make sure learning leads to real change, we have developed a two year Audit Plan, shared across our MASA, BSAFE and BSAB Boards. This plan sets out our shared priorities and provides a simple timetable for upcoming audit activity. Alongside this, we now have a full end to end audit process that brings consistency and transparency to how audits are commissioned, carried out and reviewed.

Together, these developments give Blackpool's safeguarding partnership a strong, structured approach that supports

continued improvement and helps us stay focused on delivering better outcomes for children and families through trauma informed, relational and collaborative practice.

Blackpool Children's MASA remains committed to protecting children from sexual abuse and strengthening the multi-agency response across the town. In line with the North West Tackling Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Strategy, Blackpool is embedding a consistent, evidence-informed approach to identifying, responding to and preventing CSA. The Lead Safeguarding Partners have agreed that this work will be taken forward on a Pan-Lancashire basis, with all areas adopting the North West CSA Strategy as the shared framework to ensure aligned practice, shared learning and consistent standards.

National reviews highlight gaps in professional confidence, recognition of abuse indicators and the ability to hear and protect children within the family environment. Blackpool is addressing these challenges through the adoption of the Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway, providing a shared language and consistent guidance for practitioners across all agencies. Learning from the recent Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review for Children B and C has further reinforced the importance of professional curiosity, the voice of the child and robust multi-agency information sharing.

A Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Audit is planned for autumn 2026 to review partnership practice, identify strengths and areas for development, and support learning through collaboration. The findings will help us identify key areas of focus, strengthen our collective response, and ensure children affected by sexual abuse receive timely, effective protection and support.



Families First Partnership Programme

Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP) is part of a national reform agenda responding to The Independent Review of Children's Social Care (2022) and The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's National Review into Child Protection in England (2022). The programme focuses on four key areas:

- Family Help
- Multi Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT)
- Family Networks
- Strengthening Safeguarding Partnerships

Blackpool partners are working alongside Mutual Ventures, specialists in safeguarding transformation, to shape how FFP will be delivered locally. A new Strategic Delivery Group has been set up to lead this work, reporting into MASA and providing updates across wider council and partnership boards. This ensures that frontline voices, governance and implementation stay fully connected.

Two online briefing sessions in February 2026 were delivered for internal and multi-agency frontline staff across social care, early years, education, health, youth justice, fostering and specialist services, introducing the aims of the programme and exploring what the upcoming national changes mean for Blackpool. Polling results demonstrate the impact of the briefings. Awareness and understanding increased significantly, with over 90% of internal staff reporting improved knowledge after the session. Clarity about the programme's aims improved, particularly for colleagues attending for the first time. Confidence grew, with concerns about the impact of FFPP reducing across both sessions. The early engagement marks the start of a wider communication and participation plan. Over the coming year, Blackpool will:

- Continue sharing updates as national guidance is released
- Involve frontline teams in shaping local implementation
- Provide accessible learning materials, including short briefings and practical guidance
- Ensure multi agency partners have clear information about new expectations and ways of working

The FFPP represents an important opportunity to strengthen support for children and families in Blackpool. Frontline staff will play a vital role in shaping, informing and delivering these changes, and ongoing engagement will remain central to our approach.



Blackpool's Commitment to Tackling Child Sexual Abuse

MASA continues to strengthen its analytical capability, using local intelligence and multi-agency datasets to build a clearer picture of CSA, identify trends and target support more effectively. This data-informed approach underpins implementation of the North West CSA Strategy and supports continuous learning and accountability. The development of the new Contextual Safeguarding Strategy further aligns with this work, promoting a whole-system approach to risk both within families and in the wider community.

Alongside regional tools such as the CSA “True to Us” self-assessment and updated practice resources, Blackpool is working to ensure all frontline professionals have the skills, supervision and support needed to respond confidently and effectively. Through this approach, Blackpool continues to build a proactive, trauma-informed safeguarding system centred on the lived experiences of children.



Elective Home Education (EHE)

Over the past year, the Local Authority has strengthened arrangements for Elective Home Education (EHE) in Blackpool, informed by a robust evidence base including the MASA multi-agency audit, parental consultation, and emerging children and young people's voice work with the support of Blackpool's FC Community Trust. Together, these sources have provided the clearest picture to date of the experiences and needs of home-educated children and have shaped a three-phase EHE Action Plan for 2026.

The MASA audit offered an objective review of current practice and prompted strong multi-agency engagement. High-quality single-agency audits, reflective sessions, and shared learning have improved visibility of EHE children, supported by enhanced data-matching and monthly information-sharing between the EHE Team and 0–19 Health Services. These developments have strengthened the system's ability to identify risk earlier and intervene more effectively.

Parental consultation has deepened understanding of the family experience, highlighting strengths in relationships with services as well as areas for improvement, particularly around communication, clarity and earlier support. In response, the Local Authority has increased leadership oversight and reviewed staffing capacity, to improve early intervention offer of support. The resulting three-phase plan sets out a structured approach to strengthening support and oversight for children who are home educate and their families.

What This Means for Families

- **Phase 1** Families get clearer information from the start and feel more included in the system.
- **Phase 2** Families will experience a more joined up system, where agencies communicate better and support is easier to access.
- **Phase 3** Stronger long term outcomes and clearer future pathways

Families will see:

- **Clearer routes to exams** and qualifications, making it easier to plan for GCSEs, functional skills or other assessments.
- **Better reintegration support** if a child returns to school, so the process is smoother and more supportive.
- **More consistent Section 19 arrangements**, ensuring education is accessible for children who cannot attend school for health or other reasons.
- **New systems to track progress and risk**, helping families and services work together to prevent young people from becoming disengaged from learning or employment.

The EHE action plan sits within a strengthened governance structure that ensures progress is monitored and supported. The impact of this work will be monitored throughout the year, helping to make sure that improvements are meaningful, sustained, and fully embedded across the system.

There are plans to share Blackpool's learning with Directors of Children Services across the North West Region during 2026.



Coproduction and Participation

Developing a Coproduction Strategy

This year, MASA have worked towards developing a unified Coproduction Strategy in partnership with Participation People, Blackpool Coproduction team and aligned closely with the Making Safeguarding Personal Group. Going forward, this programme of work will be held within the newly formed, all age Coproduction Strategic Delivery Group, ensuring a single, joint space for shaping and overseeing Coproduction across the partnership. Building on Blackpool's strong foundations, the work will map existing voice mechanisms, identify gaps, and engage children, young people, parents, adults and professionals, leading to a co produced, trauma informed, rights based strategy supported by strengthened feedback loops, improved communications, and practical tools to embed consistent coproduction practice across the MASA and wider safeguarding partnership.

Participation People lead and Young People supported the delivery of the Coproduction session at the annual development day and provided the following feedback.

The MASA Development Day co-production session was exceptionally impactful, with Blackpool MASA partners demonstrating genuine openness, deep reflection, and a shared commitment to strengthening how the voices of babies, children, young people, adults and families consistently shape safeguarding systems; the session's outputs, combined with wider evidence submissions and diagnostic insights, are now informing the development of a robust MASA Co-Production Strategy and a system-wide voice map that will further embed meaningful participation across agencies.



Family Story: Early Support for Communication Development Learning and Reflection

- This family story demonstrates the importance of listening to parents concerns and acting early when there are signs that a child may not be meeting communication milestones.
- Effective multi-agency collaboration ensured the child's needs remained at the centre of planning, with professionals sharing information and supporting the family through each transition.
- A coordinated approach reduced the need for the family to repeat their story and enabled timely access to speech and language support, health services, nursery provision and wider community resources.
- The story highlights how strong relationships between families and professionals can build trust, increase engagement and improve outcomes for children.

Impact for the Child and Family

- The child received targeted, home-based support that focused on communication development through everyday interactions and play.
- Parents were coached to use communication strategies confidently within daily routines, helping them to support their child's development beyond the intervention itself.
- The child successfully accessed nursery, received appropriate assessments and referrals, and benefited from a joined-up understanding of their developmental needs across services.
- Parents reported feeling more confident in asking questions, raising concerns, understanding their child's needs and advocating for the support they were entitled to.

Family Voice

“What did ‘targeted support’ mean to us? At first, we weren't sure. But it meant someone who truly understood our worries, came to our home, and showed us simple ways to help our little one communicate. It meant not feeling alone with our concerns.”



Workforce Development, Communication and Engagement

The Workforce Development Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) has made significant progress over the past year in strengthening Blackpool's multi agency safeguarding learning and development offer. The group continues to drive a coordinated approach to workforce capability, ensuring practitioners across the partnership are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to safeguard effectively.

This reporting period reflects substantial expansion in training provision, improved consistency of safeguarding messages, and enhanced integration of learning from reviews and audits.

Training Courses

- Places – 1300
- Courses – 13
- Contextual – 49
- Neglect – 273
- Domestic Abuse – 112

Attendees

- Local Authority – 960
- Health – 425
- Police – 113
- Education – 301
- Voluntary Services – 111
- Fire and Rescue – 10
- Housing – 185
- Other – 186
- Private Sector – 13
- Probation – 31

Fig 3. Snapshot of training attendance data 2025–2026

Priority 1 Strengthening the Multi Agency Training Offer

A wide range of training programmes has been delivered throughout the year, with consistently positive engagement and feedback from the workforce. The Domestic Abuse training offer continues to be well received, supported by a dedicated group of trainers, with “Tom’s Story” lived experience sessions now embedded as a core component.

Non Fatal Strangulation (NFS) briefings remain in regular delivery, supported by the establishment of a Pan Lancashire Task & Finish Group in response to increased local and regional concerns.

Cuckooing Awareness Training saw exceptionally high demand, with two well attended sessions (approx. 160 practitioners), and additional delivery options are now being explored. A supporting seven minute briefing has been published to extend reach across the workforce.

Contextual Safeguarding training has been significantly strengthened, transitioning to a full day format with lived experience input and a comprehensive 12 month delivery schedule. Participant feedback has been particularly positive.

All participants

- strongly agreed the course met the stated objectives
- strongly agreed that the exercises within the session were relevant
- strongly agreed that the subject was explained clearly
- agreed that they felt included and listened too

Feedback comments

One of the best and interesting training courses I have been on, with different speakers it broke the day up, I was fully engaged with the training all day, I use the service and thought I knew a lot about it however I realised I didn't. One of the best and interesting training courses I have been on, with different speakers it broke the day up, I was fully engaged with the training all day, I use the service and thought I knew a lot about it however I realised I didn't.

I just wanted to say how good this training was and the different professionals attending made it really informative and allowed us to have a face-to-face insight into all the hard work being done across Blackpool.

This really is an amazing course that appears to improve each time it is rolled out

Further developments include the creation of:

- A **Professional Curiosity** package for rollout in Autumn 2026, ensuring consistent messaging across agencies.
- A refreshed **Trauma Informed Approaches** offer, co designed with Better Start, incorporating a layered approach and a strong focus on vicarious trauma.
- A comprehensive **Learning from Reviews** training programme covering SARs, DHRs, CSPRs and MARRs, statutory thresholds, expectations of partners, high quality chronologies, and thematic learning.

Additional specialist training has also been delivered, including **Advocacy Awareness**, the **Getting on Better Toolkit**, **Early Help Contextual Toolkit**, **Oral Health for Early Years**, **LADO briefings**, and tailored **safeguarding sessions for Blackpool's tourism sector**.

Neglect & GCP2: Embedding Consistency Across the System

The multi agency "Train the Trainer" programme on neglect has strengthened practitioners' skills and confidence in delivering consistent, high quality neglect training within their own organisations. The 2026 enhancements include additional child protection content and updated local and national data. This ensures a unified, evidence informed approach to recognising and responding to neglect across the partnership.

The GCP2 programme continues to embed well, with a full annual schedule in place. A co produced monitoring tool is being used to gather data on usage and impact, with agencies submitting their first returns in early 2026. Refresher courses for licensed practitioners are scheduled throughout the year to maintain skills, with additional dates planned in response to demand.

Priority 2 Developing Multi Agency Training Capacity

The multi agency training pool is now firmly established, with representation from Police, Education, Health, Housing, Adult and Children's Services, ICB, and Blackpool Teaching Hospitals. This has strengthened resilience in training delivery and promoted consistency in safeguarding messaging across sectors. A second Train the Trainer session is scheduled for early 2026 to expand capacity further.

Priority 3 Using Learning to Drive Improvement

Findings from the Group-Based Exploitation audit and the Elective Home Education (EHE) multi agency audit have been progressed into relevant strategic groups, with clear actions, governance, and monitoring mechanisms in place. A 12 month EHE Task & Finish Group is now overseeing recommendations, policy updates, and the development of associated training. These activities continue to strengthen system learning, ensuring audit findings translate directly into practice improvements.

Priority 4 Updating Policies and Procedures

The adoption of the **Philomena Protocol** on a Pan Lancashire basis represents a significant improvement to the Missing from Home approach. Updated language and clarity within the document strengthen consistency across agencies.

The newly developed **Procedure and Pathways for Bruising and Injuries to Babies and Children**, created through extensive multi agency collaboration, will be launched in early 2026, supported by regional communication and training.

The **Working Well with Children and Families threshold document** continues to progress, with Part 3 now available and Parts 1 and 2 (embedding Families First principles) nearing completion.

Priority 5 Improving Access to Safeguarding Information

The Safeguarding Blackpool Partnership website continues to develop as a key resource for practitioners, with new content added this year on Cuckooing, Prevent, and Contextual Safeguarding. Further updates, including enhanced Education content and improvements to the secure members' area, will continue into the coming year.

Website views April 2025 – March 2026

Home Page	306,642
Report a concern	8,486
What is Child Safeguarding	7,772
LADO	3,853
7mbs	2,603
CSPR's	3,723
QA and Audit	1,787
Newsletter	6,516
Awaken Exploitation Team	3,083
Early Help	2,949
Encompass (new to site)	244
Policy and Procedures	3,451
CASPAR NSPCC Briefings	1,966
Total Views	436,177

Priority 6 Communicating with the Workforce

Regular Safeguarding Partnership Newsletters have been published, sharing updates on key priorities, reviews, campaigns, and upcoming training. Future editions will continue to highlight new developments and emerging learning themes across the partnership. As illustrated above the newsletter was viewed 6516 times in the last 12 months.

Digital Learning and Sustainability

Blackpool's use of the Pan Lancashire Me Learning platform is under review to assess overall value and alignment with local needs. Options for a dedicated Blackpool specific e learning system are being explored to further tailor training to local priorities. Minimum attendance thresholds for instructor led courses are also being defined to support sustainable, efficient delivery.

What does this mean for children and families?

This year has seen substantial progress in strengthening Blackpool's multi agency safeguarding training and development infrastructure. The WFD SDG has successfully expanded the breadth and depth of the training offer, embedded learning from reviews, improved consistency across agencies, and enhanced accessibility of safeguarding resources. The partnership is well positioned to continue building workforce capability, supporting practitioners to provide high quality, effective safeguarding for children, families, and adults across Blackpool.

Training in Development

Professional Curiosity

Development of the Professional Curiosity training package is progressing well. A one hour briefing was delivered during Adult Safeguarding Week to outline the purpose and direction of the programme, confirming that the content will be built from existing pan Lancashire resources alongside high quality materials shared by partner agencies. This approach will ensure consistency of language and expectations across the partnership. The final product will form a structured half day, face to face session incorporating interactive elements to support reflective practice. Single agency examples provided by partners will also be embedded as illustrations of good practice.

Trauma Training

Following a review of available training models, partners agreed that the Better Start trauma informed package provides the strongest foundation, particularly given its comprehensive coverage of vicarious trauma and workforce wellbeing. A revised multi agency model has now been co designed, establishing a layered approach that includes a workforce readiness component tailored specifically to Blackpool. All three Boards have now endorsed this model, enabling development of a bespoke trauma informed training package aligned to Blackpool's local needs.

Learning from Review Sessions

A new multi agency training programme is being developed to strengthen understanding of statutory and local review processes, including Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs), Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and Multi Agency Rapid Reviews (MARRs). The offer will provide clarity on statutory requirements, thresholds and partner expectations, and will support practitioners to understand the lifecycle of a review from referral through to action planning. The training will also cover what constitutes a high quality, evidence based referral, the principles of effective chronology building, and key themes emerging from recent local and national reviews.

Safeguarding Training for Tourism

Targeted safeguarding training is being delivered to Blackpool's tourism sector by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service and MASA L&D lead. Tailored to a wide range of roles from senior managers to frontline hospitality and attraction staff, the training provides essential safeguarding knowledge, practical guidance and clear expectations regarding responsibility for managing allegations. The programme aims to increase sector wide awareness, strengthen confidence in identifying and responding to concerns, and promote a consistent safeguarding culture across Blackpool's visitor economy.

GCP2a (Antenatal Neglect Tool)

The GCP2a antenatal neglect assessment tool will be delivered via e learning as part of the wider neglect training pathway. The implementation framework is currently being finalised by the multi agency steering group, with work underway to ensure appropriate governance, accessibility and alignment with the existing GCP2 programme.

Over the last 12 months two Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) have been undertaken and published, two Rapid Reviews have been undertaken and received positive feedback from the National Panel who agreed with the strategic partners decision that a CSPR was not required. Learning from all the Reviews has been integrated in our workforce development and training work and shared in Safeguarding Newsletters and 7-minute briefings.

Strengthening how we safeguard babies and young children from experiencing physical abuse - Development of a revised Procedure & Pathways for Bruising and Injuries to Babies and Children

Research and learning from local and national reviews showed that bruising or unexplained injuries in very young, non mobile children can be an early warning that a child needs help. Partners agreed it was important to make sure the guidance used by all agencies was aligned, up to date, and easy for staff and families to understand.

During 2025, safeguarding partners across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Lancashire worked together to refresh and improve the way we respond when babies or young children are found with bruising or injuries. This work ensures professionals across Lancashire have clear, consistent guidance so that families receive the right support at the right time, and children are kept safe. This new guidance has been co produced through a wide ranging, multi agency process involving health services, Children's Social Care, police, safeguarding partnerships, and hundreds of frontline practitioners.

Key activity included:

- Reviewing existing guidance across all local areas to understand differences in practice and where improvements were needed.
- A Pan Lancashire Safeguarding Review: Learning from recent Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews highlighted the need for clearer, more consistent pathways.
- In October 2025, 32 professionals from Pan Lancashire safeguarding partnerships came together to co design an improved, shared protocol. Frontline staff and senior leaders worked together to shape new clear definitions, safeguarding pathways, partnership attendance at timely held Strategy Meetings, Safety Plans, and a consistent Child Protection Medical Report template and agreed wording which will be used by all Paediatricians by Hospitals across PAN Lancashire.

Through this collaborative work, partners agreed several important improvements:

- A single definition of when a child is considered “non independently walking” to help identify higher risk situations.
- Simplified, easy to use flowcharts for all frontline staff.
- A strengthened and clear role for Paediatric Review and Child Protection Medicals, ensuring families are treated respectfully and medical explanations are considered early.
- Consistent referral processes and shared expectations across all agencies.
- Improved timely information sharing arrangements and aligned documentation.

These changes support better communication between agencies and provide a more consistent, child centred response for families. Safeguarding partners are now finalising the revised Procedure and Pathways for Bruising and Injuries to Babies and Children, which will be shared across all agencies. The protocol will be launched to the multi agency workforce in 2026, supported by joint training and implementation resources.

Blackpool Teaching Hospital learning from this review has informed service improvements across maternity, emergency and paediatric settings, including strengthened escalation pathways, improved continuity for families and enhanced injury assessment for infants. Internally, a safeguarding risk assessment tool has been implemented within the Emergency Department to support consistent identification and escalation for children aged 12 months and under presenting with injury. Audit findings demonstrate improved documentation and strong awareness of safeguarding pathways, with high levels of paediatric discussion, supporting ongoing assurance and continuous improvement.



What This Means for Families

The new guidance ensures that all professionals respond in a clear, consistent, and sensitive way when they are worried about a baby or child presenting with physical injuries. It strengthens our collective commitment to working together, ensuring children are safeguarded from experiencing physical harm at the earliest opportunity, balancing supporting families and carers with care and respect with professional curiosity.

Resolving Professional Disagreements

The three safeguarding Partnerships across Lancashire share a Resolving Professional Disagreements protocol and guidance. Blackpool partners have produced and agreed a local flowchart which provides a localised version of the Pan Lancashire approach, setting out a clear multi agency process so that concerns are addressed quickly, safeguarding is never delayed, and all partners follow a consistent, transparent and accountable escalation process. A directory of key contacts supports timely resolution, helping partners work together effectively to keep children safe.

Working with dads and men in families

This guidance has been developed in response to themes from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Rapid Reviews and Multi Agency Review of Learning processes, to strengthen how we identify, engage and involve dads and men in families. Too often, men have been under engaged, leading to gaps in assessment, missed protective factors and unchallenged risks. Evidence and local learning show that when dads and positive male role models are consistently involved, children benefit from improved emotional wellbeing, stronger relationships and more stable outcomes. To deliver whole family practice in Blackpool, we needed a clearer, more consistent approach to working with all men connected to a child's life.

- The guidance is for all practitioners working with children and families across Blackpool, including Early Help, Children's Social Care, health, education, youth justice, police and the voluntary sector, with Home-Start Blackpool contributing to its development.
- Applies to fathers living with the child, those with parental responsibility and wider male family networks.
- Supports practitioners to work relationally, use curiosity and understand each man's role in a child's safety and wellbeing.
- Ensures children's relationships with dads and key men are better understood and reflected in planning.
- Promotes more balanced support for families and stronger co-parenting, while improving assessment quality and understanding of strengths, risks and family dynamics.
- Aligns with the Blackpool Families Rock approach by promoting whole-family practice and helping children grow up safe, connected and supported by all key adults in their lives.



Pan Lancashire CSPA Group

On the 8th December 2025 The Pan-Lancashire CSPA Business Group met for a full-day development session to reflect on learning from the past year, strengthen cross-area collaboration, and agree shared priorities for 2026 to 2027. The session brought together representatives from safeguarding partnerships, health, police, and local authority colleagues across Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen to reflect on learning, strengthen consistency, and set shared priorities for the year ahead.

Partners highlighted continued progress in strengthening consistency across the Pan-Lancashire footprint, including shared approaches to Rapid Reviews, improved connectivity between CDOP and CSPA processes, and the use of shared learning tools such as the 7-Minute Briefings. There was strong recognition of the “culture of learning, not blame,” supported by greater transparency, honest professional dialogue, and the use of AI-supported chronologies to enhance thematic analysis.

Themes linked to professional curiosity, voice and lived experience of the child, and understanding resilience and vulnerabilities remained central. Partners acknowledged the system-wide ambition to tackle recurring issues differently and ensure that learning translates into everyday practice. Several cross-cutting challenges were identified.

These included:

- Capturing and embedding the child’s lived experience more fully within Rapid Reviews, especially when contact has primarily been with the sibling group or practitioners.
- Understanding family context where police investigations or sensitive circumstances limit direct contact.
- Ensuring workforce confidence in Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (EDEI) considerations, particularly in how practitioners evidence this in chronology.
- Disseminating learning effectively across large and diverse geographies and ensuring consistent impact.
- Managing increasing demand for Business Units, particularly in the context of multiple MARLs and CSAs.

Partners explored issues affecting babies, children and adolescents across the region, including safer sleep, water safety, transitions, pre-birth assessment, disguised compliance, and information-sharing for transient families. Learning from recent reviews reinforced the importance of strong cross-border communication, early identification of risk, and coordinated multi-agency safety planning. The group agreed a programme of work for the next 12 months, underpinned by a commitment to joint working and consistent practice across all three MASAs.

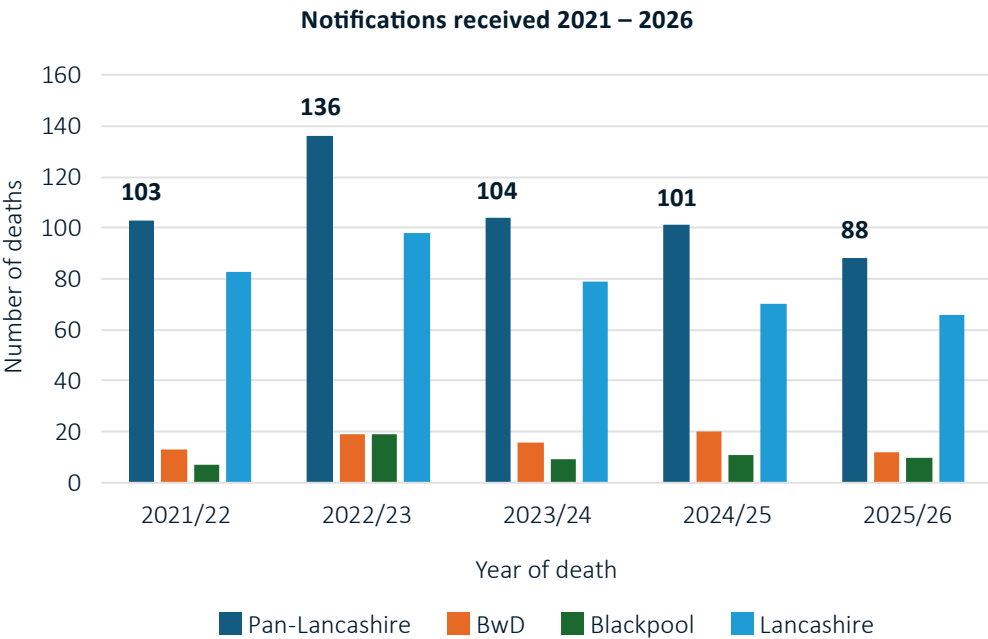
Pan-Lancashire CSPA shared priorities for 2026

- **Geographical Factors & Cross-Border Support** Strengthening consistency and support for families who move across areas, including those affected by migration or insecure immigration status.
- **Transitional Safeguarding for Adolescents and Care Leavers** Ensuring smooth transfer of support between children’s and adult services and continuity of care for vulnerable young people.
- **Embedding EDI & Strengthening Co-Production** Ensuring services are inclusive, culturally competent, and shaped by the voices of children, young people, families and communities.
- **Parental Mental Health** Deepening understanding of its impact on parenting capacity, child wellbeing and safeguarding, and improving joined-up responses across agencies.

CDOP Annual Update Summary (2025–26)

Across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire, Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) activity continues to show a strong multi-agency commitment to reviewing child deaths, identifying learning and supporting prevention work.

Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire CDOP were notified of 88 (12 Blackburn with Darwen residents, 10 Blackpool residents and 66 Lancashire residents) child deaths that were in line with Working Together 2026. This represents a decrease of 13 deaths, compared to the previous year when we received 101 notifications. An additional 11 notifications were received for children who were not normally resident in Lancashire. These notifications were passed on to the respective CDOP.



Infants under one year remain the most vulnerable group, accounting for 64% of deaths, consistent with national patterns. The most common categories of death were perinatal/neonatal events and congenital anomalies, reinforcing the importance of early years and maternity-focused prevention.

CDOP continues to identify wider vulnerability factors associated with child deaths. In 2025-26:

- 66% of cases had modifiable factors identified, significantly higher than national averages.
- 52% of cases involved Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), most commonly parental mental health, domestic abuse, and substance misuse.
- Deaths disproportionately impacted children living in the most deprived communities, highlighting ongoing health inequalities.

A thematic review of deaths (2019–2024) further identified inequalities by age, geography, gender and ethnicity, with higher mortality rates in some local areas and among certain ethnic groups, reinforcing the need for targeted, place-based responses.

Key areas of focus and impact

CDOP has continued to translate learning into system-wide prevention activity, including:

- **Safer Sleep:** Embedding consistent guidance, expanding professional training, and delivering multi-agency campaigns.
- **ICON programme:** Coordinated multi-agency delivery to support parental coping and infant care.
- **Water, road and farm safety:** Development of toolkits, briefings and targeted campaigns.
- **Learning and development:** Delivery of multi-agency training, webinars and practitioner resources to strengthen frontline practice.

Governance and system improvement

During 2025-26, CDOP implemented a refreshed governance structure, strengthening:

- Strategic oversight and accountability
- Alignment with safeguarding and health partnerships
- Coordination of prevention activity and learning

The new structure introduces a Strategic Board, Operational Group and strengthened Learning & Improvement function, supporting a more streamlined and effective approach to reducing child deaths.

Joint Partnership Communication, Engagement and Launch Events

Emerging themes

Key themes identified through reviews and joint agency responses include:

- Rising prominence of adolescent risk, including mental health and suicide
- Continued risks relating to unsafe sleep, accidental injury (including drowning) and vulnerable environments
- Complex family contexts, including social care involvement and parental needs

There were 35 sudden and unexpected deaths, consistent with the previous year and remaining below the long-term average, though accidental deaths (particularly drowning) were more prominent.

Ongoing priorities

CDOP will continue to focus on:

- Reducing infant mortality and improving early years outcomes
- Strengthening adolescent prevention and mental health support
- Embedding learning into practice across all agencies
- Addressing inequalities and improving data quality
- Enhancing partnership working to ensure learning leads to measurable impact



Our MASA Development Day

Our MASA development day, held on 18 March 2026 brought together partners from across the safeguarding system for a morning dedicated to shared learning, reflection and strategic planning. The event provided a vital space for colleagues to reconnect with MASA's core purpose and strengthen collective commitment to improving outcomes for children and families. The morning was structured around reaffirming MASA's direction of travel, grounding the partnership in its shared values, and aligning priorities for the year ahead.

Attendees explored anti-poverty practice, reviewed and reflected on achievements from 2025–2026, and contributed to shaping priorities for 2026–2027, ensuring coherence across agencies.

The event concluded with a workshop focused on developing MASA's first Co-Production Strategy. Participants worked together to shape principles, priorities and practical approaches for embedding lived experience in strategic and operational work.

The days outputs will guide further development of MASA’s approach to co-production and inform the 2026–2027 Partnership Plan.

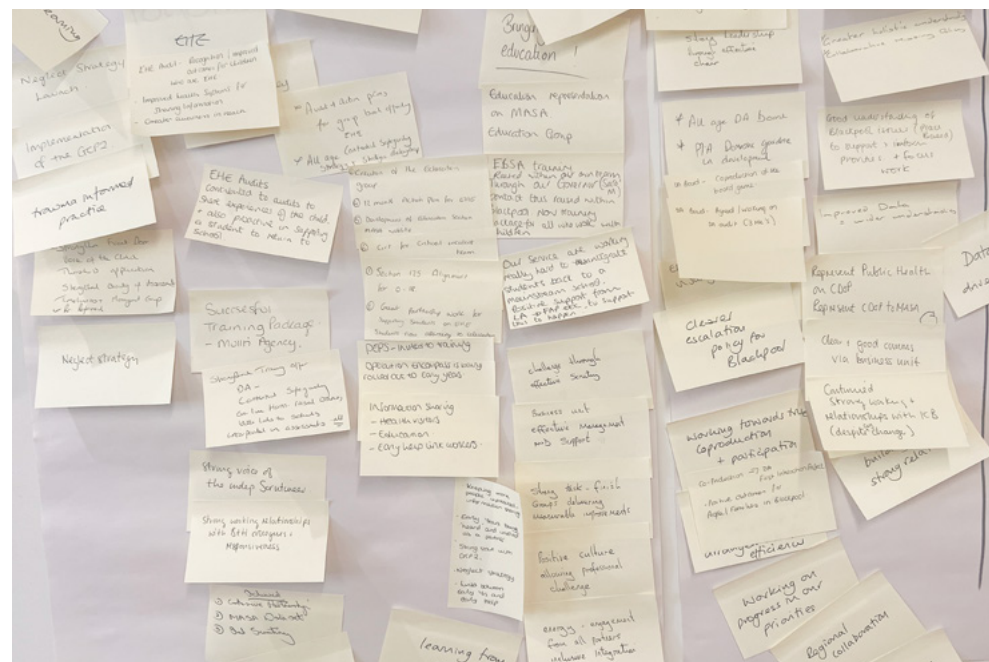


Fig 4. Snapshot of Partnership achievements from the last year

Next Steps for MASA in 2026–2027

Transitional Safeguarding

Blackpool Council Children's and Adults Services, together with the Safeguarding Partnership, has continued to strengthen its approach to supporting young people as they move into adulthood. A key development this year has been the planning of a Transitional Safeguarding workshop for April 2026, to be facilitated by national experts Dez Holmes and Dr Nathalie Huegler from Research in Practice.

Transitional Safeguarding recognises that turning 18 does not remove vulnerability and that young people often face a sudden reduction in support due to the divide between children's and adults' systems. Those with experiences of care, homelessness or exploitation are particularly affected, frequently falling below adult service thresholds despite ongoing need. A flexible, developmentally informed approach is therefore essential. The workshop will bring together leaders from children's and adults' services, health, education, youth justice, community safety, housing and the voluntary sector to begin shaping a shared local vision for Transitional Safeguarding, grounded in evidence and local need.

Central to this work is co-production, ensuring that young people and families with lived experience play a meaningful role in shaping future arrangements. This marks an important step toward a more coordinated, evidence-informed and compassionate safeguarding approach for young people in Blackpool as they move into adulthood.

Joint Partnership Communication, Engagement and Launch Events In 2026 MASA, BSAB and BSAFE will bring colleagues together from across the children's and adults' workforce at various face to face and online events to provide opportunities for networking, shared learning and celebrating key achievements from the past year, while also launching new partnership developments and priorities, celebrating progress made over the past year and provide a platform to launch refreshed strategies, guidance and work programmes.

Key Workstreams Showcased

- Working Well with Children and Families
- New Domestic Abuse Strategy & Practice Guidance
- 2005–2008 Neglect Strategy & Adults Self Neglect Toolkit
- Updated Early Help Strategy
- Northwest Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Strategy
- Elective Home Education (EHE) Guidance
- Procedure and Pathways for Bruising and Injuries to Babies and Children
- Partnership Participation Strategy
- MASA Escalation Guidance
- Pan Lancs Missing From Home Guidance
- Updates on Family First, sharing how early help and multi agency working are improving support for families.
- Safer Sleep Guidance

Attendees will have opportunities to shape future priorities through:

- Interactive workshops
- Idea boards and feedback walls
- Quick vote stations and short surveys
- Themed small group discussions

What does this mean for Blackpool's Children, Adults and Families

- Clearer guidance to support confident, safe decision making
- Better early help pathways with quicker access to support
- Stronger safeguarding practice for vulnerable people
- A more skilled, consistent and confident workforce
- Priorities informed by the lived experiences of frontline staff