



**Committee
People Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

Public

**Date and Time
21st October 2026
18:00**

Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2025/26

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Andy Hall, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education	
Lead Director:	David Shaw – Director of Children's Services	
Service Area:	Service Area – Children's Services	
Report Author	Lisa Charles – SSCP Development Officer	
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Electoral Divisions Affected	All	
Key Decision?	N/A	
Cabinet Forward Plan	N/A	
Report considered by	N/A	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The annual report fulfils the statutory requirement under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and provides a strategic account of how the Shropshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has exercised collective system leadership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Shropshire. It sets out how the statutory safeguarding partners — the Integrated Care Board, Local Authority and Police — have worked together with relevant agencies to align priorities, strengthen accountability and improve the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- 1.2. The report assesses the Partnership's progress, impact and areas for further development during 2025/26. It draws together evidence on governance, national reform implementation, learning from reviews, performance and quality assurance, and priority delivery. It also sets out the Partnership's strategic direction for 2026/27, with a clear focus on early help, prevention, effective multi-agency practice and demonstrable improvement in outcomes for children and families.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to;

- 2.1. Consider and note the annual report as evidence of the Partnership's strategic oversight, statutory compliance, progress during 2025/26 and continued focus on improving outcomes for children and families in Shropshire.
- 2.2. Consider and note the 2026/27 priorities and the Partnership's planned approach to implementation, assurance and impact measurement, recognising the importance of sustained multi-agency leadership in delivering system-wide improvement.

3. Background

- 3.1. The annual report provides assurance on how safeguarding partners have discharged their statutory responsibilities and used collective leadership to strengthen the local safeguarding system. It demonstrates how governance, scrutiny, performance oversight, learning and partnership activity have been aligned to improve the identification of risk, the quality of multi-agency practice and outcomes for children and families across Shropshire.
- 3.2. The report strengthens transparency by setting out the key decisions, strategic actions and governance arrangements led by the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs). It provides elected members, practitioners, partner agencies, children and families with a clear account of what has changed, why it matters, and how the Partnership will continue to test whether activity is improving safeguarding practice and lived experience.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

4.1. This year the Safeguarding Children Partnership has focused on:

- Implementing Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Implementation of National Reforms and Families First Partnership
- Continuing to strengthen the role of education partners with representation now at all levels of the Partnership structure
- Improving arrangements for performance and quality assurance, including independent scrutiny
- Delivering multi-agency learning and improvements as a result of learning from child safeguarding practice reviews (CSPRs)
- Delivering against our priority areas (neglect; child sexual abuse and exploitation)
- Shifting focus to early help, prevention and support for children and families

4.2 Looking ahead, the Partnership will need to maintain momentum while managing significant system change. Strategic priorities for 2026/27 are to embed national reforms, publish and implement the revised local thresholds document, strengthen early help and prevention, improve the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse, and increase the use of evidence, audit and independent scrutiny to demonstrate impact. The Partnership will use its governance arrangements to monitor delivery, manage risks, escalate barriers and ensure that improvement activity remains focused on the safety, wellbeing and lived experience of children and families.

5. Alternative Options

No alternative options are available as the production of the report is a statutory requirement.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

6.1. **Capacity to deliver statutory safeguarding functions.** The Partnership operates in a complex and changing safeguarding environment, with increasing expectations around scrutiny, data, learning and assurance. The Business Unit supports the Safeguarding Children Partnership, Adult Safeguarding Board and Community Safety Partnership. Current capacity is stretched, creating a strategic risk to delivery pace, resilience and the ability to evidence impact. Resourcing and delivery arrangements are therefore under review to ensure statutory duties, partnership priorities and improvement activity remain deliverable.

6.2. **Implementation of national reforms.** National reforms require sustained system leadership and coordinated change across early help, family help, thresholds, child protection, scrutiny and data sharing. This presents delivery risk, but also a significant opportunity to simplify pathways, strengthen

consistency of practice, improve earlier identification of need and sharpen the Partnership's collective accountability for outcomes.

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Delivery of statutory safeguarding functions	The SSCP is currently funded through a multi-agency budget detailed within the annual report. Resourcing and delivery is currently under review to ensure efficient and effective discharge of statutory duties.	Failure to safeguard vulnerable children
Implementation of national reforms including Working Together 2026 and Families First Partnership	Maintaining the integrated implementation plan and critical path. Complete locality and workforce readiness assessments. Deliver the Family Help Together framework training and capture feedback. Confirm Family Help and multi-agency child protection operating arrangements. Track dependencies, benefits, communications and risks through the designated governance route.	Failure to safeguard vulnerable children

7. Council Priorities

7.1. The annual report supports the Council's priority of 'Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life' by providing assurance that local safeguarding partners are working together to protect children from harm, promote welfare and improve outcomes for children and families. The focus on early help, prevention, national reform implementation, multi-agency practice, learning and scrutiny contributes to ensuring that children receive the right support at the right time and are able to be safe, healthy and thrive within their families and communities.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The financial contributions are outlined within the annual report covering the partnership contributions and expenditure.

9. Legal and HR implications

9.1 The production of the report and delivery of the activity outlined are statutory duties of the Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

10. Electoral Division Implications

10.1 The report is applicable to all electoral divisions across Shropshire.

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

11.1. The annual report supports positive health and wellbeing outcomes by focusing on safeguarding, early help, prevention, family support, multi-agency working and learning from reviews. It recognises wider determinants of health, including family circumstances, neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse, parental mental health, substance misuse, rurality, education and access to services. By strengthening earlier identification of need, timely support and partnership assurance, the report contributes to reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families across Shropshire.

11.2. The views, experiences and interests of children are reflected through the Partnership's use of safeguarding reviews, audit, performance oversight, quality assurance and independent scrutiny to understand children's lived experiences and identify where practice needs to improve. The report demonstrates how this learning is acted upon through multi-agency improvement activity, strengthened early help and prevention, revised thresholds and national reform implementation. This supports Child Friendly Shropshire by ensuring children's safety, welfare and outcomes remain central to safeguarding decision-making and service development.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The report has considered equality implications through its focus on children and families who may experience increased vulnerability, disadvantage or barriers to support. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief. The report also recognises rurality and access to services as important inclusion issues for Shropshire families.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

N/A

14. Background Papers

N/A

15. Appendices

Appendix A – Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2025/26
Appendix B – Family Help Together – A Framework for Action