



Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership

2025/26 Yearly Report
August 2026

RBSCP Executive Reviewed: 10/08/26



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1. Welcome to the RBSCP Annual Report

During 2025-2026 Rochdale Safeguarding Children Partnership built on the foundations of the last year in relation to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA). The key partners have worked with dedication and enthusiasm to move the Partnership in a positive direction mindful not only of the Borough priorities but external influences and drivers.

The new scrutineer function has added to the richness of oversight and formative challenge. In turn this as meant more holding ourselves to account and being unafraid to evolve and develop as a meaningful partnership.

We have worked tirelessly with our partners to implement the action plan from the JTAI inspection of 2024. Looking at new ways of working and how we can work together to strengthen services across our Integrated System to afford best outcomes for our people.

This report lays out the detail of the activity across subgroups of the Partnership. The work of such groups is only viable with the commitment of our partners to attend, contribute and disseminate within their own organisations. We have built on the activity of the subgroups and provided more evidence of assurance via audit in the last 12 months, work which has been enhanced by the input of the Independent Scrutineer.

We have worked as a system to commence fulfilling the directives of the Families First Program and it will be interesting to watch this unfold in the coming months and years.

The Partnership working across the system is a testament to commitment of partners working in times of great economic challenge and change.

The report provides a good insight into Safeguarding Children activity, partnership working and a desire via our priorities to strive to provide optimum services across an integrated system.

Key partners are looking forward to working together to deliver best outcomes over the next 12 months.

Alison M. Kelly

Alison Kelly,

Locality Associate Director for Nursing,
Safeguarding & Quality. NHS GM IC (HMR)

**Chair of the RBSCP on behalf of the
Designated Safeguarding Partner**



2. Introducing Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership (RBSCP) has been developed to support the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023/2026. RBSCP provides the safeguarding arrangement framework where partners and relevant agencies work together to identify and respond to the needs of children, commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews and provide scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Our framework fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement across partnerships. Within core arrangements, we have a robust local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) process, effective multi-agency quality assurance framework and a comprehensive multi-agency training programme. Our governance structure has a clear line of sight to front line practice for leaders to understand the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable children.

The involvement of relevant partners has been fundamental to the effective safeguarding of children in the Rochdale Borough, and our new structure enables continued meaningful engagement through membership of groups and a multi-agency meeting forum. The commitment of our partners is highly valued, and the success of the new arrangements relies on the continuation of these positive relationships.

Rochdale Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements and have agreed on the model of oversight, single- and multi-agency governance, accountability and service delivery, supported by independent scrutiny. The Rochdale Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) are:

- **The Chief Executive of Rochdale Borough Council**
- **The Chief Executive of the Greater Manchester NHS Integrated Care Board**
- **The Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police**

These multi-agency safeguarding arrangements refer to the Borough of Rochdale, which is one of ten local authorities within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) area. Whilst the responsibility for delivering the legislative requirements of Working Together 2026 locally is solely the responsibility of Rochdale Council, NHS Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester Police, wider collaboration across Greater Manchester is in place to support the strategic leadership and implementation of our arrangements. This is in recognition that some matters will be common challenges for local partnerships and because two of the statutory partners operate across the GM footprint.

Arrangements are in place for Lead Safeguarding Partners to meet three times a year as the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children and Young People's Alliance (GMSA). Through this forum, they provide collective leadership and deliver mutual assurance of strategic and operational safeguarding partnership arrangements for children and young people in Greater Manchester.

The Safeguarding Alliance is the dedicated forum where the Lead Safeguarding Partners can:

Set direction, oversee GM priorities, and model collaborative working.
Bring, explore and problem solve city-regional strategic and system wide issues.
Agree required financial resources, including individual agency contributions for safeguarding partnerships.
Provide mutual challenge and accountability.
Receive high level performance, quality assurance information & key system learning.
Receive updates from the Complex Safeguarding Executive.

In addition, there are a number of collaborative workstreams that are supported by the GMCA and Rochdale Children's Safeguarding Partnership is committed to continuing to work with partnerships across the northwest to support sector led improvement.

During the period covered by the report, the GMSA has undertaken work to determine the resources required to deliver the statutory functions of safeguarding partnership arrangements, received assurance about the findings of the Mayoral Independent Assurance Review into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Greater Manchester and safeguarding performance across the region and considered the changes within NHS reforms. This has resulted in regional work to review SARC capacity, work to identify optimal delivery model for the statutory functions of safeguarding partnership arrangements and enabled constructive dialogue and challenge about the responsibilities of Lead Safeguarding Partners and the impact of the changes within NHS and GM ICB for safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

In 2026-27, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed against the new Working Together 2026 guidance, including a review of the Alliance's membership with the ambition to strengthen the role of independent scrutiny moving forwards. Statutory partners will also seek to identify safeguarding functions that can be best delivered on a wider footprint (cluster, GM or NW) and ensure there is strategic oversight of national reforms, such as Families First that will have most significant implications for safeguarding practice.

In Rochdale, LSPs delegate certain functions but remain accountable for decisions made on behalf of the RBSCP. Designated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) represent their agencies with authority, make decisions, commit to policy and resources, and ensure effective implementation of safeguarding arrangements.



3. RBSCP Safeguarding Partnership Executive

In Rochdale the delegated officers from each statutory agency act as **Designated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs)**, and they are:

- **Director of Children’s Services (Rochdale Borough Council)**
- **Chief Superintendent, Rochdale Borough Commander (GMP)**
- **Chief Clinical Officer (Greater Manchester NHS Integrated Care Board)**

The DSPs, working together, have equal authority and shared responsibility for leading the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to ensure they are effective in bringing together relevant partner agencies. Joint functions of DSPs include:

1. Delivery and monitoring of multi-agency safeguarding priorities and procedures.
2. Partnership working with education allows better identification of and response to harm.
3. Implementation of effective information sharing arrangements between agencies.
4. High-quality, timely Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, evidencing impact of learning and independent scrutiny clearly in yearly reports.
5. Provision of appropriate multi-agency workforce development and training.
6. Seeking and responding to feedback from children and families, co-designing services, ensuring children from different communities access the help and protection they need.

The Designated Safeguarding Partners assume primary responsibility for implementing local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and provide strong leadership of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to ensure the effective bringing together of relevant partner agencies. All three lead safeguarding partners (LSPs) have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements. The three Designated Safeguarding Partners and relevant partners meet bimonthly as the RBSCP Executive and agree the safeguarding direction, priorities and the RBSCP Annual Report. The Safeguarding Partnership Executive develops, manages and aligns the Strategic Safeguarding Priorities to other Boards.

Membership includes, RBSCP Advisors and Children Social Care Assistant Directors and Education representatives. The meeting is chaired by one of the three nominated DSPs, on an annual rotational basis. Independent scrutiny of the arrangements is provided by the Independent Scrutineer and Peer Review.



4. Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Safeguarding Partnership Executive is supported through the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Partnership and supporting subgroups. The RBSCP has representatives from a wide variety of organisations, detailed on Rochdale Safeguarding Partnership - [About the Safeguarding Children's Partnership \(RBSCP\)](#).

RBC Children's Services	Neighbourhood Services	Healthwatch Rochdale
NHS GM Integrated Care Board	Pennine Care Foundation Trust	Safer Communities Partnership
Greater Manchester Police	Elected Members	National Probation Service
Adult Care	Northern Care Alliance	GM Fire & Rescue Service
Early Help and Schools	Safeguarding Adult Board	Hopwood Hall College

The RBSCP members lead and facilitate challenge around safeguarding practice, learning from National and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, considers solutions and disseminates safeguarding workforce development across the partnership and community. The associated subgroups that support Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership Forum and Executive are identified in the table below:

Safeguarding Performance & Quality Assurance Group
The SPQA subgroup performs two key tasks for RBSCP. It is the primary audit group and oversees all RBSCP multi-agency audit activity—including that undertaken via other groups. SPQA oversees the multiagency Section 11 and Section 175 /175 safeguarding audit processes. The subgroup is responsible for the analysis and scrutiny of the data and narrative performance reports from partners and provides a forum for partners to hold each other to account in respect of performance and quality assurance of safeguarding practice and improvement. The group oversees the RBSCP Quality Assurance Framework and multi-agency policy design and delivery.
Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group
This group oversees serious incident notifications involving children, facilitates Rapid Reviews, makes recommendations to the RBSCP Executive regarding Multi-Agency or Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. The group liaises with National Panel and facilitates partnership learning from LCSPRs and National reviews to implement and evidence effectiveness of learning from reviews, safeguarding practice improvement and positive impact for children and families.
EHASH Strategic Group
TEHASH Strategic Group focuses on the effectiveness and development of EHASH service. to ensure children and families receive the right services at the right time. This will be achieved via consultation with all multi-agency stakeholders and the views of children and families. The EHASH Group examines EHASH performance and audit activity to ensure EHASH provides the care and support required for effective outcomes.
Early Years, Education & Safeguarding Group
Early Years, Education & Safeguarding Subgroup is responsible for ensuring education partners are informed and involved with strategic development of safeguarding, providing assurance to Rochdale Borough Children Safeguarding Partnership (RBSCP) that all key stages are actively working towards guidance contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
Learning & Development Group
The Learning & Development Group is responsible for high quality, up to date, effective and child focused multi-agency safeguarding training across the partnership to ensure skilled and effective workforces. The group supports all RBSCP subgroups and is supported by a multi-agency training pool to ensure that a comprehensive, relevant and effective multi-agency and single agency training offer is in place. The Learning & Development Group oversees the needs analysis, monitors the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding training, and translates learning from LCSPRs into briefings and trainings options to strengthen safeguarding practice and outcomes.

In the RBSCP Annual report 2024/25 RBSCP had a Complex Safeguarding Subgroup that had strategic responsibility and oversight over children who may be vulnerable and those at risk of exploitation within the district from CSE, CCE, gangs, human trafficking, being missing from home, care or school and harmful sexual behaviour.

During 2025/26 the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements were refreshed and published in February 2026 (Appendix 1) in response to the RBSCP Business Plan 2025-2027 publication in December 2025 (Appendix 2). In doing so Complex Safeguarding was not identified as a current Priority in the RBSCP Business Plan 2025-27,

and so the subgroup was reviewed to form as a Strategic Board, away from the RBSCP structure, but providing assurance and progress against the Complex Safeguarding workplan designed through work undertaken within Greater Manchester Collaborative Authority and the associate Peer Review. The new Complex Safeguarding Board will run from April 2026 with new terms of reference and assurance reporting to RBSCP.

In addition to the above RBSCP Forum and Subgroups, there are also several affiliated functional groups that support the safeguarding agenda and responsibilities:

Early Help Strategic Board Children and Young People Partnership Rochdale Safer Communities Partnership Corporate Parenting Board Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Homelessness Board	Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) Rochdale Safeguarding Adult Board.
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5. Rochdale Borough and our Children

Rochdale borough is in the southern Pennines, north-east region of Greater Manchester, covering 62 square miles, characterised by urban developments of dense housing and industrial areas with two thirds rural land.

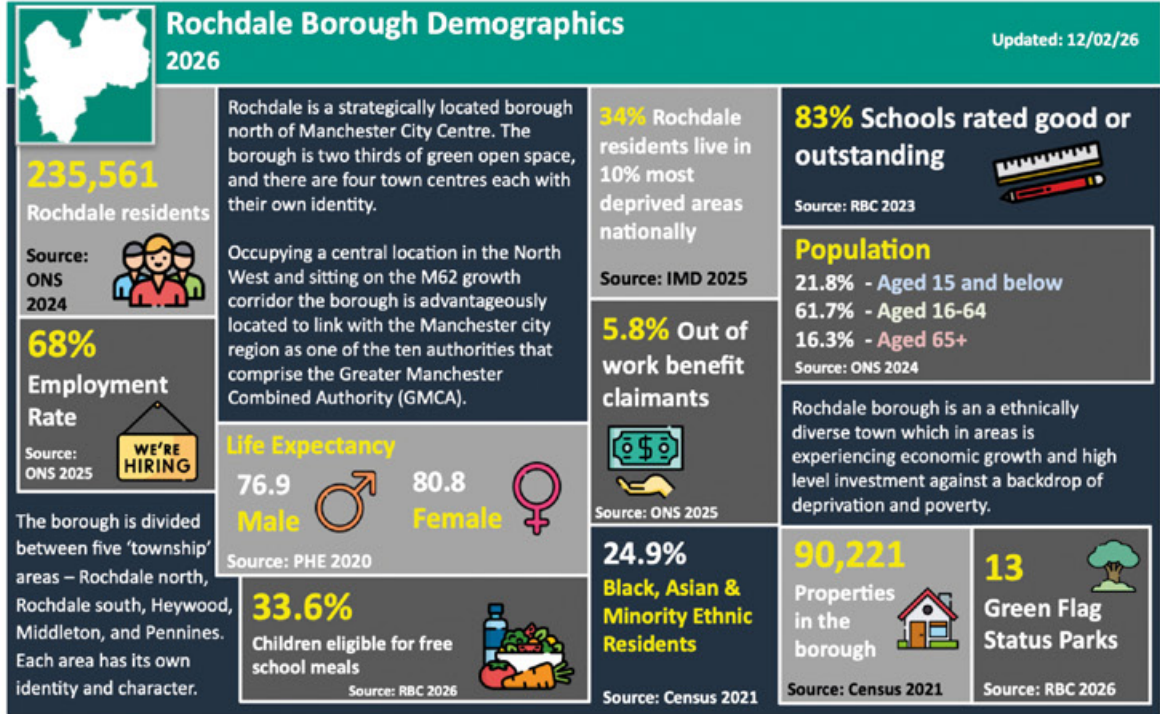
The borough’s population is growing, there are 226,992 residents in the Borough (ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2021). An increase of over 12,000 people since the 2011 Census. This is mainly due to there being more births than deaths each year, but international migration is also a contributor according to the ONS data. The population is predicted to increase to 236,400 by 2030 with the biggest predicted increase (19%) in the number of people over 65. Whilst population size will increase, it may be lower than predicted due to pandemic associated deaths. Borough population is relatively young, with 24.5% of residents being under 18. There are 133,818 people aged 18 to 64 (59.0%) & 16.5% aged over 65.

The population is split across five townships or neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods are Heywood, Middleton, Pennines, Rochdale North and Rochdale South. Rochdale South is the largest neighbourhood with a population of 55,910 it also has the youngest population structure with 26.6% under the age of 18.

Middleton is the second largest neighbourhood (49,300); Rochdale North (45,819); Pennines (41,329) and Heywood is the smallest neighbourhood (29,406). Pennines has the oldest population structure with a higher proportion of residents over the age of 65 (19.0% over the age of 65).

Rochdale Borough is a very diverse place, with over 266 different ethnic groups being listed by residents in the 2021 Census. The majority identified themselves as White British (70.0%), with the next largest groups being Asian/Asian British Pakistani (13.6%) and Asian/ Asian British Bangladeshi (2.3%). We also have proportionally one of the largest populations of Asian British Kashmiri residents in the country (1.0%).

The Borough experiences high levels of deprivation and is ranked 15th most deprived in England in the Indices of Deprivation (MHCLG, 2019). 32.8% of Rochdale’s residents live in areas that are in the most deprived 10% of the country. Most very deprived areas are located near the urban centres of the townships and in particular around Rochdale Town centre.





Rochdale Borough

Understanding the borough

■ Sept 2023

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Statistics

Rochdale Borough - Census 2021		2011	2021	% Diff
Population	All Persons	211,699	223,773	5.7%
	Males	103,642	109,718	5.9%
	Females	108,057	114,055	5.6%
	Young People (0-19)	56,252	59,299	5.4%
	Older People (65+)	30,816	36,867	19.6%
Households	Households	87,552	90,223	3.1%
	One person	24,183	27,641	14.3%
	One family	53,685	57,288	6.7%
	Other households	5,684	5,294	-6.9%
Ethnicity	White	172,874	165,485	-4.3%
	Mixed	3,569	5,284	48.1%
	Asian or Asian British	31,630	41,406	30.9%
	Black or Black British	2,770	7,927	186.2%
	Other	856	3,669	328.6%
Country of Birth	Born in UK	188,084	189,122	0.6%
	Born elsewhere	23,615	34,651	46.7%
Religion	Christian	128,186	104,841	-18.2%
	Muslim	29,426	42,121	43.1%
	Other	1,762	2,095	18.9%
	No religion OR religion not stated	52,325	74,715	42.8%
Housing Tenure	Owns outright/mortgage	54,149	54,377	0.4%
	Socially or privately rented	31,803	35,318	11.1%
Economic Activity	Economically Active	101,424	101,069	-0.4%
	Economically Inactive	65,492	73,878	12.8%
	Unemployed (inc. students)	10,259	6,610	-35.6%
Census 2021 Response Rate		93%	97%	4.3%

Summary

In summary Rochdale borough is an ethnically diverse town which in areas is experiencing economic growth and high level investment against a backdrop of deprivation and poverty.

The wards across the borough vary characteristically from affluent rural areas on the edges of the borough to highly deprived ethnically diverse centres.

£36,816
Median Household Income



£183,660
Average house price



67.2%
Employment Rate



6% Out of work benefit claimants



10
Green Flag Status Parks



Population

20.5% - Aged 15 and below
63% - Aged 16-64
16.5% - Aged 65+

Sources:
Office of National Statistics, Census 2021, Public Health England

ROCHDALE AT A GLANCE

Key data about our children and young people



Number of children in Rochdale aged 0-17

58,087



Percentage of population who are children

Rochdale 24.7%
England 20.8%



Primary pupils eligible for free school meals (Autumn census)

Rochdale 30.2%
England 24.7%



Secondary pupils eligible for free school meals (Autumn census)

Rochdale 36.3%
England 25.8%



Number of young people in Rochdale aged 16-17

6,609



Number of young people that are not in education, employment or training

396

Percentage of young people that are not in education, employment or training

5.18%



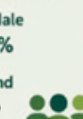
Percentage of children in low income families

Rochdale 36.4%
England 19.9%



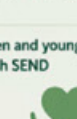
Number of children classed as BAME

Rochdale 38.8%
England 27.5%



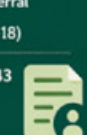
Number of children aged 3-18 who currently receive SEN support (Jan-26) 5,439

Number of children and young people (0-25) with SEND 9,222



Number of children with an Open Child in Need (CIN) Referral

1,990 (ages 0-18)
Rate per 10k: 343 (Jan 26)



There are currently approximately 4,001 CYP with EHCPs and 5,561 with SEN Support in Rochdale (18.05.26).

Number of children who are on a child protection plan

288
Rate per 10k: 50 (Jan 26)



Number of children who are cared for in Rochdale

615 (ages 0-18)
Rate per 10k: 106 (Jan 26)



Rochdale has almost double the National Average of EHC Plans
Total EHCP rate (per 10,000 2-18 population) Rochdale 9.4 National 4.3

16.5% of all children have SEND



Working together



Being inclusive



Taking ambition



Making a difference

Number of children in Rochdale aged 0-17

58,087



Percentage of population who are children
Rochdale 24.7%
England 20.8%

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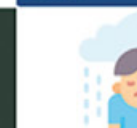
Number of young people that are not in education, employment or training 396
Percentage of young people that are not in education, employment or training 5.18%



Percentage of children in low income families
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England 19.9%



Number of children classed as BAME
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England 27.5%



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6. Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Business Unit Budget 2025-2026

Currently financial arrangements for RBSCP and RBSAB are 'joint'. Agencies contribute funding that is ringfenced to a specific statutory board/partnership, other contributions are based on a 50% share. The table highlights elements for RBSCP, where possible.

2025 - 2026 Budget Arrangements			
Total Contribution via Income for RBSCP & RBSAB 2025-26	Joint Income	Ringfenced RBSCP income	Ringfenced RBSAB income
RBC Children Service	-92,105.00	-92,105.00	0.00
RBC Adult Care	-95,878.00	0.00	-95,878.00
ICB	-79,816.00	-39,908.00	-39,908.00
GMCA (GMP)	-27,768.00	-13,884.00	-13,884.00
Schools SLA	-23,000.00	-23,000.00	0.00
EH&S	-15,500.00	-15,500.00	0.00
Probation	-3,400.00	-1,700.00	-1,700.00
Housing / Adult Care	-3,000.00	0.00	-3,000.00
Total	-340,467.00	-186,097.00	-154,370.00
2024-25 Joint carry forward	-137,886.00	-90,693.00	-47,193.00
Total Budget	-£478,353.00		

The budget and structure for RBSCP & RBSAB has not been fully reviewed for some years, this commenced during 2025/26 and will continue into 2026/27 as part of the Greater Manchester Alliance work, recognising responsibilities from WTSC 2026 and current Social Care reform. Current contributions don't consider any cost-of-living increases for Business Unit staff salaries.

The current budget relies on a carry over which is utilised to predominately fund independent roles, safeguarding reviews, safeguarding training and events. This committed carry forward is reducing due to the costs of Independent Scrutineer and

LCSPR costs, not being allocated designated budget within the current formatting. The overall risk associated with this is a diminishing carry forward value, which reduced in year by 36%.

A decreasing funding stream ringfenced to RBSCP is the School / Academy subscription to the RBSCP resources. As more schools academise, there has been more resistance to sign up to an optional funding agreement with RBSCP. A further risk is local changes to statutory safeguarding partners and currently unknown changes to income streams in the future, specifically GM NHS ICB.

2025/2026 Expenditure		
RBSCP & RBSAB Salaries	Budget	Expenditure
Interim Business Unit Staffing	322,288	243,799
Agency Costs	0.00	56,620
Total	£322,288	£300,419

Additional Expenditure 2025-2026		
	Commitment/ Additional Expense	RBSCP Expenditure
Independent Scrutineer	27,500.00	£13,750.00
Safeguarding Practice Reviews	£8000.00 each	£24,900.00
Subscriptions, training & business costs	£29925.00	£14,962.00
Total		£53,612.00

Alongside the Business Unit are two independent roles that support RBSCP and RBSAB respectively. The RBSCP Independent Scrutineer is a statutory role introduced by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The RBSAB Independent Chair was appointed as per the local safeguarding adult board Constitution. There is no specific budget for these roles but a committed annual contract cost, as identified above.

RBSCP has a statutory requirement to complete LCSPRs for any serious incidents that meet the require criteria. There is no set budget for these in the current budget format, but each one will accrue £8000 expenditure to complete. In 2025/26 three LCSPRs were commenced accruing expenditure of just under £30,000.00.

The additional costs included shared expenditure in respect of Subscriptions, Licenses, Training and room hire, Software packages, marketing and general Business Unit running costs. Both RBSCP and RBSAB are committed to innovative methods to provide safeguarding learning. One example is the use of Synthesia to provide a different method of learning delivery based on informational videos and not relying on documentation.

Due to increasing costs exceeding set budget lines, the joint carry over was used this year to meet statutory duties and expenditure, reducing the carry over into the next financial year, which already had statutory commitments and an LCSPR to complete. The statutory safeguarding partners are committed to funding statutory safeguarding duties and responsibilities and continue to review the Business Unit functions, and future delivery options. Discussions have commenced, via Greater Manchester networks to determine future funding and safeguarding delivery options.

2026/27 Joint Carry forward	Total	RBSCP	RBSAB
	£95,802.00	£69,651	£26,151.00



7. Independent Scrutiny

Report from Myra Ball - Independent Scrutineer

This was my first full year as Independent Scrutineer for Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership (RBSCP – the partnership). The independent scrutiny function is set out in Working Together 2026, specifically page 37.

I have maintained my level of knowledge and continued professional development by attending training, through literary reviews and membership of professional groups and partnerships. I am an active member of the National Independent Scrutineer Network through The Association of Safeguarding Partners and the Northwest Regional Improvement Pilot Programme (RIPP) which allow me to learn, collaborate and share best practise from other areas.

Freedom to roam

Last year I mentioned having a freedom to roam. The importance of scrutiny whilst having this freedom to roam is pivotal for any evaluation or assessment of the partnership. So, what has this looked like over the past twelve months?

I have never been refused entry or access to people, meetings or notes at both the strategic and operational level. It is important to note that I have the necessary clearance and when I have attended meetings with families, their consent has been given.

I had an opportunity to speak to the Chief Executive of Rochdale Council without being pre-briefed or steered towards what I should or should not say. It was an opportunity to hold each other to account about our roles, responsibilities, what works well and what needs to improve. I have observed operational risk meetings and always ensure that feedback is given verbally and backed up in writing.

As part of the Families First Partnership Programme (FFP) I attended the strategic planning and vision setting meetings, resulting in a strong documented plan for delivery. I have never felt that I was there to fill a quota or tick a box, my opinion was encouraged and sought.

I had an opportunity to speak with the Rochdale Domestic Abuse Partnership (RDAP) chair and subsequently attend a meeting. Following an explanation of my role and how scrutiny should extend to any partnership activity impacting on children, the mandate to roam was welcome. The reason this is important is that RDAP is aligned to the Rochdale Safer Communities Partnership and under a separate reporting structure - this demonstrate that Rochdale as a place is actively engaging and embracing opportunities across governance structures to support children.

The ambition to improve the voice of the child and quality assurance has resulted in more scrutiny, deep dive pathways, new QA framework and extensive work to capture the voice of the child, all of which are no longer green shoots but are bearing fruit.

This freedom to roam allows for observational and direct scrutiny of not only what is done, but how it is done – my approach enhances accountability and offers a level of quality assurance. Evidence suggests that the partnership is strong and is relational in nature with a learning culture. Leaders, managers and practitioners respond collectively without blame yet hold each other to account in a firm but fair way.

Scrutiny activity

I have had scrutiny, oversight and reported upon:

- **Strategic documents, including the RBSCP Annual Report 25/26, Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) and RBSCP Induction briefing document for new members.**
- **Partnership Executive and full meetings, including subgroup highlight reports.**
- **Partnership governance arrangements and priorities.**
- **All serious incident notifications, rapid reviews, local children safeguarding practise reviews, action plans and outcomes.**
- **Support and observation of multi-agency audits & learning events.**
- **Deep Dive & Space to Think plan and proposals for partnership reflective discussion implementation.**
- **RIPP reporting – pre-decision scrutiny of quarterly reports, data development, MASA, efficiency, Fairness and Belonging.**
- **Pre-decision scrutiny of Professional Challenge and Effective Resolution Process.**
- **Participation People work in developing and co-producing the RBSCP Participation and Voice Strategy**
- **Observations of EHASH strategic board, practice review subgroup, performance and quality assurance subgroup, learning and development subgroup, MARAC and child protection review conferences.**
- **Working Together 2026 review.**
- **Child protection authority consultation**

Last year I mentioned that the partnership was on an improvement journey. The pace of improvement continues to impress me, alongside the ambition to strive for even better things.

The challenges

There have been significant national changes to legislation and guidance that has led to large pieces of work being undertaken either by RBSCP or single agencies. The impact of this cannot be underestimated whilst trying to achieve business as normal for children & families. Specifically, the following:

- **The Families First Partnership Programme. Produced to support statutory safeguarding partners to implement family help and multi-agency child protection reforms. The overall aim is to provide children with the best start in life and break down barriers to opportunity. The focus is towards intensive earlier help for families, more expert, focused multi-agency child protection practice and greater use of family networks.**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. The changes are vast and seek to bring clarification, reinforce existing expectations, strengthen processes and add new content.**



- Integrated Care Board (ICB) changes 2026. NHS England is making significant changes and working towards a new operating model under a 10-year governmental health plan. Such changes bring uncertainty especially when the Rochdale ICB landscape has been strong. As the national picture evolves, it will be for the partnership to evaluate the impact on governance arrangements, structure and ultimately outcomes for children and families.
- Ofsted - local authority children's services (ILACS). Rochdale is expecting its ILACS inspection, and the readiness work has been underway for some time. Whilst this is a Children Social Care inspection a large proportion of the work involves the multi-agency partnership.
- **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. Schools, local authorities and other child services have been examining the proposals for this new legislation ahead of sign off by Parliament on 30th April 2026. The interdependency of the RBSCP sub-groups, Families First Partnership Programme and this new legislation on family group decision making, support for care leavers, sibling contact, regional care co-operators and financial oversight is likely to be under scrutiny during 2026/2027.**
- **Financial. It is fair to say that every agency is under financial pressure to cut budgets in an ever-increasing demand environment. The partnership is also acutely aware that the cost-of-living crisis is affecting the community of Rochdale and financial pressure are affecting everyone.**

Now what?

I was recently described as the "eyes and ears" of the partnership, I found this an interesting analogy. Clearly, I am watching and listening which demonstrates the support I am providing to the partnership, but how does this translate to children and families. As I move into 2026/2027 the independent nature of my role must also evolve so that I am the eyes and ears of children and families too.

The value and effectiveness of Independent Scrutineers is a discussion which is picking up pace.

The challenge is not to rely solely on the Independent Scrutineer for scrutiny. I have never felt that I am. The success of scrutiny is with all partnership leaders and members, their attitude, their values, their behaviours whilst supporting and challenging. I have observed a culture in Rochdale that is open, aspirational and respectful, often set against a backdrop of competing priorities, pace of change, financial constraints and national policy decisions. For the following year my intentions are to:

- **Scrutinise the Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams.**
- **Scrutinise the embedding of WT 2026**
- **Scrutinise the embedding of the Quality Assurance framework**
- **Conduct a multi-agency neglect audit**
- **Recruit a youth scrutineer**

The stability of the Business Unit is the only reflection from last year to this, that has not been realised. All leaders have supported the RBSCP Business Unit by examining and streamlining processes, but there must be a financial settlement during 26/27 that sees a Business Unit that is fully staffed.

Finally, there is evidence of strong governance arrangements with a shared responsibility led by the statutory partners and delivered by the wider partnership. I continue to be impressed by the development journey and "can do" attitude of the Delegated Safeguarding Partners despite national and financial challenges. This is an indicator of a strong, maturing, committed, and ambitious partnership.



Myra Ball
Independent Scrutineer



8. RBSCP Activities and Impact 2025/26

Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children's Partners strongly contribute to protecting children from harm and promoting their well-being. During 2025/26 the new Business Plan for the next 2 years was published, [RBSCP Business Plan](#). The Business Plan highlighted that there would be three RBSCP Priorities during the period, which are:

Priority 1: Neglect
By introducing the Family Help model, professionals and Family Help Lead Practitioners are enabled and supported to recognise the signs of neglect, understand the impact of neglect on children, and respond at the earliest point of identification, ensuring children and families are at the centre of everything we do.
Priority 2: Child Sexual Abuse
Multi-agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) receive high quality learning & development to recognise the signs of child sexual abuse and understand the impact of CSA on individuals and the wider community. MACPTs will deliver effective support, providing services that ensure the welfare and wellbeing of victims of CSA.
Priority 3: Impact on children of Domestic Abuse
Through robust quality systems, data is shared accurately, and widely, to enable effective support for children and young people impacted by Domestic Abuse. The RBSCP will seek information that children tell us they feel safer as a result.

The RBSCP Business Plan 2025-27 is supported by the RBSCP Neglect Strategy, which is currently under review in line with FFPP developments and reform. The Neglect Strategy describes neglect as one of the most prevalent forms of child abuse. It sets out our commitment, vision and priorities for identifying and responding to childhood neglect. All professionals support and promote the safeguarding of children and young people. The Early Help Strategy and Neglect Strategy will be reviewed towards the end of 2026 in response to our local Early Help offer and associated reform.

- **NHS GM**
gmintegratedcare.org.uk/nhs-gm/inclusion-and-diversity/
 - **GM Police EDI Strategy 2022-2026**
gmp-dei-strategy-and-objectives---issue-1---corporate-template.pdf
- Rochdale Borough Council**
<https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/equity-diversity-inclusion-1/policies-strategies>

Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB).

Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership holds equity, equality, diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in high regard across the partnership. There is not a joint strategy for EDI because the partner services are very specific, and as such specific strategies are needed to ensure open, transparent and honest approaches to EDI across the safeguarding partnership service delivery and strategic oversight. This to ensures EEDIB is central to service and policy development, These access links highlight DSL EDI strategies & policies:

During 2025/26 RBSCP worked with Northwest Multi Agency Safeguarding Learning and Support Hub as part of the Regional Improvement Plan on several development areas. One of which is to increase the effectiveness of understanding and responsiveness to **Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB)**.

The Hub is leading on developing an ambitious, collaborative framework and infrastructure to drive Equity, Diversity and Inclusion across the region. This workstream will support regional system enablement through strengthened EDI capacity and leadership. This will support Rochdale and associated boroughs to:

- **Better understand how EDI is featured based on regional data and insights**
- **Understand what EDI and belonging means to communities and individuals**
- **Develop Key EDI goals and objectives for the region over the next 2 years.**

The RBSCP will work with the NW Safeguarding Hub to develop a strategic framework and will co-design and deliver tailored, practical solutions, according to the specific needs and contexts of the local area.

The Fairness and Belonging Framework (Appendix 3) is being launched in April 2026 across the NW Safeguarding Hub with the aim to improve:

- **Leadership, Shared Understanding,**
- **Governance, Scrutiny & Assurance,**
- **Learning, Training and Improvement**
- **Partnerships to be better connected to share insights, learning and what works.**

RBSCP Activity 2025-26

The Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Partnership Executive met five times during the reporting period. Following Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, development, representatives from Education continue to attend Executive Meetings, as does the Independent Scrutineer where required. During the reporting period there were several RBSCP Forum and Executive meetings held which included:

- **RBSCP** – 10/11/25 and 04/03/26
- **Executive** – 07/04/25 02/06/25, 04/08/25, 06/10/25, 12/01/26 & 02/02/26.

Attendance at the Executive Meetings during 2025/26 is highlighted below:

Agency	Attendance
Greater Manchester Police	100%
RBC Children's Services	100%
Integrated Care Board	100%
Education	67%
Independent Scrutineer	50%

Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Partnership Executive examines current safeguarding practice, assurance reports from DSPs and subgroups, emerging themes and learning from reviews and safeguarding finances and resources. The table below highlights specific areas of discussion and decision making by the Executive during this year, and the intended impact for children and families in the borough:

Exec Topics & Decision Making	Agreements & Intended Impact
07/04/25 Exec DSG updates included: Safeguarding Matrix, Recruitment of CFC Nurse, Responses to incidents over weekends, Children & Schools Bill update Alexis Report	Strategic updates, developments and challenges for services delivered to children and families in Rochdale
Combined Authority CE Peer Review LGA Peer review Lessons Learnt Review Coroners Update JTAI Improvement Update	Monitoring practice improvements and impact
Independent Scrutineer Work Plan & Report	Future IS plan & reporting to maximise benefit & direction.
LCSPR Author commissioning process	Effective and suitable arrangements
Children, Wellbeing & Schools Bill 2024/25 Families First Partnership programme	Updates on reform proposals & intended impact
Professional Challenge and Effective Resolution Process	Review policy to ensure clear use & effective monitoring
02/06/25 Exec DSG updates included: NHS Reforms, Initial Health Assessments for CFC, Private Children's Home Provider escalations, Families First Partnership developments Out of borough children placed in area, CCP focus group gathered experiences of children regarding police interactions	Strategic updates, developments and challenges for services delivered to children and families in Rochdale
Business Plan Priorities agreed Sec 11 Findings Report National Review into CSA Action Plan	Clear focus on priorities, aligning National & local developments to benefit Rochdale children
Update on the Rapid Reviews/LCSPR's.	Monitoring timeliness of reviews and learning progress.

Exec Topics & Decision Making	Agreements & Intended Impact
04/08/25 Exec Standard items include updates from DSPs, Chairs of Subgroup, Independent Scrutineer, Business Manager	Oversight of strategic & operational issues and impact for safeguarding children and families. EHASH progress and audit activity
EHASH Update Training Report	Partner responsibilities and oversight of issues, offer, trainer pool, attendance, and system issues to maximise WFD & benefits for children.
Rochdale Professional Challenge and Effective Resolution Process	Final approval for publication
IS Scrutiny plan	Areas for scrutiny and assurance
06/10/25 Exec Standard items include updates from DSPs, Chairs of Subgroup, Independent Scrutineer, Business Manager	Oversight of strategic & operational issues and impact for safeguarding children and families, including update on FFPP.
RBSCP Annual Report 'its Silent' National Report CSA - Strategy for Partners	Achievements, impact & next steps Learning from reviews and focus for improving Practice
Partnership Participation Strategy	Develop Participation champions to co-design Partnership Strategy
Presentation on Learning from LCSPRs	Share learning from LCSPRs to maximise practice improvement.



Exec Topics & Decision Making	Agreements & Intended Impact
12/01/26 Exec Standard updates from DSPs, Independent Scrutineer, Business Manager	Oversight of strategic & operational issues and impact for safeguarding children
Family First Partnership National Framework update	FFPP and National framework developments
Domestic Abuse	Agree assurance reporting for DA impact
RBSCP Business Unit Review	Service review, future options & funding
Inspection Readiness	Full update on SEND / iLACS
LCSPR Case Review Updates	Oversight of current Reviews
RBSCP Pledge Board	Approve Pledge Board for MASA Publication
02/02/26 Exec Standard items include updates from DSPs & Chairs of Subgroup,	Oversight of strategic & operational issues and impact for safeguarding children
Q3 Subgroup Updates	Assurance on progress against priorities and next steps
FFPP & SEND on RBSCP website	RBSCP website to ensure public and partners can access FFPP & SEND updates as they develop.
Partner Participation Strategy	Strategic Champions trained, RBSCP workshop and Hackathon sessions April/May to progress strategy co-design.

Safeguarding Partner Attendance at RBCSP
Forum Meetings during 2025-26

Agency	Attendance
Greater Manchester Police RBC Children’s Services NHS GM ICB Community Safety / Public Health	100%
Education Pennine Care Foundation Trust Probation Service Adult Social Care Elected Members	50%

Exec Topics & Decision Making	Agreements & Impact
10/11/25 - Forum Standard items include updates from DSPs, Chairs of Subgroup, Independent Scrutineer, Business Manager	Oversight of strategic & operational issues and impact for safeguarding children and families, including update on FFPP.
RBSCP Annual Report RBSCP Pledges RBSCP Induction RBSCP Business Plan Strategic Priorities & Work Plan	Shared priorities and commitment to CYP in Rochdale, with clear induction and work plan for 2025-27
MASA Publication Review	Review and refresh arrangements
Inspections Policy Update	Partners aware of updates and inspection preparations
LADO Annual Reports	To highlight activity, impact, progress & emerging issues
Emerging Safeguarding Themes -E-Bikes, Community Action & Children’s Book	Responses to merging issues to minimise risk and protect
04/03/26 Forum Strategic Partner Workshop to develop Participation and Voice Partnership Strategy	04/03/26 Forum Examined where voice currently travels across the safeguarding system, to identify where influence strengthens & consider how leadership shapes influence. Agree priorities for April Youth Hackathon. Allowing RBSCP to move from “activity” to “influence” and clarify MASA’s role in strengthening participation feedback loops.

RBSCP Briefings were also shared with the Forum members in September 2025 and March 2026, which protected strategic space to facilitate the Voice and Partnership Participation Workshop in March 2026. This workshop engaged strategic leaders across MASA to consider Participation and Voice, to inform co-production sessions with children, young people, families and practitioners in early 2026/27 to co-design the **RBSCP Participation and Voice Partnership Strategy**, currently in development.

RBSCP Subgroups

In addition, to the RBCSP Executive Meetings and Forum Meetings, partners strongly support safeguarding developments. The tables below highlight partnership engagement and activity in respect of the RBCSP Subgroups:

Subgroup	Dates of Meetings in 2025/26
Complex Safeguarding	17/04/25, 22/07/25, 16/09/25, 18/11/25, 24/02/26
Early Help, Education & Safeguarding	30/04/25, 23/02/26
Practice Review	22/04/25, 09/07/25, 01/10/25, 16/12/25, 09/02/26, 16/03/26
Learning & Development	05/06/25, 04/09/25, 26/11/25, 04/02/26
Performance & Quality Assurance	15/04/25, 15/07/25, 16/09/25, 27/11/25.
EHASH	09/07/25, 10/09/25, 12/11/25, 14/01/26, 11/03/26

Overview of Subgroup Activity during 2025/26

As highlighted in Section 3, the Safeguarding Partnership Executive is supported through the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Partnership and supporting subgroups. Each subgroup has assessed their activity during 2024/25 and explored the impact this has had for children and families in Rochdale. Those in this section, are as follows:

- EHASH • Early Years and Education Safeguarding

EHASH Strategic Group
Summary of Activity & Progress against Action Plan

During 2025/26, the EHASH Strategic Group provided strengthened multi-agency governance and strategic oversight of Rochdale’s safeguarding and early help front door. Building on developments and priorities identified through the 2024/25 Action Plan, the group focused on clarifying purpose and function, strengthening accountability, and ensuring EHASH delivers timely, proportionate and child-centred responses aligned with partnership priorities, inspection readiness and national reform programmes, including Families First and Right Care, Right Person.

Early in the year, the group held a dedicated development session to reaffirm the purpose and function of EHASH, the Strategic Group, and individual member roles. This supported delivery of the action plan by embedding expectations around shared accountability, dissemination of learning within agencies, and improving strategic grip.

Key priorities progressed included a stronger focus on levels of need rather than thresholds, embedding the voice of the child through trauma-informed

practice, and improving the proactive use of data to inform decision-making.

Throughout the year, the Strategic Group maintained oversight of EHASH operational performance, demand pressures and quality assurance activity. Particular attention was given to increasing referral volumes, consent and feedback processes for referrers, workforce pressures across health and policing, and the continued embedding of the EHASH referral portal. Connectivity with other partnership boards was strengthened to ensure EHASH intelligence contributes to a wider understanding of safeguarding risk and informs partnership assurance.

Assurance arrangements were enhanced by aligning audits, action plans, Independent Scrutiny findings and JTAI improvement activity, ensuring clear progression against agreed actions. Spotlight case discussions and reflective sessions supported delivery of the action plan by grounding strategic oversight in frontline practice and lived experience.

Key Achievements during 2025-2026

Key achievements for the EHASH Strategic Group during the year included:

- Delivery against the 2024/25 Action Plan through re-clarification of the purpose and function of EHASH and the Strategic Group, strengthening shared understanding, accountability and member responsibilities.
- Review and refresh of Terms of Reference, clarifying expectations around representation, dissemination of decisions, and inclusion of mental health input by exception.
- Sustained multi-agency strategic oversight with strong core engagement from children’s social care, health, police, education and early help services.
- Oversight of the implementation and embedding of the EHASH referral portal, including strengthened protocols around consent, feedback to referrers and escalation of urgent concerns.
- Strategic governance of increased demand linked to national reforms and triage changes, with proportionate responses prioritised to reduce unnecessary intrusion for families.
- Strengthening of quality assurance arrangements, including monthly strategic audits informed by JTAI learning, refreshed audit membership and improved consistency of assurance activity.
- Improved consideration and evidence of the voice of the child across audits, decision-making and reflective discussions.
- Strategic oversight of key safeguarding themes including domestic abuse, child sexual abuse (including intrafamilial harm), neglect, private fostering and cumulative harm.

- Oversight of the Heywood Family Safeguarding pilot within EHASH pathways, with early positive indicators around flow and multi-agency coordination.
- Consolidation of EHASH-related action plans into a single, coherent workplan to reduce duplication and improve tracking of progress, including actions from CSPRs, audits and scrutiny.

What difference has this made?

The work of the EHASH Strategic Group during 2025/26 has strengthened assurance that the safeguarding and early help front door is operating with greater clarity, consistency and child focus.

Improvements in role clarity, strengthened accountability and reinforced shared purpose have enhanced strategic challenge and partner ownership. Quality assurance activity, supported by reflective spotlight cases, has improved visibility of practice strengths, system pressures and areas for development, enabling more targeted and coordinated improvement action.

A clearer focus on levels of need and the voice of the child has supported more trauma-informed and proportionate decision-making, helping to reduce avoidable escalation while ensuring timely risk identification and responses. Stronger alignment with JTAI actions, Independent Scrutiny and national learning has improved inspection readiness and learning is being embedded in practice.

Next Steps & Action Plans for 2026/27

Building on progress to date, priorities for 2026/27 include:

- Further strengthening the use of multi-agency data to understand demand, referral quality, consent processes and outcomes for children and families.
- Completing and embedding the EHASH audit programme, including learning themes of cumulative harm, use of historical information, intrafamilial sexual abuse and referral decision-making.
- Continuing to improve referral quality and feedback to referrers through learning, training and audit feedback.
- Maintaining focus on workforce pressures and attendance to ensure meetings are consistently quorate and governance remains effective.
- Continuing close alignment with Families First reforms, Right Care, Right Person and JTAI improvement activity.
- Embedding learning from the Independent Scrutiny review of EHASH through a clear, monitored action plan.
- Strengthening connectivity with other partnership boards to ensure EHASH intelligence informs wider safeguarding assurance and strategic decision-making.

Early Years & Education Safeguarding Sub-Group

Summary of Activity & Progress against Action Plan

Since the establishment of the Early Years and Education Safeguarding Sub-Group in January 2025, significant progress has been made in creating a strong, partnership-led approach to safeguarding across education. The group has quickly embedded its role as a statutory forum, agreeing clear governance arrangements through its Terms of Reference, strengthening multi-agency representation, and establishing mechanisms to escalate and respond to thematic risks.

In parallel, the group has overseen improvements in safeguarding assurance, with audit findings demonstrating that most schools have well-embedded safeguarding cultures, robust systems, and effective leadership. A lead Headteacher from Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools Forums has also been identified to join the Executive Partnership.

Key Achievements during 2025-2026

Neglect

Since January, the Sub-Group has prioritised strengthening the response to neglect by revisiting through training the use of screening tools, thresholds, and referral pathways to develop consistency across education settings. This has included a focus on the response to need framework and identifying workforce development needs to support earlier and more effective identification of all forms of neglect.

Neglect has also been considered within wider safeguarding assurance activity. Through the Section 175/157 audit and thematic QA work, the subgroup has highlighted links between neglect, persistent absence, elective home education (EHE)

and children missing education (CME), ensuring these vulnerabilities are better understood and addressed. Multi-agency training is in development to support an understanding of EHE.

A new Attendance Alliance has been launched with key representatives from across the system, bringing safeguarding partners alongside education to consider the wider determinants of attendance aligned with neglect.

An inclusive approach remains central to the oversight of suspensions and exclusions, with a clear focus on keeping children within education and addressing underlying needs.

This is reflected in improving trends in suspension data and a reduction in the use of part-time timetables, demonstrating a strengthening commitment to early intervention and inclusive practice across settings.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

Since its inception, the Sub-Group has begun to strengthen the system response to CSA by embedding learning from previous reviews and identifying training and development priorities. There has been a clear focus on ensuring that education settings understand safeguarding thresholds and referral pathways, including the use of evidence-based tools from the CSA centre for expertise in response to evidence that a notable proportion of referrals are not meeting threshold.

The Sub-Group has also supported the development of ongoing professional learning approaches, including the use of DSL networks, scenario-based discussion, and continuous safeguarding updates to improve professional curiosity and decision-making in this area.

Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

This year, progress has been made in strengthening multi-agency responses to domestic abuse, particularly through enhanced collaboration and improved safeguarding processes within EHASH. The introduction of an education worker in EHASH has strengthened the visibility of safeguarding concerns. Issues relating to referral quality or themes developing within these referrals are picked up on and can be managed in real time.

The Sub-Group has also identified information sharing between schools, the local authority, and GMP as a critical safeguarding risk, highlighting the need for consistent, clear systems and strong working relationships. Particularly relating to Operation Encompass. Discussion has also focused on the role of early years and education within wider safeguarding forums such as MARAC.

Safeguarding Audits in Schools

Term 1 safeguarding audit findings show a strong overall picture, with the majority of schools operating at embedded or exceeding levels across all areas, demonstrating well-established safeguarding cultures, clear leadership, effective multi-agency working, and robust systems such as CPOMS and support for vulnerable pupils. Practice is particularly strong in recording, governance, and identification of children with social worker involvement, alongside growing use of trauma-informed approaches and continuous staff development. However, there is some variability in attendance and off-site safeguarding, including consistency of graduated responses, tracking, and alternative provision quality assurance.

Additional subgroup priorities

Attendance, EHE, CME

The work across attendance, EHE, and CME this last year demonstrates the importance placed on the critical role education plays in safeguarding children and young people.

With the inclusion of the attendance alliance, multi-agency approaches such as the Emotionally Based Non-attendance panel, the Local Inclusion Support Offer through SEND services, family engagement through attendance workshops and targeted safeguarding and legal intervention demonstrates that Rochdale's approach reflects a clear shift from monitoring attendance to understanding and addressing the underlying causes of absence, ensuring that children's needs are identified early and responded to effectively.

CYPP Alignment

As an action the subgroup identified actions aligned to the Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) Safe agenda with key priorities to: Keep children safe from harm, promote healthy relationships and wellbeing, strengthen early intervention and listen to and value children's voices. A survey has been carried out that has identified strong practice in relation to curriculum offers linked to healthy relationships, consistent implementation of safeguarding & child protection policies as well as behaviour / anti-bullying policies and the equality and inclusion framework.

What difference has this made?

Neglect

- Improved awareness of neglect indicators across schools and Early Years settings
- Stronger alignment between early years, education, early help, and safeguarding processes
- Increased focus on early identification through audit and QA activity

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

- Stronger strategic focus on CSA across education and Early Years
- Increased awareness of gaps in thresholds and referral quality
- Early steps toward embedding continuous safeguarding learning

Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

- Improved identification and triage of safeguarding concerns linked to domestic abuse
- Stronger integration of education within multi-agency safeguarding systems
- Clear recognition of information-sharing challenges as a priority risk

Next Steps & Action Plans for 2026/27

Neglect

- Deliver further targeted training on neglect and consistent use of screening tools. That also includes Early Years and Wraparound services.
- Multi-agency training development for elective home education.
- Improve the quality and appropriateness of referrals to EHASH
- Use data and thematic reviews to deepen understanding of neglect patterns aligned with attendance as a key wider system priority.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

- Further delivery of the targeted CSA training programme
- Improve consistency and confidence in identifying and responding to risk
- Use audit and case learning to continue to inform practice improvement across settings

Safeguarding Audits in Schools

- Strengthen information sharing protocols between partners
- Communication of new guidance for schools around Quality Assurance of Alternative Provision
- Mobilisation of the Attendance Alliance
- Clarify and embed education's role within MARAC arrangements
- Ensure domestic abuse is consistently reflected in training, policy, and audit activity

Attendance, EHE, CME

- strengthening the response to the Children's Wellbeing Bill and Children Not in School registers
- improving data quality and visibility of all children
- further embedding inclusive attendance and trauma-informed practice
- strengthening links between attendance, EHASH, Early Help, and safeguarding services
- continuing to build trusted relationships with families

CYPP Alignment

- Developing workforce confidence through training and support
- Work towards meaningful youth leadership and prevention messages through peer influence using multi-agency partnerships and
- development of tools to improve consistency of PSHE / healthy relationships work and to address VAWG priorities.

Overall Priorities and Next Phase

This year, the Sub-Group has also established the foundations for sustained improvement through:

- Development of an action plan and risk register to track progress and escalate risks
- Plans to dip-sample strong practice and share learning across schools
- A focus on quality assurance of alternative provision and attendance, particularly where variability presents safeguarding risks

Key cross-cutting priorities moving forward include

- Improving consistency and evidencing impact across all settings
- Strengthening workforce development and continuous safeguarding training
- Addressing system challenges in information sharing
- Enhancing oversight of vulnerable children, particularly those in alternative provision or with attendance concerns

Conclusion

Since being established in January 2025 the Early Years and Education Safeguarding Sub-Group has made strong early progress in developing governance, strengthening safeguarding assurance, and identifying clear priorities across neglect, child sexual abuse, and domestic abuse. The system is characterised by committed leadership, improving multi-agency collaboration, and increasingly embedded safeguarding practice across schools.

The next phase will focus on embedding consistency, strengthening quality assurance, and translating strategic priorities into measurable impact, ensuring that all children across Rochdale are effectively safeguarded and supported.

Other subgroup reports are highlighted in Sections 7, 8 & 9 in respect of Performance, Quality Assurance, Practice Review and Learning & Development.

In Section 11, partner agency reports also highlight single agency activities to further protect and safeguard children and families in Rochdale.

9. Performance and Quality Assurance

Analysis of the effectiveness of the RBSCP in safeguarding children is provided by the **Safeguarding Performance & Quality Assurance Subgroup** through data analysis and multi-agency audit. The group works closely with Children's Social Care Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Lead. The group oversees multi-agency audits and reviews single agency audits, leading an audit cycle which is responsive to areas of concern and includes a programme of re-audit/dip sampling to evidence effective safeguarding practice improvement.

The QA Framework, published on the RBSCP website, provides the strategic principles of RBSCP quality assurance including audit, performance and evidence of practice improvement impacting positively on children and families in Rochdale.

[Quality Assurance Framework](#)

The audit cycle reflects the RBSCP Priorities and is also informed by:

- **Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**
- **Performance indicators and dataset information/analysis**
- **Repeated issues or concern, including those highlighted through previous audits.**

- **Feedback from practitioners, management forums or policy developments.**
- **Views of children, young people and their families to support qualitative analysis.**
- **Joint Targeted Area Review (JTAI) themes identified for improvement.**
- **Statutory audit requirements and findings from Section 11 and Section 157/175.**

SPQA Subgroup and other subgroups use data and intelligence to explore and monitor performance in their area of responsibility, aligning to the RBSCP Priorities. This information assesses the effectiveness of partner services effectiveness in helping to protect children and families. The Group is also responsible for agreeing and updating interagency safeguarding procedures. These apply to the Greater Manchester online Procedures, which provide a clear framework under which Greater Manchester organisations work together to safeguard children. Procedures are regularly updated to take account of local or national learning, changes in legislation or statutory guidance. SPQA activity for 2025/26 is as follows:



SPQA Sub-Group

Summary of Activity & Progress against Action Plan

During 2025/26, the subgroup delivered against agreed priorities through strengthened governance, a live audit programme, and enhanced multi-agency assurance. Key developments included implementation of an audit schedule, progression of local and regional data work, review of escalation processes, and approval of a refreshed QA Framework (April 2026). Oversight also included JTAI-related improvement actions.

What has gone well:

- **Governance strengthened through improved membership and finalised Terms of Reference.**
- **RBSCP priorities reviewed, agreed and promoted.**
- **Audit schedule and tracking embedded as core assurance tools.**
- **Progress in partnership data development, including NW RIPP contributions.**
- **QA Framework refreshed and approved (April 2026).**
- **Increased multi-agency assurance reporting.**

- **Agreed 2026/27 Section 11 approach**
- **Continued to work with Education with regards to S157/175 audit**
- **Progressed the majority of JTAI actions**

Challenges / areas for development:

- **Complexity in establishing a meaningful multi-agency dataset.**
- **Delays in some JTAI actions due to incomplete reporting.**
- **Section 175 return rates remain inconsistent.**
- **Evidence of learning not consistently translating into practice improvement.**

Key Achievements during 2025-2026

Child Neglect

Neglect remained one of the agreed partnership priorities, with responsibility for key audit activity sitting through the Early Help Strategic Board and linked work across education and health. Progress during the year included planning and then completion of a neglect toolkit audit. The evidence relates to a clear gap between policy/tool expectations and frontline application, alongside agreed actions to strengthen awareness, training and strategy review.

Progress / what has gone well:

- **The subgroup agreed neglect was an achievable priority and linked review of the neglect strategy/toolkit to the Strategic Early Help Board.**
- **In November 2025, the Neglect Toolkit Audit was presented to the subgroup.**

- **Audit findings showed that where the neglect tool had been used, it supported better identification of neglect concerns and improved the quality of referrals.**
- **Partner updates in April 2026 also referenced ongoing progress in neglect-related work within Pennine Care and education-linked Family Help / early intervention activity.**

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

CSA became a clearer area of focus over the year, moving from priority-setting and training discussions into deeper practice review and strategic development. SPQA has identified the development of guidance materials, adoption of CSA Centre of Expertise resources via a detailed learning exercise based on four deep-dive cases involving child sexual abuse and EHCPs.



At the same time, the subgroup recognised continuing challenges in workforce confidence, strategy clarity, and identifying and recording CSA through performance data.

Progress / what has gone well:

- **Early discussions on priorities identified the need to promote CSA training and develop champion support for the workforce.**
- **In July 2025, the subgroup agreed to fully adopt the CSA Centre of Expertise materials for RBSCP, and the Education Safeguarding lead agreed to develop a working group to create Healthy Relationships guidance materials with school representatives.**
- **In September 2025, RBSCP QA Officer presented learning from four deep dive safeguarding cases involving CSA and EHCPs, producing 7 key learning points for multi-agency practice. The learning themes covered voice of the child, earliest opportunity for help, education as a key partner, consistent use of tools, review of harmful sexual behaviour processes, relational practice, and EHCP considerations.**
- **The HBA Strategy had undergone a review to ensure clarity of document**
- **By November 2025, members referenced a CSA strategic approach that was drawing together national learning and local action planning.**

Impact of Domestic Abuse (DA) on children.

The subgroup's domestic abuse quality assurance activity has focused on Operation Encompass and the effectiveness of school notifications following domestic abuse incidents.

The evidence shows a year that started with concerns about timeliness and reliability of notifications and progressed to agreed improvement actions and reported improvement in compliance.

Progress / what has gone well:

- **The subgroup agreed that domestic abuse remained a priority area, while being careful to avoid duplication with the work of RDAP.**
- **In April 2025, members noted that schools were reported to be happier with Operation Encompass notifications following improvements, although more formal QA was still needed.**
- **A domestic abuse / Operation Encompass audit was undertaken about ensuring childcare providers as well as schools were considered.**
- **In November 2025, the Operation Encompass Audit reported a 56% school response rate and identified examples of good practice, including therapeutic interventions and use of SDQ.**

- **By April 2026, actions had been completed, including a shared DSL mailbox and baseline expectations for schools, and that performance had improved significantly to approximately 75%+ compliance. The subgroup recognised the need for clearer accountability and better operational consistency in the notification process.**
- **Further domestic abuse audit work planned for repeat domestic abuse referrals and honour-based abuse.**

What difference has this made?

- **Stronger assurance and clearer practice improvements.**
- **Identified gaps leading to targeted actions.**
- **Improved audit activity and reporting.**
- **Follow up, re-audit and stronger close the loop oversight and practice.**

Next Steps & Action Plans for 2026/27

- **Embed QA Framework**
- **Develop Deep Dive / Space to Think multi agency reflective discussions,**
- **Improve Section 175 compliance.**
- **Deliver Section 11 process.**
- **Continue RBSCP priority improvement audits.**
- **Agree strategic approach to multi-agency data development**
- **Introduce Safeguarding visits as part of new QA Framework once new DSPs commence in 2026.**

RBSCP Performance Overview

The following table highlights key performance indicators in respect of Children’s Service data comparing 2024/25 to 2025/26. It is clear that 50% of KPIs evidence movement in a positive direction, with 42% evidencing a negative direction. Such performance is monitored and examined in Monthly Performance meetings within Children’s Social Care and relevant data is also discussed at RBSCP Meetings. In addition, RBSCP Subgroups also monitor additional data in respect of Business Plan priorities and emerging themes.

Rochdale Children’s Services - Overview of Performance Indicators

KPI	2024/25	2025/26	Direction
01: Open cases to Children’s Social Care (rate per 10k pop)	490.0	471.7	down ↓
02: % of contacts with decision making within 1 working days	86.4%	87.8%	up ↑
03: % of referrals with decision making within 1 working days	98.0%	96.6%	down ↓
04: Repeat referrals (within 12 months)	17.1%	18.1%	up ↑
05: % of C&F Assessments completed within 45 days	86.6%	89.9%	up ↑
06: % of CIN visits completed on time (4 weekly)	86.5%	83.9%	down ↓
07: Number of Strategy Discussions held in month	185.1	157.3	down ↓
08: Initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale (15 days)	89.9%	90.6%	up ↑
09: % of Child Protection visits completed within 2 weeks	75.1%	81.9%	up ↑
10: % of children subject to a repeat Child Protection Plan ever	24.8%	25.8%	up ↑
11: Rate of New Cared for Children in month	30.0	37.5	up ↑
12: Number of Children in Care who had a statutory visit in timescale	90.0%	88.6%	down ↓
13: % of Children in Care statutory reviews held on time	85.2%	90.8%	up ↑
14: % of Children in Care who have had 3+ placement moves in 12 months	8.7%	10.0%	up ↑
15: % of Children in Care under 5 years with up to date health assessment	64.1%	89.6%	up ↑
15a: % of Children in Care 5 - 18 years with up to date health assessment	85.6%	94.6%	up ↑
16: % of Children in Care 4 - 16 years with SDQ assessment in the last 12m	62.2%	83.0%	up ↑
17: % of Care Leavers not in education, employment or training (19-21yrs)	48.1%	48.7%	up ↑
18: % of return interviews held for Children in Care missing episodes	41.1%	59.2%	up ↑

10. Responding to and Learning from Serious Incidents

This **Safeguarding Practice Review Group** oversees serious incident notifications involving children, facilitates Rapid Reviews, makes recommendations to the RBSCP Executive regarding Multi-Agency or Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. The group liaises with National Panel and facilitates partnership learning from LCSPRs and National reviews to implement and evidence effectiveness of learning from reviews, safeguarding practice improvement and positive impact for children and families, as per Working Together 2026.

Following a significant incident to a child, a Greater Manchester Serious Child Safeguarding Case Notification form is submitted and an initial SIN meeting takes place to consider the criteria for SIN. If the DSP representatives agree threshold is met, the serious incident will progress to a Rapid Review. Children’s Services formally notify the National Child Safeguarding Panel.

The full process can be found in **Appendix 4**, but in summary, a LCSPR Panel will undertake a rapid review of the circumstances surrounding the serious incident, making recommendations to the DSPs regarding criteria for a LCSPR. Where a LCSPR is required, RBSCP commission an independent author, and the LCSPR Panel manage the process to completion, approving final report and developing achievable local actions in line with findings and recommendations. The Safeguarding Practice Review Subgroup oversees action plan progress and practice improvement, and the Learning and Development Group provides and disseminates learning.

Practice Review Sub-Group
Summary of Activity & Progress against Action Plan

During 2025/26, the Practice Review Subgroup (PRSG) provided effective strategic oversight and assurance to the Partnership that learning from serious incidents was being identified, progressed and embedded in a proportionate and meaningful way.

The subgroup maintained scrutiny of Serious Incident Notifications (SINs), Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs), ensuring decisions were consistently aligned with national guidance and Working Together 2023. Clearer application of thresholds and strengthened early learning mechanisms supported more timely and proportionate responses, with alternative learning approaches used appropriately where statutory reviews were not indicated.

PRSG oversight extended to a complex range of ongoing and historic reviews. While some reviews experienced unavoidable delay due to criminal justice or coroner processes, the subgroup maintained assurance that learning was not lost. Where publication was not possible, anonymised and thematic learning was disseminated to partners to ensure continued system impact.

A key focus during the year was the closure of historic learning and strengthening assurance mechanisms. Significant progress was achieved in embedding agreed learning into business-as-usual audit, quality assurance and workforce development activity, demonstrating a shift away from standalone action plans towards sustainable system improvement.

The subgroup also strengthened its role in aligning learning from local reviews with wider system intelligence, including Independent Scrutineer feedback, Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) activity and national safeguarding reviews. This supported a clearer line of sight between learning, action and impact.



Key Achievements during 2025-2026

- Key achievements over the year included:
- Full completion and formal sign-off of all learning outcomes for Child 5
 - Closure of multiple recommendations for E1 and substantive progress against remaining F1 actions
 - Embedding the routine use of historical social care information within EHASH audits as business-as-usual practice
 - Strengthened assurance on cumulative harm through strategic and thematic audit activity
 - Improved quality, consistency and clarity of LCSPR reports submitted for Executive consideration

- Clearer alignment between PRSG learning, Independent Scrutineer feedback and JTAI improvement activity
 - Active consideration and local integration of national and cross-border learning, including CSA reviews and race and racism in safeguarding, with a system now in place to support integration of national learning into locality
- These achievements demonstrate a shift from managing individual actions to embedding learning sustainably across the safeguarding system.

What difference has this made?

- The work of the PRSG during 2025/26 has improved Partnership confidence that learning from serious incidents is leading to tangible change. Assurance is stronger that:
- decision-making is proportionate and consistent;
 - learning is shared even where publication is not possible;
 - recurring themes such as child sexual abuse, emotional harm and cumulative risk are influencing practice, supervision and audit activity; and
 - partners share accountability for learning and improvement.

Overall, the subgroup’s work has strengthened governance, reduced duplication, improved the quality and clarity of review outputs, and contributed to a more trauma-informed and system-focused safeguarding response.



Next Steps & Action Plans for 2026/27

- Looking ahead, the PRSG will continue to focus on the following throughout 2026-27:
- Strengthening the partnership response to child sexual abuse, informed by local and national learning
 - Maintain a focus on emotional harm and cumulative risk
 - Further strengthen culturally competent and anti-racist safeguarding within review processes
 - Ensure learning recommendations are proportionate, achievable and system-focused

- Progress reviews in a timely way despite ongoing external constraints where possible
 - Further strengthen partner engagement, assurance and impact evaluation.
- These priorities will support the Partnership’s ongoing commitment to learning from serious incidents and improving outcomes for children and families in Rochdale.

Serious Incident Notification Analysis

Between 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026 of the 5 SINs, 2 progressed to Rapid Review and LCSPR, 3 didn’t meet threshold but benefitted from multi-agency discussion and advise. Referrals have reduced compared with 11 in 2024/25, and 10 in both 2021/22 & 2022/23. Work has been undertaken during this period applying the ‘Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: Guidance for Safeguarding Partners (June 2025) which has seen reduced SIN submissions that did not meet the criteria in the latter half of the year, thus more suitable application of criteria is being applied for SIN submissions.

Quarter	SIN	LCSPR
Q1	0	0
Q2	3	1
Q3	1	0
Q4	1	1
Total	5	2 + 2 from 2024/25

The most common theme was Sibling Child Sexual Abuse and Physical Abuse/ Neglect. During 2025/26, RBSCP carried out 3 LCSPRs, 2 were from SINs received in 2024/25, and the third from a SIN received in Q2 2025/26. Q4 SIN/Rapid Review, agreed LCSPR to commence early 2026/27.

LCSPR	Sex	Age	Serious Incident
K1	Female	Early Toddler	Physical Abuse
Milo & Ben	Males	Key Stage 1 & 2	Sibling Child Sexual Abuse
Mario	Male	Key Stage 4	Sibling Child Sexual Abuse

Of the 3 LCSPRs completed in this period, all final reports are to be approved by the Safeguarding Practice Review Subgroup in March 2026, with presentation and final approval by RBSCP & Executive planned for early 2026/27.

Single agency learning is underway for each of the 3 LCSPRs, progress was reported at Panel and will now be overseen by the Safeguarding Practice Review Subgroup.

The recent Rapid Review has seen submission of all single agency action plans, in readiness for the LCSPR. The improved Rapid Review process requires timelier identified single agency actions to respond to learning earlier in the process.

Not all CSPR reports are published but all learning recommendations are utilised in improving local safeguarding practice. Independently commissioned reports may be completed outside of the year they were initially commissioned in, this may be due to the complexity of a case.

In 2025-26, one Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review was not published due to ongoing criminal investigations and high media interest that could easily identify the family. Publishing decisions are determined by RBSCP and Executive and shared with the National Panel.

During 2025/26, learning from a Thematic Review and one LCSPRs were shared, however due to the nature of the LCSPR incident, report completion was delayed due to court proceedings and coroner inquest.

The LCSPR was not published due to high media attention and identifiability, but learning was disseminated via briefings to ensure ongoing practice and system improvement. Both Learning Plans are progressing but not yet completed:

CSA Thematic

Review Information

CSA thematic considered professional responses to CSA during 2023/24. By reviewing CSA incidents over the previous 18 months, themes were identified for the RBSCP to progress. The local findings were incorporated with findings from the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, report, 'I want them all to notice', Protecting Children and Responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment (November 2024) to produce a National and Local CSA Action Plan

Learning Themes:

- The Identification, assessment and response to HSB and sibling CSA.
 - The importance of effective multi-agency working
 - Recognition and response to intra-familial CSA and wider indicators of abuse.
 - Response to Child to Parent Violence
 - Working with parents and carers to increase engagement.
- Co-existing vulnerabilities for adults (such as parental learning difficulties, mental health, domestic abuse substance misuse)
 - Recognising professional confidence in talking to children about CSA, support for children and the impact of CSA.
 - The importance of safe adults/non abusing family members

Outcome:

- Partnership training needs analysis has been completed with training offer and CSA Leads identified to promote CSA awareness and Centre of Excellence Hub.
- CSA Working Group developed to map progress and impact.

- CSA Data analysis developing to understand need and identification.
- 7 Minute Briefings published on CSA and SARC (Support Service).
- Circle Time audit completed to better understand need and responses.

The Action Plan is still ongoing and continues to improve responses to CSA

Child H1

Independent Report author: David MellorPublished: No

Review Information

CSPR considered information held by partners across borders for a family, who had moved into the area. Whilst unaccompanied outside Child H1 was attacked by a dog that lived on the property and sadly died. LCSPR examined harm by dangerous dogs and safety matters for children, families and staff.

Learning recommendation:

- Assessing the needs of children must address risks children may be exposed to in environments they regularly visit and spend time in away from the family home.
- RSPCA Inspectors recognise potential child safeguarding concerns and follow child safeguarding processes and access support available from the NSPCC.

- The workers involved were exposed to risks when they attended the property.
- There was a significant delay in arranging a strategy meeting in this case, further complicated by the concerns spanning two local authorities.
- The case highlighted concerns relating to dog safety.

Outcome:

- Assessments consider environmental risks to children that they regularly visit.
- Professional Challenge and Effective Resolution Policy revised, disseminated and published for partners, monitoring system refreshed to oversee themes.
- RBSCP assurance of RSPCA Inspectors safeguarding training offer, awareness of child safeguarding processes, and support by agencies such as NSPCC.

- Strengthened risk assessments and considerations for staff safety when attending new properties and delivering their duties, in respect of dogs.
- Ensure appropriate timescales are met for strategy meetings and appropriate transfer to other local authorities where indicated.
- National advice and GM Policy on Safeguarding Children from Dangerous Dogs updated and other learning resources relating to dog safety disseminated to partners to support learning and minimise dog related harm.

Learning from Reviews

During March and September 2025 LCSPR Learning Review presentations were delivered to partners to disseminate the learning from the past 6 LCSPRs/MA Reviews to ensure learning was shared and practitioners had access to related work force development.

Much work has been completed during 2025/26 in respect of improving the Rapid Review and LCSPR process, and this has assisted those new to the process to fully understand their roles and responsibilities. RBSCP has developed a Learning Evaluation form for partner for each LCSPR to evidence practitioner dissemination, learning and practice improvement. This will assist to evidence impact of LCSPRs on practice and for children and families and will be activated with all 3 LCSPRs when finalised in early 2026/27.

Process Improvements.

RBSCP has completed the following developments during 2025/26:

- CSPR Guidance for Safeguarding Partners shared in August & Sept Q2.
- Rapid Review process improved & strengthened Child Voice and Pen pictures.
- Reviewed Learning Outcome design to simplify learning and accessibility to good practice and areas for development Q2/3.
- Partner Highlight reports introduced in Q3.
- Independent Scrutiny of RR & LCSPR completed.
- New method to examine and disseminate learning from Nation Reviews within Practice Review Subgroup and seek local assurance from relevant agencies.
- Reaudit of previous LCSPRs to identify progress (E.G. D1 and F1). Further re-audits planned for EHASH Subgroup activity.
- Practitioner events methodology examined, to explore approach and style to enhance usefulness for CSPR process and benefits for frontline practitioners.

Ongoing Developments for 2026/27

RBSCP plan to complete the following in the forthcoming year to continue to strengthen CSPR Process and Learning from Reviews:

- Introduce Seminars & Briefings for new CSPRs to promote opportunities for learning, dissemination and for practitioners to access CPD Learning from reviews protected time
- Review 7-minute Briefings to ensure updates and relevance
- Monitor effectiveness of Evaluation Forms and Highlight Reports
- Explore Manager Briefings and introductions to CSPRs to induct those new to CSPR Process and Panel member responsibilities.
- Reviewing QA Framework to strengthen close the loop on learning.
- Use IS Report to further strengthen process and impact of Learning Evaluation

Independent Scrutiny of Rapid Review/LCSPR Process in RBSCP

During 2025/26 I have attended or had documentary scrutiny over all the cases listed in this report and RBSCP’s approach to serious incidents and reviews is strong and evolving. I have recently graded the partnership ‘Good’ across five areas and written an executive summary and full report.

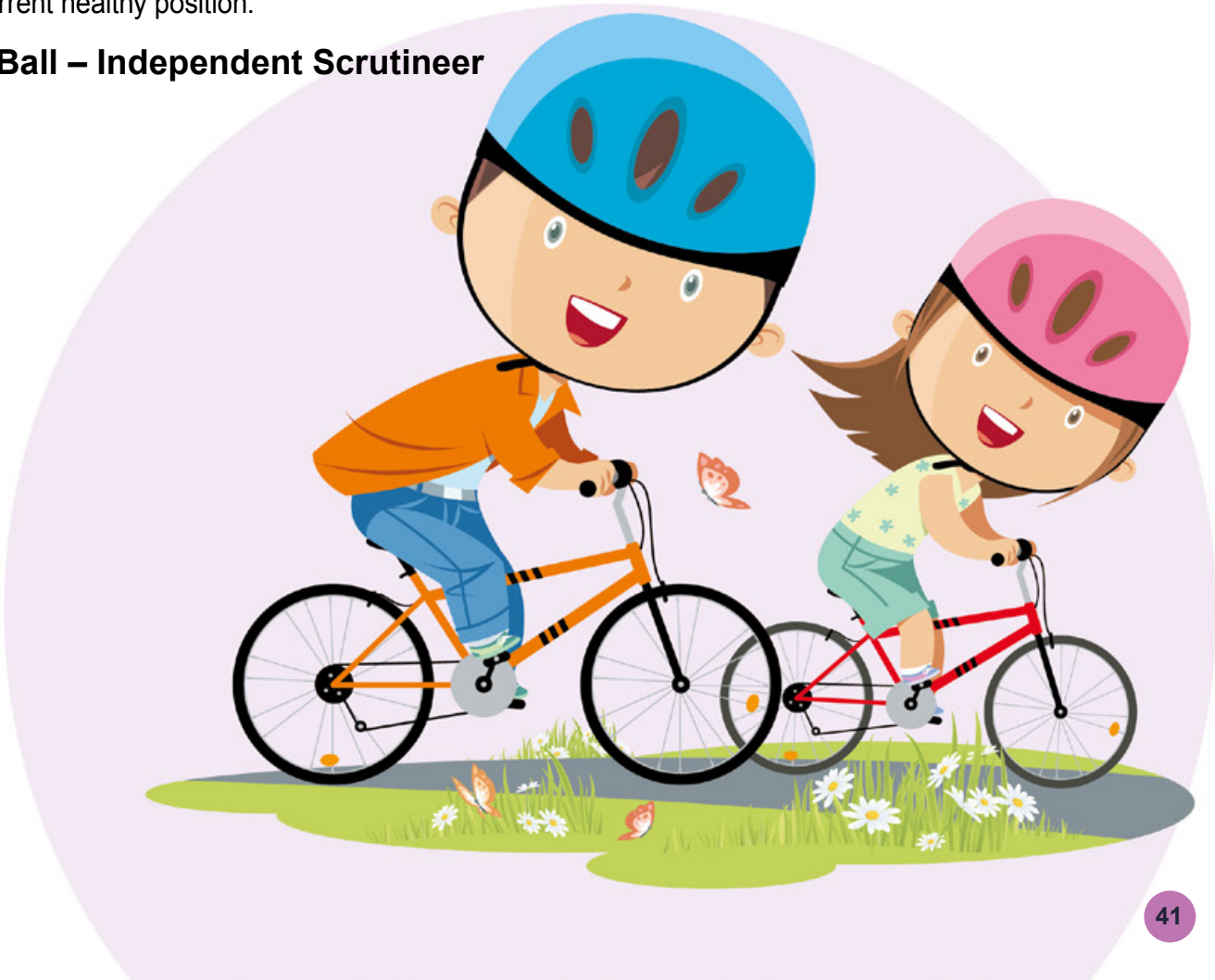
Methodology	Grading
Statutory duties	Good
Quality assurance mechanisms	Good
LCSPR and National reviews analysis	Good
VoC and families	Good
Whole system effectiveness	Good

There is a correlation between good partnership activity, leadership and motivated people; the pace of change and “can do” attitude of individuals is recognised in my full report.

Governance, accountability and structure have been reinforced across the PRSG and SPQA groups and if improvements continue over the next twelve months that match what has been achieved so far, the partnership should be able to extract meaningful, full circle analysis on how all this hard work has led to a measurable impact for families, practitioners and communities. There is a desire to demonstrate how lessons have been truly learnt and embedded into practice.

The whole system of learning from SIN to RR and LCSPR is working and strong. RBSCP should be proud of its current healthy position.

Myra Ball – Independent Scrutineer



11. Partnership Workforce Development

Learning and Development Sub-Group

Summary of Activity & Progress against Action Plan

Partnership workforce development is facilitated by RBSCP Learning and Development Group who devise the RBSCP Training Strategy and coordinate partnership safeguarding learning events. The group supports the Performance & Quality Assurance Subgroup and Practice Review Group through the RBSCP Business Manager. The multi-agency safeguarding training offer is informed by training needs analysis and learning from practice reviews and audits, to improve safeguarding practice and outcomes for local children and young people. RBSCP is committed to providing a comprehensive multiagency training programme which includes the following elements:

Core safeguarding training courses

provide a foundation for good multiagency safeguarding practice. Held regularly and with refresher events to keep knowledge up to date and to maximise access.

Subject specific training events, and seminars

provide safeguarding training in greater depth. Topics vary, depending on local and national safeguarding themes and partnership workforce needs, so demand is responded to effectively.

E learning - a suite of safeguarding children courses, provide numerous topics for practitioners to access, including neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse, and wider safeguarding practice matters.

Development of innovative learning materials, including 7 Minute Briefings, 5 Minute Takeaway, Workbooks, videos, spider grams or infographics.

Evaluating the impact of learning

To ensure that local and national learning impacts positively on practice and that changes are embedded, sustainable over time and have the desired effect, monitoring is undertaken to:

- Ensure training courses reflect statutory safeguarding standards and principles.
- Monitor training effectiveness, attendance and impact on practice.
- Quality assure training programmes using Learning Framework and QA Process.
- Actively involve practitioners to obtain meaningful feedback and evaluation.
- Elicit the impact training has had on children, young people and families.
- Ensure the voice of children, young people and families is evident in training.

Key Achievements during 2025-2026

Work undertaken this year included:

- Reviewing membership of the subgroup to achieve maximum engagement and progress against the workplan, including member responsibilities in overseeing non-engagement across partners.
- Progressed the 2025/26 work plan to achieve its ambition responding to legislation and reform.
- Completed quality assurance on WTSC and Basic Introduction to safeguarding single agency refresher courses, ensuring updated material and embedded voice of the child across courses.
- Introduced QA Training Standards process to be delivered across each training package, to strengthen course standards and requirements.
- Expanded our Training Pool with new Trainers, to deliver core safeguarding courses.

What difference has this made?

By delivering a responsive safeguarding training programme we can create a proactive culture of safety across the partnership. This has equipped professionals to confidently identify warning signs, navigate complex safeguarding frameworks and respond promptly to emerging risks and needs. We constantly try to create a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce, so children and families receive timely, appropriate, and effective support from skilled professionals across the partnership, leading to more consistent safeguarding responses across local services.

Workforce development quality assurance processes ensure the training offer is underpinned by recognised training standards and adapts to learning from local and national reviews and audits to better meet the needs of our children.

- Extended agency access to our training website to better respond to training booking demands and support for practitioners
- Commenced review of 7 Minute Briefings to ensure they are updated for professionals
- Delivered Tri-borough training event and supported Practitioner Fortnight targeting the work of RBSCP and courses focused on RBSCP priorities.
- Embedded learning from audits, training evaluations and course requests from agencies into the offer, to ensure responsiveness to need.
- Developed monthly Training summaries and guides for professionals exploring training offer on website, to ensure they can easily identify required, priority and upcoming safeguarding training.

Multi-Agency engagement within the group strengthens consistent standards across agencies, fostering joined-up approaches to safeguarding and risks for children, whilst increasing responsiveness to changing needs and emerging themes.

This directly helps to minimise risk, improve professional confidence and multi-agency collaboration to prevent and protect children from harm and abuse, whilst supporting relational practice to improve the lived experience of children and young people in Rochdale.

Next Steps & Action Plans for 2026/27

- Complete Quality Assurance process, to ensure all courses are audited by Autumn 2026
- Ensure agencies provide assurance that Basic Safeguarding Training courses have been adapted to include new WTSC 2026 changes.
- Following feedback from frontline staff, we will develop more frequent briefing style sessions to provide activity updates from RBSCP
- Complete 7 Minute Briefings reviews to be assured they reflect current themes and references.
- Review course offer for CSA, Elected Home Education, EDDI and themes from LCSPRs.
- Reposition the group and Chair to ensure it fully supports and links effectively to all RBSCP subgroups in respect of learning needs identified through LCSPRs, Audit, Learning Circles etc.
- Deliver Marketplace event to showcase local community and voluntary support services and consider further accessible bitesize sessions.
- Continue to examine training evaluation findings to better evidence practitioner impact in practice improvement
- Staff survey to support development of WFD offer or future workplans.
- Examine learning from LCSRs and SARs to develop targeted learning in 2026-2027, and opportunities for shared learning events.



Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training - End of Year Report 2025-26

Introduction

Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Board/Partnership are responsible for agreeing how organisations in the borough will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

The RBSAB/RBSCP Training Strategy describes how high-quality training will be provided to enable staff and volunteers to work effectively across boundaries and organisations.

This report outlines the delivery of the Training Strategy for the financial year 2025-26, covering the attendance at multi agency training, partnership engagement, course evaluation and the impact that the training has had on practice. The findings are reported directly to both Board and Partnership.

It should be noted that the multi-agency training programme would not be possible without the extensive contributions of partner agencies and the commitment of Multi Agency Safeguarding Training Pool members.

Single Agency Training

All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their workforce is competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect. Employers and voluntary groups must ensure their workers and volunteers know how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns, including signs of possible maltreatment. This knowledge and expertise should be put into place before practitioners attend multi-agency safeguarding training.

The RBSCP/AB have produced minimum standards and core areas to be covered within single agency training. These were updated during 2025-26. It is the responsibility of the individual agency / organisation to ensure that their in-house safeguarding training meets these requirements.

Multi Agency Training Pool

The Multi Agency Training Pool is made up of experienced practitioners who work in Rochdale and are released by their agency to deliver multi agency safeguarding courses. During 2025-26 around 35 members, from a wide range of partner services, delivered training.

The RBSB Development Officer also supported individual course development and co-ordinated update sessions with small groups of trainers.

The RBSB training delivery would not be possible without the generous input of the Training Pool members.

Training Offer 2025-26

During 2025-26, 41 different courses were available within the RBSB Multi Agency Training offer. Which was an increase from 35 courses last year. Many of these were presented multiple times. The total number of individual courses delivered was 102.

Allegations Management (Adults)	Modern Slavery and Trafficking
Allegations Management/ Safer Working Practices / The work of the LADO.	Motivational Interviewing and the Cycle of Change
Basic Substance Abuse Awareness	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Duty To Co-Operate training
Bruising on Babies and Children	Neglect and Emotional Abuse
Child Sexual Abuse	Parenting Principles
Children Missing From Home	Personality Disorder training
Complex Safeguarding: Responding to Child Exploitation	Reducing Parental Conflict
County Lines	Responsiveness to Hidden Harm
Cuckooing/ Home Invasion	Role of the Lead Professional in Early Help Assessments
Cultural Humility	Safer Sleep for Babies and Coping with Infant Crying
Cumulative Effects of Harm	Stalking
Domestic Abuse Awareness	Self-Neglect and Hoarding
Domestic Abuse – Engaging with those who harm	Substance Use - Ketamine
Early Help Training	Substance Use – Nitrous Oxide
“Honour” Based Abuse	Substance Use - Young People, THC and Synthetic Cannabinoids
Intra familial sexual abuse	Trafficking and Modern Slavery
Loneliness Reduction	Trauma Responsiveness to Hidden Harm
Male Victims of Domestic Abuse	The Stressed Out Brainw
MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) training	Violence Against Women and Girls
Mental Capacity Act/ Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards	Working Together to Safeguard Children
Mental Capacity Act – Tri-Borough Event	

The majority of these courses are provided by the Safeguarding Board/Partnership but the list also includes a few courses that are provided by partner colleagues who use the Board/Partnership website to advertise and administer their training to partners.

Changes from the previous year

- Following the success of the **Mental Capacity Act tri-Borough training** last year, the event was re-run in partnership with Bury and Oldham SABs

- New courses** added to the training programme include:
 - Basic Introduction to Substance Abuse Awareness.**
 - Cultural Competency.**
 - Male Victims of Domestic Abuse.**
 - Motivational Interviewing and the Cycle of Change.**
 - Responsiveness to Hidden Harm.**
 - Role of the Lead Professional in Early Help Assessments.**
 - Trauma Responsiveness to Hidden Harm.**
- Four new **7 Minute Briefings** created:
 - Allegations Management.**
 - Allegations Management Lead.**
 - Cuckooing.**
 - Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.**
- The updating of all existing Seven Minute Briefings by subject areas has begun.
- Three monthly follow-up evaluations have been reintroduced to establish the impact training has on children and families.
- Introduce Quality Assurance process to ensure all courses advertised meet minimum standards.
- RBSCP Members Induction Pack has been updated.
- Non-attendance data is now monitored by RBSCP Learning and Development Group.

Changes have been led by:

- Disseminating learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews, highlight recommendations and promote associated training from local and national reviews.
- National and local initiatives, research and developments.
- Consideration of the data in the Training Needs Analysis.
- Evaluations from participants.
- Evaluations from trainers.
- Requests from partner agencies.
- Anticipated new legislation and publication of WTSC 2026

Take-up of training offer 2025 -26

Agency	Numbers / Previous Year
Adult Care RBC	123/38
Children's Social Care RBC	178/99
Early Help & Schools (includes academies / private schools)	246/250
Foster Carer	0/1
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue	0/0
GM Police	7/1
GP Surgery	2/5
Hopwood Hall College	75/42
Integrated Commissioning Board	7/NR
Northern Care Alliance	172/76
Pennine Care Foundation Trust	87/40
Private sector (e.g. residential care, adult carer groups, child minders, nurseries)	83/64
Probation Service	2/0
Public / Other/ Not stated	436/295
Rochdale Boroughwide Housing	6/NR
Safer Communities Partnership	3/1
Voluntary sector groups	101/99
TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTENDANCES	1528/1013

NR = Not Recorded

RBSB training places taken up, by year	
2017/18	1494
2018/19	1386
2019/20	** 799
2020/21	** 637
2021/22	1052
2022/23	882
2023/24	***1547
2024/5	****1013
2025/6	***1528

- * Peaks in these years denote multi- agency work around raising awareness of CSE with children, young people and professionals.
- ** Dips in these years relate to the pandemic and the disruptive effect it had on safeguarding training.
- *** Based on booking figures only, as attendance figures are not available
- **** Minimum figure, as some attendance was not recorded.

Additional Learning and Development Activity

In respect of workforce development activity, reference also needs to be made to the 7-minute briefings, workbooks, factsheets and videos that are produced and available on the RBSCP/AB website. The site also carries links to externally provided e-learning.

In addition, RBSCP contributes to the CSC Practice Fortnight each year. This year many courses were linked to the priority areas, see below, as well as session delivered to frontline staff across agencies on the role and function of RBSCP, recent activity and priorities, the importance of learning and the RBSCP training offer. Feedback from the session was positive with staff asking for more direct contact and briefings from the RBSCP Unit. A total of 91 people from 11 agencies attended the RBSCP Briefing.

On 19th November 2025 the Safeguarding Boards in Rochdale, Oldham and Bury jointly held an event around the complexities of the Mental Capacity Act.

This was a re-run of a successful event in 2024. The main speaker was Neil Allen, (Senior Lecturer at the University of Manchester and Barrister). A senior officer from each of the boroughs also presented a case study from their areas, together with the learning that came from it, and showcased the resources that each Board had produced to enhance MCA understanding. The event was open to 180 practitioners across the three boroughs.

The RBSCP makes use of materials from Research in Practice and the Centre of Expertise in Child Sexual Abuse in compiling our training course content, and we signpost people to these resources to ensure the sharing of up-to-date information and professional conduct.

Information is also conveyed by the social media activity on the two Facebook pages, one for the RBSCP and one for the RBSAB. These will be reviewed in 2026/27.

Priority Areas

The RBSCP Priority areas within the current RBSCP Business Plan are Child Sexual Abuse, Neglect and Domestic Abuse. The training offer reflects these priorities as follows:

Child Sexual Abuse

- Two courses form part of our training programme
 - Child Sexual Abuse - delivered three times to 45 people this year.
 - Intra-Familial Sexual Abuse – delivered twice to 34 people this year.

CSA is also referenced in our Working Together to Safeguard Children course, and the “Complex Safeguarding: Responding to Child Exploitation” training. We use materials from the CSA Centre of Expertise and signpost people to their resources. An Adultification factsheet is published, and a CSA video is also on the RBSCP website.

Neglect

The RBSCP / RBSAB website carries a link to Government Neglect resources and has Neglect training videos and & minute briefings available for staff.

- Neglect and Emotional Abuse course – delivered twice to 38 people this year.

Domestic Abuse

There is a link on the website to a Domestic Abuse video, and a Workbook for people to work through at their own pace. Three training courses are available:

- Domestic Abuse Awareness – delivered twice to 38 people this year.
 - Male Victims of Domestic Abuse – delivered twice to 28 people this year
 - DA: Engaging with those who Harm - delivered once to 12 people this year.

Actions for 2026 - 27

- The Quality Assurance process will continue, to ensure all courses are audited by Autumn 2026.
- All Seven Minute Briefings will be reviewed and updated by subject experts.
- The Child Sexual Abuse course will be extended from half a day’s training to a full day and will incorporate content from the Intra-Familial Sexual Abuse course.
- A new page will be created on the website with information and resources on Elective Home Education.
- A new QA Scorecard will be introduced to evaluate training arrangements.

Feedback

Below is a sample of the comments that have been received from course attendees:

- “The trainers were very knowledgeable about the subject and they created a relaxed atmosphere, encouraging all parties to be involved in the conversations held”
- “A great opportunity to network with other agencies I may not have heard of that could help those lonely and vulnerable.”
- “The conversational way this training was delivered was engaging and gave room for professional conversation.”
- “The trainers were great and seemed really passionate about what they do. The layout of the training was great, it flowed very well. Thank you!”
- “It was very influential and informative”
- “It was a great training session”
- “Well presented with good detail”
- “The trainer was very well informed and answered all questions really well. It was nice to speak to other agencies and hear the various approaches to handling different scenarios”
- “Well delivered, understandable and relatable, person centred”
- “I really enjoyed the course yesterday and felt the trainers’ delivery style really complemented each other. I also liked the mix of slides, videos and group exercises throughout the day. Thank you”
- “I think the training was really informative and interesting.”
- “Really well delivered- thanks again!”
- “Clear trainers with good examples and a depth of knowledge”
- “The trainers were very knowledgeable about the subject matter and lots of experience”
- “Knowledgeable speakers, in depth information on policies /processed / definitions etc”
- “Good, varied professionals attending the course, nice mix of the MDTs. Interesting to hear stories and related back to own our experiences.”
- “Delivered by knowledgeable professionals who currently work within relevant roles”

Impact

Three months after attending a training session, each participant is contacted to explore how the training has impacted both their practice and the lives of the children, young people and adults that they work with. Attendees report that:

“Since the training I have been the lead professional on five Early Helps and feel that it helped to improve my confidence greatly. In my previous role I had only initiated and led on two Early Helps and didn’t feel as confident doing so. I feel more confident in asking other professionals to support with minute taking and sending out minutes after the meetings”.

“I have been able to support parents to gain the support that they need for their children’s additional needs and their own emotional wellbeing. I have also been able to refer to services that support in the family home and used a multi-agency approach to ensure that we are all doing our part to support the family. I feel much more confident in delegating actions to different professionals. I feel that it has enabled me to develop positive relationships with school and to ensure that children are receiving the correct support, so they are able to thrive in their lessons and at home”.

“Some of the advice provided at the training was to print off EHA to take to the meetings and I feel this really helps me to visualise which parts of the action plans have not yet been completed and need actioning.”

“The training has been used in day-to-day practice and has been useful when dealing with cases that need other agency involvement. It has made me question children’s wellbeing differently and monitor individuals closely to check in regularly. The importance of building relationship with the child’s family. The training provided clear tools to help in various situations, and I really enjoyed hearing other people’s perceptions of safeguarding in different environments of work such as colleges, secondary school etc. I particularly got a lot from the scenarios and examples of cases to then considered next steps in safeguarding.”

“I have had a successful self-neglect and hoarding case I have worked on for a long time, the main thing I learned initially was it is important to build a relationship so trust can be established.

This worked well. I used a trauma-informed, strength and rights-based approach, and I empowered the lady to make decisions at her own pace.”

“I have used my knowledge around self-neglect and hoarding into my day-to-day practice by looking at multi-agency working sooner. A lot of individuals who hoard and self-neglect have complex issues which require an MDT approach sooner to help resolve a number of issues and this also allows them to engage with someone they feel comfortable and familiar with.

“The training enriched my knowledge around the various signposting agencies available that could help support the adults with care and support needs to self-refer or agree to be referred to. This can help them deal with a variety of issues simultaneously so that they are not overwhelmed and refuse support. I was made aware of the self-hoarding scale that can be used to determine the level of risk associated to the amount of hoarding in the service user’s house. This was really useful to know as it can help support future discussions, referrals, risk management tools etc.”

“Following this training, I have been able to look beyond the individual’s primary support reason i.e. self-neglect and instead think if there was a reason for the self-neglect i.e. feeling isolated or lack of social interaction. The training has encouraged me to explore my own professional curiosity.”



12. Voice of Children and Families

During 2025 - 2026, RBSCP has spent focused time with Participating People to strengthen the Participation and Voice framework, principles and emerging approach. Activity this year has been to develop a Baby, Child, Young Person and Family Participation and Voice Strategy to be launched in 2026/27 and has included:

- Identifying 16 Strategic Voice Champions across the partnership
- Training the cross-agency network of Champions with Participating People
- Mapped where voice currently exists across the system with the champions and the full RBSCP in mapping workshops.

Workshops were designed to move beyond feedback, into shared understanding, honest reflection, and co-designed solutions. Work will continue into 2026/27 to explore and include:

- The emerging Participation & Voice Framework
- A proposed set of principles and non-negotiables
- The role of Lundy’s Model as a quality assurance and system tool
- A draft feedback loop model
- Initial strategic priorities

Strategic Voice Champions will play a key role in embedding the work by acting as:

- Listeners – noticing and valuing voice
- Connectors – linking insight across services
- Culture carriers – modelling good participation practice

Their role is not to lead all participation, but to:

Strengthen consistency	Challenging variation in practice where participation depends on “who you get” and supporting teams to apply consistent standards.
Make voice visible	Ensuring what children, young people and families say is clearly captured, shared, not lost between services or stages of decision-making.
Close the feedback loop	Prompting and supporting teams to ensure that feedback is planned, delivered and understood — not left incomplete or informal.
Support honest practice	Encouraging transparency about what can and cannot change, and modelling clear, direct communication with children, young people and families.
Spot & escalate gaps	Identifying where voice is being gathered but not acted on, and escalating patterns or risks through appropriate governance routes.
Embed reflection into practice	Supporting teams to regularly reflect on: - What was heard - What changed - What didn’t — and why

We are hearing a consistent and powerful message emerging that says -

“It’s not about speaking — it’s about what happens after.”

Initial feedback from professionals in the diagnostic workshops clearly tells us that we have systems in place that help children, young people and families to share their views, experiences and suggestions. The majority are speaking up and are sharing their experiences, but the issue is what happens next and what we are doing about hearing from those not able to speak up.

From April 2026 we will roll out a diagnostic tool across RBSCP frontline practitioners to achieve a strong understanding of frontline participation and engagement, and we also plan to facilitate three intergenerational co-production workshops with:

- children and young people
- parents and carers
- multi-agency professionals

We hope to learn how effective we are in respect of:

- Trusted relationships (“same face, same place”)
- Feeling listened to, validated and not judged
- Flexible, accessible and relational support
- Professional responses and feedback after views are shared
- Do children young people and families feel they repeat their stories
- Consistency of responses and understanding decisions made
- Voice being fully captured and not interpreted

This will allow us to develop a road map where we understand our strengths and where we need to improve across the system so that trust is not lost. We aim to improve system design and accountability in response to initial findings that tell us Rochdale is:

- Voice-rich - there is a significant amount of voice being gathered
- But often influence is inconsistent - voice does not always lead to visible action

Next steps are to develop the RBSCP Participation and Voice Strategy 2026/27. We know we do not need to create more participation activities or approaches, but to ensure voice consistently leads to influence, action and feedback. It is important to note that these developments also closely align with Fairness and Belonging Framework that is being launched in April 2026 across the Northwest.

Lundy’s Model (Space, Voice, Audience, Influence) provides the foundation for Rochdale’s approach, which needs to be applied not just as theory, but as a system framework, a quality assurance tool and a set of shared principles for practice. Going forward into the next stage of development, RBSCP need to ensure that children, young people and families safely share their experiences because we know:

- Trust comes before voice
- Safety is created through action, not reassurance
- Silence does not mean absence of voice

In Rochdale we will ensure the Strategy and consistent approach developed will ensure:

- Participation is safe, inclusive and accessible
- Multiple ways to share views must be available
- Relationships are central to effective participation

The next stage of development, through the co-production workshops, will be to identify strategic priorities. Initial insights & strategic workshops suggest these are likely to be around:

- Strengthening how voice leads to influence
- Building consistency across the system
- Embed strong feedback loops
- Design clear pathways for voice
- Ensure inclusive participation

This will assist us to focus activity in 2026/27 in respect of:

- Refine the Participation & Voice Framework
- Develop a clear Action Plan (roles, responsibilities, timelines)
- Test with additional stakeholders where needed
- Prepare for RBSCP sign-off and implementation

13. Partner Safeguarding Overview and Impact 2025/26

Whilst there is strong commitment to the RBSCP and the associated meetings and subgroups, as identified in Section 6, there has also been significant work undertaken by partner agencies to support the priorities and safeguarding developments for children and families in the Rochdale Borough.

Each partner provided an update on how they have contributed to the RBSCP Business Plan Priorities from their specific area of delivery. Thus, offering evidence to strengthen the broader safeguarding impact for children and families of Rochdale. The information below highlights the 2025/2026 safeguarding activities from the respective partner agencies:

Greater Manchester Police

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

GMP Rochdale continues to prioritise the identification and safeguarding of children experiencing neglect and domestic abuse through frontline response, structured triage, and effective multi-agency information sharing. **The Domestic Abuse / Vulnerability / Child Protection (DA/VA/CP) triage function** remains central to assessing risk and directing timely referrals. However, sustained demand continues to present challenges in timeliness and capacity.

Performance in **Operation Encompass** has improved significantly, ensuring schools receive timely information to support children exposed to domestic abuse and enabling earlier intervention.

The introduction of the **Vulnerability CORE** has strengthened oversight and consistency across vulnerability strands, including domestic abuse and neglect, through improved coordination, governance, and performance monitoring.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a core priority, with GMP Rochdale delivering activity across prevention, identification, investigation, and offender management.

This work is aligned to the **2026 Vulnerability Strategy**, embedding a **victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led approach**, with a strong emphasis on professional curiosity, early identification, and proactive disruption of offenders. Operational activity includes:

- Robust investigation of CSA offences through dedicated **Child Protection Investigation Units (CPIU)**.
- Increased use of **Police Protection Powers** to identify and disrupt high-risk offenders

- Strengthened **suspect management and use of preventative orders**.
- Delivery of **awareness and training** to improve recognition of complex abuse, including intra-familial cases.

The introduction of the **Vulnerability CORE** has enhanced the CSA response by:

- Providing **centralised oversight and standardisation (SOPs)**
- Improving **tasking, tracking, and accountability**
- Delivering **specialist support and guidance to districts**
- Strengthening **audit and assurance processes**

A multi-agency CSA Strategic Group has also been established to improve understanding of local trends, strengthen data, and ensure learning informs practice.

GMP engagement in **EHASH** and the **Families First Partnership** supports early identification, whole-family working, and coordinated safeguarding responses.

Other key developments achieved during 2025/26 that have made a difference to the lives of children.

- Establishment of the **Vulnerability CORE**, improving coordination, governance, and consistency across all vulnerability strands
- Development of **standardised SOPs** aligned to national guidance and inspection frameworks
- Development of the **Learning Skills Hub and Child Protection E-book**, providing accessible strategic and operational guidance across all areas including CSA, neglect, and domestic abuse
- Delivery and expansion of multi-agency safeguarding training, improving shared understanding and frontline capability
- Formation of the **CSA Strategic Group**, strengthening strategic oversight and response
- Continued development of **Families First Partnership** model, supporting early intervention and whole-family safeguarding
- Improved **data quality and offender profiling**, supporting intelligence-led safeguarding activity
- Preparation for **DARA Plus rollout** to enhance domestic abuse risk assessment
- Ongoing **multi-agency audits**, including greater incorporation of child & family voice.

Evidence of the impact these activities have had for local children & families.

- Improved identification of CSA and neglect, particularly in complex and hidden cases, through enhanced training, professional curiosity, and multi-agency information sharing.
- More effective offender disruption and management, reducing opportunity for harm through PPOs and intelligence-led activity.
- Greater consistency in safeguarding practice, supported by Vulnerability CORE governance, SOPs, and audit processes.
- Enhanced timeliness and quality of information sharing, particularly through improved Operation Encompass compliance and EHASH processes.
- Increased frontline confidence and capability, supported by the Learning Skills Hub, Child Protection e-book, and multi-agency training.
- Stronger multi-agency collaboration, resulting in earlier intervention and more coordinated safeguarding responses.
- Improved incorporation of the child and family voice, influencing safeguarding interventions and service development.
- Strengthened strategic understanding of CSA, through development of the CSA Strategic Group and improved data.

Next Steps and Plans for 2026/27

Priorities

- Further strengthen the multi-agency response to CSA, embedding the CSA Strategic Group and developing a clear delivery plan.
- Enhance capability to respond to online and technologically enabled CSA, including encrypted platforms.
- Embed Vulnerability CORE operating model, ensuring consistent standards and sustained improvement across all districts.
- Continue development of Families First Partnership, supporting earlier intervention and whole-family approaches.

- Support full implementation and evaluation of DARA Plus.
- Address demand and capacity within triage, improving timeliness and consistency.
- Expand multi-agency training programmes, particularly in emerging CSA themes.
- Enhance frontline awareness, compliance, and professional curiosity.

Governance and Partnership Development

- Expand multi-agency audit programmes, including targeted CSA audits.
- Strengthen data quality and performance frameworks to better understand CSA prevalence and outcomes.
- Continue development of multi-agency safeguarding models, including MACPT.
- Enhance strategic oversight in key areas, including Honour-Based Abuse.

Operational and Workforce Development

- Promote and develop use of the Learning Skills Hub and CP E-book, ensuring they remain current and widely utilised.

- Monitor the impact of CPIU shift pattern changes on partnership working.

System-Wide Challenges

- Improve compliance and consistency in Operation Encompass.
- Work with partners to address criminal justice delays and outcomes for CSA cases.
- Strengthen early identification pathways via EHASH and partnership arrangements.

Rochdale Borough Council – Children’s Social Care Services

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

In Rochdale Borough Council, Children’s Social Care Services support children and families in respect of responding to risk and need. This involved children who require targeted early help, child in need of help and children who require safeguarding and protection. As corporate parents Children’s Services also support our children who are cared for and our care experienced young people. Throughout the service offers, Children’s Services assess children and provide planned intervention and support in respect of Neglect, CSA and children affected by Domestic Abuse.

Our strong practice standards ensure a consistent approach to all children, young people and families in Rochdale. Children’s Social Care Services offer a diverse range of work force development, complementing the existing multi agency offer by RBSCP.

The Children’s Services Workforce Development Team delivers training through four core programmes: the Social Work Student Academy, ASYE Academy, Core Skills and Knowledge Programme, and Wider Service Programme. The key safeguarding themes of child sexual abuse (CSA), neglect, domestic abuse and the voice of the child, are embedded across these programmes. In addition, standalone training is available on both CSA and the voice of the child. A session on neglect was delivered within the Children’s Services Practice Fortnight in March 2026 and is also included within the Basic Introduction to Safeguarding programme. Domestic Abuse training is currently delivered by Domestic Abuse Leads within the Communities Directorate.

Further investment in CSA capability is planned for 2026/27 through the CSA Centre’s training offer. This will provide specialist training for a further five managers and 12 practice leads across the service, in addition to the two practice leads already trained.

Frontline practitioners and managers are fully trained and responsive to all such forms of harm and abuse, which are central to the core children’s services offer. In addition, specialist services also support these RBSCP priorities including Youth Justice Service and Complex Safeguarding. Our work is underpinned by a practice model of relational practice, and we utilise motivational interviewing to assist us with engaging families in developing their own solutions to the problems they are facing

Children’s Services involvement is overseen by IRO & CP Chair Services that facilitate the Child Protection and Cared For services to ensure multi agency collaborative work to ensure children thrive and grow. In addition, Rochdale has strong CDOP and LADO arrangement in place that support children through understanding child deaths and the statutory role of effective allegation management processes.



Neglect

- Earlier identification of neglect:
 - The introduction of the neglect screening tool and strengthened front door arrangements has led to earlier recognition of neglect, particularly where harm is cumulative rather than acute.
- Universal manager oversight in EHASH has reduced variability and ensured that all referrals are informed by full historical context, leading to more accurate threshold decisions.
- Stronger responses to cumulative harm - Increased focus on patterns of neglect has resulted in:
 - o Earlier escalation in cases of concern
 - o More timely progression to Legal Gateway Panel where required
 - o More decisive protective action for children
- Improved safety planning: - multi-agency use of the neglect screening tool has supported more consistent and robust safety planning, ensuring risks are clearly identified and addressed.
- Stronger partnership working and shared datasets have improved collective understanding of neglect, enabling more coordinated responses and shared accountability.
- Neglect is often embedded in referrals that come in for Domestic Abuse and practitioners are trained to identify the differing forms of Neglect and the harm it causes through holistic assessments that understand historic incidents, cumulation and impact.

The introduction of the Family Safeguarding model assists to co-produce children's plans with engagement from families to assist them to understand the impact of their actions on their children.

Our Youth Justice Service focus on supporting children to prevent entry into the criminal justice system, and also those who become involved in it, often due to behaviours rooted in neglect, trauma, or exploitation. Complex Safeguarding Services tackle non-traditional forms of harm like criminal exploitation, trafficking, and abuse that occur outside the home.

These services work effectively through identifying hidden harm using Child First principles, early intervention and diversion, multi-agency collaboration and trauma informed care.

Child Sexual Abuse

Within children services we have been continuing to ensure that improving our recognition and response to child sexual abuse. We know that our response to child sexual exploitation is well developed and independent review has demonstrated that our practice in this area is strong. With regards to child sexual abuse within the family we have engaged with the Northwest Regional Improvement Programme and supported the training and development of two practice leads for the service. These practice leads are providing training and development for our workforce.

We have utilised the approaches of the National Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual abuse and all of our workforce have access to the centre's resources and toolkit to support recognition and assessment. We have developed a child sexual abuse Think Space which enable practitioners to meet with our practice leads to think about individual cases and situations where they are either worried about sexual abuse or think they might be seeing sexual abuse but are unsure how to proceed. We are engaging with the Centre of Expertise's roll out of further e-learning and developing a larger network of child sexual abuse practice leads across the service. The development of these reflective practice opportunities, including the "Think Space" are supporting professional curiosity and discussion.

This work is multi agency and is replicated across Partners to ensure a consistent baseline and reference point for all aspects of CSA and Harmful Sexual Behaviour. Across Children's Service practitioners respond to children and young people who have been victim to CSA, but also children who display trauma indicative behaviours, including harmful sexual behaviour. Practitioners support children who have experienced familial and non-familial CSA to protect them and support them through trauma-informed practice.



Our Youth Justice Service focus on supporting children to prevent entry into the criminal justice system, and also those who become involved in it, often due to behaviours rooted in neglect, trauma, or exploitation. Complex Safeguarding Services tackle non-traditional forms of harm including CSA that occurs outside the home. Early identification and diversion from criminalisation is central to this work, that is founded through collaborative, trauma informed, relational and restorative practice that ensure children being exploited or abused are treated and recognised as victims. Specialist services within complex safeguarding and youth justice support children affected by child sexual exploitation and missing from home, which is overseen by the Complex Safeguarding Board.

We have seen an increased awareness of CSA and practitioners demonstrate ability to identify more overt forms of CSA. The use of reflective space (e.g. Think Space) is beginning to improve professional curiosity and support discussion of complex cases. We know we have more to do as we still have relatively low numbers of CSA cases within Child Protection Plans, suggesting under-identification.

Also feedback from practitioners continues to highlight low confidence in talking to children about CSA and an overreliance on child disclosure. Children's Services continues to contribute to the RBSCP CSA Working Group to co-ordinate the CSA activity across the partnership, to identify the CSA road travelled and next steps of the journey.

Domestic Abuse.

Senior member of Children's Service sit on the Community Safety Partnership and are involved in the Children's DA subgroup, that has assisted to complete the JTAI self-assessment and associated action plan to strengthen focus of the impact of DA on children, recognising children as victims in their own right.

Our Youth Justice Service focus on supporting children to prevent entry into the criminal justice system, and also those who become involved in it, oft often due to behaviours shaped by trauma, including exposure to domestic abuse.

In neglect, trauma, or exploitation. Complex Safeguarding Services tackle non-traditional forms of harm like including domestic abuse that occurs in peer relationships, online spaces, or within families.

Recognising the impact of domestic abuse on children's emotional wellbeing, behaviour, and relationships is essential to effectively assess and provide therapeutic support to help children within these services process trauma & build resilience. Thus, diverting children from the criminal justice system and ensuring children affected by domestic abuse are treated as victims, not offenders—especially for adolescent-to-parent violence or harmful behaviours rooted in trauma. Such specialist work involves Child First interventions and specialist training within the workforce on domestic abuse and parental conflict to understand safeguarding processes for children within these services.

Assessment tools for victims and perpetrators of abuse and subsequent training were rolled out across Rochdale Children's Services during 2023-2025. Following from this an assessment of the tools, their usage and impact and training numbers were evaluated in 2025. Bespoke training has been created with specialist services and community safety on engaging with perpetrators, this training covers, behaviours, coercive behaviours (including professional coercion) real case studies where practitioners engage to assess the case and identify professional coercion. The training includes assessing risk including assessing risk for the perpetrator to ensure a safe approach in supporting the whole family Practitioners are trained in DA and able to identify, respond and protect children victim to DA.



Close work is also undertaken through EHASH in respect of Operation Encompass so that children are supported in schools and families open to Children's Services receive support from a specialist section of the Family Safeguarding Model by way of 4 Domestic Abuse Practitioners (DAP workers). The DAP service was introduced in February 2023 as part of Rochdale's Family Safeguarding Model, delivering targeted, trauma-informed domestic abuse interventions to families at Child in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP). Core Objectives are to:

- Reduce risk associated with domestic abuse
- Improve safety and stability for victims and children
- Promote recovery and behaviour change
- Contribute to improved safeguarding thresholds

The area is a key area of focus to evaluate the effectiveness, outcomes, and ongoing development of the Domestic Abuse Practitioner (DAP) service within Rochdale's Family Safeguarding Model. The 1-2-1 approach is personalised and involves specialist support around safety planning, recognising abuse, safety support, boost self-esteem and sustainable change for the family.

Daily Lived Experience and Voice

Children's Services and Children's Social Care have a range of methods in place to ensure that child and family voice is central to our service delivery. All assessments require practitioners to understand and evidence the daily lived experience of children, to fully understand the impact of harm and abuse but also improvements in their daily lives when support and protection is required.



Assessment are expected to have the child's lived experience as central and telling this in the child's own words is our best practice. Cared for Children participate in a wide variety of voice opportunities including the Corporate Parenting Panel. Children and young people participate in their review meetings and IRO/CP Chairs support children to share their voice and experiences throughout their journey with Children's services.

Other key developments achieved during 2025/26 that have made a difference to the lives of children.

During 2025 – 2026 The residential service has been able to create 12 additional places for children to enable more to remain close to their families and networks. We have also maximised occupancy in the services ensuring that children are supported in homes that can meet their needs and create stability across the homes.

In supported accommodation the service has started to ensure young people are securing their own tenancies appropriately to ensure the appropriate young people are supported in internal accommodation for under 18's.

In the edge of care services there has been a drive to develop the skills and training of the staff to ensure they are able to offer support to ensure families remain together. They have developed a successful 12 week multi-disciplinary offer of support to enable families to create and execute their own plans.

The service is also leading on Family Group Decision Making which incorporates Family Group Conferencing but also supports and enables Family Network Meetings

The impact of the service on children and families is significant. Fewer children are cared for outside the Borough than would have been the case prior to the new homes opening. Children remain in internal provision with our well-trained staff who are qualified or are working towards qualifications.

The impact of the service is measured and reported on monthly and the service is also judged annually by the regulator. All the homes that have been inspected are currently judged 'Good'.

There are several Voice Groups across Children's Services and the Families First developments which provide a wealth of information and experience from children across the broad spectrum of services. Children's Services have active members on the RBSCP Participation Group and strategic champions work this year, assisting to co-produce and develop a RBSCP Participation and Voice Strategy for 2026/27.

A supported accommodation panel has been developed and is now embedding. This supports workers to ensure timely plans and ensuring children are able to access suitable long-term accommodation, while ensuring as many young people as possible benefit from the internal supported accommodation.

More families than during the last 18 months are able to be offered a service from highly skilled keyworkers to support them to remain to remain together, where appropriate and safe to do so.

Family Group Decision Making has developed (including the systems to enable) potential Family Help Lead Practitioners to have the skill to support timely intervention that enables families to make their own plans and optimises unification.



Evidence of the impact these activities have had for local children & families.

- Families First developments have played a significant role in strengthening responses to children under the new reform- see separate report.
- Domestic Abuse developments have strengthened the focus on Children being Victims and formulating a focused action plan for further developments in 2026/27.
- CSA Leads and Centre of Expertise work has consolidated pathways to responses and provided practitioners with research-based tools and resources to support children and families
- Children are more likely to receive help before neglect becomes chronic or severe.
- Parents gain a better understanding of how their actions affect their children, which empowers the to support their children and lead to sustained behavioural change.
- Children benefit from clearer, targeted support that addresses their specific needs.
- If a child's situation doesn't improve, timely action can be taken to protect them.
- Children experience greater safety and stability and feel listened to and understood.
- Children's trauma is recognised and they are supported to recover, minimising risk of displaying harmful behaviours because of their harm or abuse.
- Families are supported to effectively respond to their children's harm outside of the home and receive the help to understand and respond to harm.
- Young Person Safety Plans provide a child protection-level response while adopting a trauma-informed, non-blaming approach.
- Children benefit from more consistent and informed CSA responses across cases.
- Children are protected through ongoing oversight and timely escalation of concerns
- Workforce is skilled and equipped to recognise all forms of harm and abuse, to ensure consistent, effective and confident responses to protect children and families.

Next Steps and Plans for 2026/27

- Ongoing development of the Families First arrangements with partners ensuring that children receive help and support at the earliest point by people that they can get to know well.
- Recruit Workforce Development Officer to deliver partnership training on Families First agenda.
- Continue to enhance our participation arrangements and adopt the Partnership Strategy.
- Continue to enhance our practice regarding Neglect, CSA and Domestic Abuse including contributing to the review of the Neglect Strategy and responses to neglect
- Continue to embed CSA Think Spaces and Practice leads across Social Care.

Early Years, Early Help and Neighbourhoods Service

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

Neglect

The Early Help Strategic Board has undertaken an audit in relation to the use of the neglect screening tool which highlighted that this is not widely used or understood, as a result the EHEY&N service delivered a focussed session during practice fortnight focussed on neglect, the inputs from the session have also been used in individual neighbourhoods and at Team meetings with the aim to raise the profile of the tool.

Multi-Agency Early Help training and Lead Professional training is delivered monthly by managers and staff from the service across the borough - 98 practitioners have attended the Early Help Briefings, and 36 practitioners attended the Role of the Lead Professional briefings

We offer 1-1 support to partners to navigate the EHM system, undertake assessments, organise and chair TAF meetings - 185 requests for support have been actioned this year.

Child Sexual Abuse - Staff across the service have received training and been involved in learning circles in relation to sexually harmful behaviour.

All new staff to the service have undertaken mandatory safeguarding training, Teams in the service are aware of and use the CSA Centre of Expertise training and resources to support the early identification of CSA and support children and young people.

Domestic Abuse on Children - Staff from across the service have attended briefings in relation to the new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO). The Single domestic abuse service (SDAS) is established with Head of Service EYEH&N taking part in quarterly commissioning monitoring meetings which includes the ongoing delivery of the "Time for me" group which supports children who have been victims of Domestic abuse.



- Children’s IDVA are based in each neighbourhood at the Family Hubs on a weekly basis to offer individual support to families.
- DASH risk assessments and safety plans are embedded in the EHM commission.
- Early Help assessments explore the impact of relationships with families.
- Specific parenting programmes in relation to separated and separating parents are delivered across the borough. Three 12-week programmes were delivered during 2025-26 - 30 out of 36 parents completed the programme, giving an 83% retention rate. Among those assessed:
- **70% parents reported reduced conflict/improved communication with their ex-partner**
- **70% parents reported improved wellbeing**
- **81% parents reported progress towards personal goals**

The Break4Change programme which works with families where child to parent violence is occurring have taken place across the borough. Of the parents who accessed it 99% stated progress towards achieving their personal goal; 81% reported an improvement in wellbeing; 85% reported an increase in parenting confidence; and 90% reported an improvement in their child’s behaviour.

Support to families regarding relationships begins at antenatal within the Bump, Birth and Beyond Programme delivery which includes an input on how becoming a parent can impact on relationships.

The service has participated in the white ribbon campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse. Leaders and staff from the service have engaged in Violence against Women & Girls VAWG mapping services and highlighting need – further workshops will be ongoing in 2026-27 and will include staff, families, Action Together along with Public Health & Community Safety Partnership are leading on this work. Our Youth Service is involved in the VAWG & Schools group to map need and address need in schools regarding healthy relationships.

Schools and Inclusion

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

During 2025–26, the service prioritised strengthening early identification, improving multi-agency safeguarding responses, and enhancing practice quality across neglect, child sexual abuse (CSA), and the impact of domestic abuse (DA) on children. A strong focus has been placed on early intervention, trauma-informed practice, and integrated locality-based working. Key Priorities and Activity include;

Neglect

- Refreshed neglect strategy and use of graded care profile tools.
- Increased practitioner confidence through training on cumulative harm.
- Stronger partnership working with schools to identify early concerns.
- Embedded “Think Family” approach to consider wider contextual factors.
- Expansion of Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO) for early intervention.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

- Strengthened multi-agency intelligence sharing.
- Embedded trauma-informed, child-centred practice.
- Improved disruption and victim support pathways.
- Enhanced workforce knowledge and professional curiosity.
- Integrated systems to identify risk earlier.

Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

- Recognition of children as victims in their own right.
- Stronger links with domestic abuse services.
- Increased joint visits and risk assessment processes.
- Locality-based working models to coordinate support.
- Improved access to early help and therapeutic services.

Other key developments achieved during 2025/26 that have made a difference to the lives of children.

- Expansion of early help services and locality working.
- LISO supported over 400 children without escalation.
- Strengthened workforce and improved stability.
- Increased participation of children and young people.
- 81% reintegration into mainstream education from alternative provision.
- “Experts at Hand” model providing specialist advice.
- Digital tools improving access and reducing waiting times.

Evidence of the impact these activities have had for local children & families.

- Increased early help reducing statutory demand.
- Improved assessment quality and timeliness.
- Reduction in repeat referrals.
- Positive feedback from families.
- Improved multi-agency collaboration.
- Better identification of hidden harm.
- Reduced exclusions and improved attendance.
- Reduced reliance on high-cost placements.
- Improved financial sustainability through prevention.

Next Steps and Plans for 2026/27

- Embed trauma-informed practice.
- Strengthen data and performance frameworks.
- Develop CSA and extra-familial harm pathways.
- Expand neglect prevention work.
- Enhance the voice of the child.
- Build integrated neighbourhood teams.
- Continue workforce development.
- Expand digital and SEND support models.

Conclusion

2025–26 reflects strong progress toward early intervention, integrated working, and improved safeguarding outcomes. Continued focus on prevention, partnership, and workforce capability will sustain and build upon this progress.

NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care – Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale Locality

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

NHS GM has maintained our statutory duties as an equal statutory safeguarding partner across all ten GM localities, working jointly with Local Authorities and the Police as required by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) for our Safeguarding Children Partnerships. Our Chief Executive is the Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP), and our Chief Clinical Officer is the Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP).

During 2025–26, NHS GM has provided strong system leadership to improve the quality and consistency of multi-agency safeguarding practice, with a focus on early risk identification and effective decision-making. NHS GM has established infrastructures to support learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews and has continued to draw upon national learning, reviewing relevant findings from national panel reports, and independent inquiries. Key themes linked to the RBSCP priorities have been used to support system assurance and learning such as extra familial harm, neglect, sexual abuse and the impact of parental vulnerabilities. These have informed local safeguarding discussions and improvement actions with providers and partners. NHS GM supported system learning and improvement across partnership arrangements.

- Led a system-wide improvement programme to strengthen the quality, consistency and effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding decision-making, including the development of a multi-agency Strategy Meeting SOP aligned to statutory guidance.

- Improved the quality of health contributions to strategy discussions through strengthened governance, clearer expectations for health representation, increased GP engagement and the promotion of impact chronologies to support identification of cumulative harm, neglect, child sexual abuse and domestic abuse.
- Provided strategic leadership through the EHASH Strategic Group, enhancing health information-sharing, clarifying roles and responsibilities, strengthening escalation arrangements and supporting compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements.
- Embedded a programme of monthly multi-agency EHASH audits and assurance activity, using findings and safeguarding review learning to drive continuous improvement in front-door safeguarding processes, partnership working and decision-making

Other key developments that have made a difference to the lives of children and families.

- Strengthened multi-agency safeguarding governance and assurance, ensuring learning from reviews, audits and national inquiries is effectively embedded across the system.
- Enhanced the consistency and effectiveness of strategy discussions through system-wide improvements to governance, health participation and multi-agency decision-making.
- Improved the quality and impact of health contributions to safeguarding processes, including strengthened primary care engagement and information-sharing arrangements.
- Increased oversight, accountability and management of safeguarding risks across NHS GM provider organisations through robust assurance and performance frameworks.
- Translated national and local safeguarding learning into targeted improvement activity, strengthening system responses to vulnerability, cumulative harm and emerging risk.

Evidence of the impact these activities have had for local children & families.

- Improved quality and timeliness of multi-agency safeguarding decision-making through strengthened health participation and information-sharing at strategy meetings.
- Improved timeliness, oversight and quality assurance of Initial Health Assessments, supporting better outcomes for children entering care
- Enhanced identification of cumulative harm, neglect and emerging risk through increased use of impact chronologies and a stronger focus on the child's lived experience.
- Strengthened a culture of continuous learning across the system, with evidence of learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews informing policy, practice and service improvement.
- Greater consistency in multi-agency risk assessment and response, particularly in relation to domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and complex safeguarding concerns.
- Enhanced the quality of safeguarding planning through clearer decision-making, stronger professional accountability and more outcome-focused actions for children and families.

Summary, Next Steps and Plans for 2026/27

During 2025-26 NHS GM continued to safely discharge its statutory duties in relation to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults as outlined in national guidance. The Chief Executive holds organisational safeguarding accountability and is supported by our Executive Lead who was the Chief Nursing Officer until 1st January 2026 when, as part of the ongoing NHS Reforms, this formally transferred to the Chief Clinical Officer. The organisational leads were supported by the Deputy Chief Nurse and the Associate Director of Safeguarding, who provided strategic system leadership and oversight of safeguarding assurance. Statutory safeguarding delivery continued to be supported through the locality Associate Directors of Quality and Safety and delivered by Designated Safeguarding Teams in each of the ten GM localities.

NHS GM recognise the strengthened leadership and improved multi-agency working across Rochdale during 2025/26, which has supported more consistent, child-centred safeguarding practice and better outcomes for children and families. Building on this progress, our collective focus for 2026/27 will be on:

- Delivering and sustaining our shared partnership priorities ensuring that key safeguarding processes are embedded,
- System-wide assurance remains strong while to drive improvement in the quality and impact of safeguarding across the whole partnership.
- Learning is effectively translated into practice,





Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust (PCFT)

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust (PCFT) has a statutory duty to promote the welfare of children and young people and to protect adults at risk of abuse. Safeguarding means protecting a citizen's health, wellbeing, and human rights; enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It is an integral part of providing high-quality health care.

PCFT's Vision is for a happier and more hopeful life for everyone in our communities. This includes safeguarding practices and requires a 'Think Family' approach, as neither children, young people, adults, nor their families and carers exist in isolation.

Safeguarding is central to how the Trust delivers safe, compassionate, and accountable care, and the work reflected in this annual report is aligned with the Trust's values:

Kindness: Evidenced through trauma informed, compassionate safeguarding practice that prioritises the wellbeing and dignity of children and adults at risk.

Fairness: Demonstrated in our commitment to equitable, consistent safeguarding responses that uphold people's rights across all services.

Ingenuity: Shown through ongoing improvements in data insight, governance, and partnership working to enhance safeguarding effectiveness.

Determination: Reflected in the sustained focus on strengthening assurance, driving learning, and continually improving safeguarding standards across the Trust.

The PCFT Annual Report 2025/26 below, summarises the safeguarding activity by the Safeguarding Team to provide assurance to our Executive Board and stakeholders that we are safeguarding our patients, service users and carers, meeting our statutory responsibilities, in line with the Safeguarding Accountability Framework, and the actions we are taking to improve key areas of safeguarding practice. This report also celebrates our achievements and identifies our strategic plans for 2026/27.

www.penninecare.nhs.uk/annualreports

Community Safety, Public Protection & Neighbourhoods

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

PRIORITY - CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE - PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICES

Licensing:

- Safeguarding training is included in induction programmes / coaching session for all applicants intending to be private hire / hackney carriage licence holders.
- Taxi and private hire trade informed of referral mechanisms to relevant safeguarding professionals should they have any concerns of any welfare matters relating to their fare-paying passengers.
- In addition to enhanced DBS checks, information (tested and untested) is also sought from safeguarding professionals / partner agencies to make informed decisions as to whether an applicant is fit and proper to hold the relevant licence at Licensing Panels.
- Attendance at Court by the Licensing Service to defend any licensing appeals which may be of a safeguarding nature.
- Ex-parte licensing hearings and PII applications – are commonly associated with safeguarding information.
- Revocation of licences further to information of a safeguarding nature from GMP / Children's Services, or other professional.
- Attendance at Allegations Management Strategy meetings / Complex Safeguarding meetings / GMP MATT meetings where information is shared to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are put in place.

- Continue to maintain effective working relationships with safeguarding professionals – information / witness statements provided in timely manner to in-house safeguarding professionals and GMP for the effective discharge of their roles / progression of cases through the judicial system
- Corporately, the organisation has an induction process for all staff and volunteers that includes familiarisation with safeguarding policies and procedures.

They understand when and how to raise a safeguarding 'Concern' to Adult Care / Children's Services.

- Regulatory framework, i.e. Licensing Act 2003 / Gambling Act 2005 – promotion of the licensing objectives which includes the protection of children from harm / protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling
- Visits to Licensed Premises (VLP) to ensure licensed venues are adhering and complying with licensing conditions to safeguard children.



Trading Standards

Provide vital disruption and enforcement activity targeted at products that are attractive to young people, which are linked to CSA / CCE.

- **Visits:** 868 including factories, warehouses, shops, market stalls, storage units, restaurants, takeaways. All visits safeguarding indicators are monitored and where necessary referrals into CSC care made.
- **Seizures** - Value of over £8m
- **Enforcement** - 11 closure orders in 12 months all linked to illegal tobacco, organized crime, vapes, underage sales activity for including knives.
- Proactively monitor new areas to identify issues i.e. Aesthetics providers.

Environmental Health

EH Officers undertake routine, proactive and reactive visits to a wide varied of premises linked to environmental matters, such as food standards and hygiene, and statutory nuisance reports. For example, to highlight the scale of premises being inspected over a 12-month period the service carried out:

- 847 Food hygiene inspections
- 71 food sampling visits
- 472 complaints food safety and hygiene investigated
- 1295 noise complaints investigated
- 115 premises disrepair complaints investigated
- Community Safety Officers attend MDT meetings such as MARAC and the Joint Decision-Making Panel (Youth Justice Service) and other information sharing meetings such as individual case conferences can give a good overview of interactions that they have had with the child along with the settings that they have had the interaction.

EH Officers are trained to monitor and assess any safeguarding concerns that would need a referral to CSC, e.g. checks are assessed for living quarters above shops / businesses, evidence of sleeping within premises.

Community Safety – Safer Neighbourhoods Team

- Early interventions and referrals (to the appropriate service such as EHASH) including gathering information from GMP, educational settings such as schools and from agencies such as youth services. Some of the warning markers could be children appearing in the Town Centre on a regular basis going for long periods unsupervised, frequent call outs to the same address or children associating with known offenders.
- As child sexual abuse can happen outside of the home and as part of our duties we look for signs of CSE when out in parks and other open spaces and the transport network. TfGM are a key partner as we carry out such pieces of work. It is important that we maintain a professional curiosity as Community Safety Officers.
- Enforcement work to disrupt perpetrator behaviour such as Closure Orders, Civil Injunctions and Community Protection Notices. Using tools and powers such as Anti-Social Behaviour Warning interviews for young people showing risk taking behaviour helps gather further information around behavioural trends and home life.
- Commission Foundation 92 mentors (x2) who carry out a six-week mentoring programme with young people identified in risk taking behaviour. This intense support is a good platform to gain trust of a young person to a better understand their home life.
- CSOs make timely referrals that include concerns around Domestic Abuse or Criminal Exploitation. This is often done alongside Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
- Community Engagement events where the CSOs are approachable in all of the Townships. We have picked up referrals in the past from these events and have also distributed leaflets as part of wider campaigns involving child abuse or topics such as online grooming. At these events we can offer signposting to specialist support services and or encourage engagement with statutory services.

- Community Safety Officers with concerns around CSE feed into the multi-agency framework and our key strengths are, early intervention, being part of the RBSCP with good access to other services, applying enforcement powers where applicable and relevant and make Community Engagement effective.

Please see separate update on Domestic Abuse Activity for 2025/26.

Evidence of the impact these activities have had for local children & families.

Licensing enforcement (taxis, alcohol, gambling), and community safety.

Impact Evidence

- Taxi licensing standards (DBS checks, safeguarding training) reduce risk of child sexual exploitation during transport.
- Alcohol licensing controls reduce underage access and associated anti-social behaviour affecting families.
- Joint operations (police + councils) disrupt exploitation hotspots.

Indicators under development:

- Number of safeguarding referrals linked to licensing checks
- Compliance rates with taxi safeguarding requirements
- Reduction in youth-related anti-social behaviour incidents

Trading Standards enforcement, scams prevention, fair trading.

Impact evidence:

- Prevention of scams protects vulnerable families from financial hardship.
- Illegal sales enforcement (age-restricted products) reduces access and harm.
- Action against rogue traders prevents exploitation of low-income households.

Indicators under development:

- Financial savings to residents from enforcement (£)
- Number of illegal sales prevented (test purchase results)
- Reduction in reports of doorstep crime affecting families

Early Intervention and Safeguarding Integration

Activity:

Multi-agency working (MASH, safeguarding boards), intelligence sharing

Impact evidence:

- Public Protection officers early identification of neglect, unsafe housing, or CE.
- Referrals made contribute to earlier interventions for at-risk children.
- Holistic support provided through partnership working.

Indicators under development:

- Number of safeguarding referrals from Public Protection / Community Safety.
- Outcomes of referrals (early help vs statutory intervention).
- Case studies demonstrating early identification.

Next Steps and Plans for 2026/27

- Roll out of Trading Standards Intelligence System to other service areas, e.g. Licensing, Environmental Health, Community Safety.
- Assess and consider partnership opportunities within the forthcoming Tobacco and Vapes Bill.
- Serious Violence Partnership (reporting to the Community Safety Partnership) is working to provide a system wide approach and response to youth related serious violence adopting a public health model of early intervention.

Greater Manchester Probation Service: Rochdale

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

Increase in the volume of home visits undertaken within the last 12 months, allowing for observations of any vulnerabilities or safeguarding concerns within the homes of where people on probation are resident.

Co-ordination of collaborative multi-agency risk management planning for all

Roadshow in 2025 focusing on incorporating safeguarding information into risk management plans.

Focus on ensuring social histories of individuals are known and capturing of care experience for people on probation within registration flags,

allowing for assessment of need and reasonable adjustments required to facilitate their participation in supervision.

Implementation of monthly commencement audits with a specific focus on the completion of checks and how information gathered then features in the person's risk assessment, management plan and sentence plan.

Work with serious organised crime colleagues to facilitate greater information sharing pertaining to child criminal exploitation, working to ensure protections are in place during custodial periods to disrupt onward coercion.



Other key developments achieved during 2025/26 that have made a difference to the lives of children.

All safeguarding screening checks are now undertaken by a central Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Team (DASIT). Whilst this has led to a temporary withdrawal of a co-located staff member, this provides Children's Services with the immediate access to probation for screening, moreover continues to remove the burden from their team for processing information requests from probation to check on known/unknown persons.

Ongoing presence at MAPPA (both within the district and external) for all those convicted of non-recent sexual offences against children. Continuous challenge to the perspective of meaningfulness and

risk when assessing contact with children by those in custody and upon release, placing the impact on the child and benefits to them at the centre of this.

Ongoing information sharing re those who have committed sexual offences against children, within the above context, at the non-recent investigations/complex safeguarding meeting.

Safeguarding and domestic abuse checks central to the assessment of all cases subject to early release from custody under easement measures introduced in respect to prison capacity.

Evidence of the impact these activities have had for local children & families.

Assessment outcomes which focus on the benefit to the child of contact with those who may not serve as a pro-social influence pertaining to onward offending justifications.

Strength of oversight of MAPPA cases with the inclusion of prohibitive measures to safeguard being central to safety planning.

Engagement with probation's 'Think Child' campaign: this year we engaged with a series of online child safeguarding events which raise staff awareness of their unique role in supporting the wellbeing of children whose lives are impacted by the behaviour of individuals in our care or under our supervision.

The campaign provides an opportunity for staff to listen to children directly. Including [children talking about their experience of prison visits, having a parent who is in prison or on probation](#), and receiving visits from professionals at home.

With the support of **Time Matters UK**, we have been listening to children to shape the way we deliver our services, and have supported them to develop:

- a leaflet designed for children which explains what being on probation involves:
- a leaflet inspired by children's views on how best Probation staff can engage children during prison and home visits.

Both materials have been co-produced with children with lived experience.

We have also partnered with Time Matters UK to promote the use of [Child Impact Assessments](#): a questionnaire which HMPPS staff and practitioners across agencies can use with children who have a parent in prison or on probation. The assessment ensures children are listened to and helps professionals understand children's needs. Separate child impact assessments are available for mums and dads.

[DAD Child Impact Assessment](#)

[MUM Child Impact Assessment](#)

Probation staff can request for professionals who work directly with the affected child (social workers, teachers etc...) to complete the assessment with the child.

Next Steps and Plans for 2026/27

Provision to be established for wider information sharing within the new Families First structures.

Continued monitoring of mandatory training for all staff and additional specialist training for practitioners.

Despite having made progress, we recognise there is more we can do to create a culture of listening to children and using their views to shape our services, for example improving their experience of prison visits. Therefore, we will continue to embed impact assessments.

Adult Social Care

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

- | | |
|---|--|
| -Ongoing engagement between Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and wider stakeholders has strengthened relationships and how Rochdale support children, young people and families to prepare for Adulthood. | A delivery plan has been set out with key priorities including a multi-agency referral/case discussion meeting and review of pathways and systems. |
| -Task and finish Group are in situ to consider gaps and areas of development in regard to transitional and complex safeguarding. | -There in regular attendance from ASC and Sunrise team at the Greater Manchester Transitional Safeguarding Group to share ideas, reflect and consider best practice across region. |

Other key developments achieved during 2025/26 that have made a difference to the lives of children.

The Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Strategy has been developed to address identified gaps in transition outcomes for young people with care and support needs, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).	This strategy is closely aligned with the Raising Rochdale Supporting SEND children, young people, and families plan, which outlines Rochdale's commitment to ensuring that all children and young people achieve their full potential.
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Evidence of the impact these activities have had for local children & families.

Clear plans in place and set out within the PFA strategy to improve Rochdale's preparing for Adulthood offer, with a key priority for keeping children and young people safe.

Next Steps and Plans for 2026/27

RBSCP & RBSAB Support Service Showcase event is planned for June 2026 to promote Children's and Adult's services across Rochdale.



HMP Buckley Hall

RBSCP Priorities 2025-26

HMP Buckley Hall is a Category C adult male prison and does not hold individuals convicted of sexual offences. However, the establishment recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond offence type and include children who visit the prison, maintain family contact, or are affected by parental imprisonment. During 2025–26, safeguarding activity has focused on early identification of risk, information sharing, and re-establishing links with Rochdale Children's partnership.

Neglect

The prison strengthened its approach to identifying neglect by embedding professional curiosity within safeguarding practice. Staff were encouraged to explore children's living arrangements, care provision and unmet needs when information was shared by prisoners or observed during visits. Clear referral pathways were reinforced so that concerns relating to emerging need could be referred through **Family Help / Early Help**, rather than waiting for escalation to statutory thresholds.

Designated Safeguarding Leads ensured that neglect concerns were assessed proportionately and that referrals were made promptly to the child's home local authority.

Child Sexual Abuse

(CSA) Although Buckley Hall does not hold individuals convicted of sexual offences, the prison recognised the relevance of CSA safeguarding through disclosures of historical abuse and the impact such trauma can have on parenting capacity and family relationships.

Staff received guidance on trauma informed responses to CSA disclosures and were reminded of the importance of accurate recording and appropriate information sharing.

Where CSA related information was identified, the prison worked with partner agencies to ensure safeguarding intelligence contributed to trauma informed practice and referral to support networks.

Domestic abuse

Was identified as a key safeguarding theme during 2025–26. The prison reinforced the principle that children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right. Systems were strengthened to ensure that domestic abuse related information gathered in custody was recorded accurately and shared lawfully with safeguarding partners, supporting effective safety planning for children and families.

Safeguarding practice emphasised that risks may continue during imprisonment, including coercive control by proxy and emotional harm, and that prison based intelligence plays an important role in multi agency risk management. We continue to undertake offence related monitoring to ensure partners and families are protected.

Other key developments achieved during 2025/26 that have made a difference to the lives of children.

- Review and strengthening of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, explicitly aligning with Rochdale safeguarding priorities
- Enhanced staff awareness of professional curiosity and safeguarding thresholds
- Improved recording and escalation of safeguarding concerns through the Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Strengthened information sharing practice in line with the Seven Golden Rules

These developments have supported more consistent, child centred safeguarding across the establishment.

Additional Activity

In addition to RBSCP subgroup activity and agency activity there have been several multi-agency partnerships developments to improve safeguarding practice and outcomes for children and families in Rochdale. As identified earlier RBSCP has engaged in several development areas this year including Northwest Fairness & Belonging and the Participation and Voice framework and Strategy developments with Participating People. The following explores such activities to highlight RBSCP commitment to ongoing improvement and impact.

Northwest Safeguarding Hub

The Northwest Children's Safeguarding Partnership brings together the 24 local safeguarding partnerships across the Northwest into a single learning and improvement system. Its purpose is to build shared understanding, develop practical tools, and promote a more consistent, informed, empathetic, and effective approach to safeguarding across the region.

In 2024, delegated and lead safeguarding partners across the Northwest committed to regional collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding, strengthening collective responsibility and shared learning across partnerships.

[Northwest Children's Safeguarding Partnership MoU | NWADCS](#)

There is a shared website that brings together evidence, tools, and resources to support NW Safeguarding Children's Partnerships. The journey so far has included a MASA Business Managers Framework, Northwest Language Charter, review of Section 11 audit toolkit, LCSPR framework and practice guide, NW dataset and work to develop specific data on Neglect, CSA, Fairness and Belonging etc. Work around collaborative Children's Safeguarding Learning and development and structures of MASA is also underway.

Unfortunately, from April 2026, funding for the NW safeguarding Hub will cease but work continues throughout the Northwest children's safeguarding network in respect of some of these developments such as Fairness and Belonging, Neglect, Infant Views, Voice, Experience and Influence (IVVE), Business Managers Forum and Training & Development.

Rochdale Domestic Abuse Partnership Report

Rochdale Domestic Abuse Partnership is a multi-agency strategic group that supports the council in meeting its duties under the Domestic Abuse Act by setting local strategic direction, informing the needs assessment and strategy, overseeing commissioning, and ensuring coordinated delivery of support for victims, children and perpetrators. It brings together key partners from the council, police, health, probation and specialist providers to improve outcomes, oversee MARAC and Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews, monitor the Domestic Abuse Action Plan, and report through local safeguarding and community safety governance structures, meeting every eight weeks and operating through a co-chair model. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. This report provides a summary of the actions taken to understand and mitigate the effects of domestic abuse on children.

Domestic Abuse Strategy:

We have engaged the partnership to review and update our Domestic Abuse Strategy with children and young people being a key focus across the 4 priorities of prevention, early intervention, protection and recovery. Alignment with the Family First model remains central, supporting a cohesive and integrated approach across the system. The updated strategy will be brought to the Children's Executive for consultation and key actions included in the forthcoming action plan.

Specialist Domestic Abuse Services (SDAS):

Our commissioned specialist services provide dedicated support for children and young people, including one-to-one therapeutic work and counselling for those aged five and above. The new three-year funding settlement resolves existing financial pressures, ensuring the long-term sustainability of this model and enabling continued delivery of specialist support for children.

Operation Encompass:

GMP are currently enhancing their implementation of Operation Encompass to improve quality, consistency, impact of referrals, governance and evaluation. Rochdale support this work and in July 2025 Community Safety completed a local audit of Operation Encompass. This found that while most schools provide timely oversight and emotional support to children following domestic abuse notifications, there is significant variation in practice, capacity, and the consistency of information received from GMP. Barriers such as delayed or inaccurate notifications, unclear thresholds for statutory support, parental nonengagement, and limited school capacity affected effective delivery.

Following on from the audit, these issues were addressed through a joined-up approach with GMP, community safety and education safeguarding leads, the outcomes being;

- More robust procedures for school staff receiving notifications, ensuring efficiency is not affected by staff absence
- The introduction of a minimum standard for all schools to deliver on receipt of a notification

Rochdale Children's Domestic Abuse Toolkit:

Community Safety, together with partner agencies, produced a practitioner toolkit offering clear guidance on identifying and supporting children experiencing domestic abuse. It contains age-appropriate materials for exploring wishes and feelings, safety planning and strengthening resilience. Widely utilised by schools and child-facing professionals, the toolkit is now undergoing a review to ensure alignment with updated legislation and current good practice including resources to capture the voice of the child.

Domestic Abuse Practitioners (DAP) audit:

In September 2025 an audit was completed of the DAP worker role, a role that sits within the family safeguarding model to support families that need ongoing intervention for domestic abuse when risk has been reduced. The audit highlighted the gap in support for children with the service focusing primarily on the adult victim, not the children. This has been addressed by Children's Services, and the DAP workers will now offer low level support working to children and young people within the family affected by domestic abuse.

Children's DA Subgroup:

Formed in December 2025, this multi-agency group brings together statutory and voluntary sector partners to concentrate specifically on the needs of children affected by domestic abuse. The group's objectives include progressing the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's recommendations for children, enhancing the consistency and visibility of the child's voice, reviewing specialist service provision to ensure RSCP maintains informed oversight, and sharing updates and learning with partners through targeted communications and briefings.

DA Self-Assessment:

As part of the work undertaken with the independent scrutineer, the partnership has completed a self-assessment. It outlines how Rochdale's multi-agency partnership meets the 20 JTAI essential criteria for protecting and supporting children who are victims of domestic abuse. It demonstrates strong commitment across Community Safety, Children's Social Care, Health, Housing, Police, Probation, Early Help, Education and NHS providers to recognising children as victims in their own right and responding to their needs. Core strengths include robust multi-agency working through daily risk meetings, MARAC, MATAAC and MAPPA; widespread professional curiosity supported by regular training; clear referral pathways and routine enquiry.

Specialist support is available via Rochdale's Specialist Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS), offering help for victims, children and perpetrators, alongside safe accommodation options.

Leadership oversight is strong, with performance monitoring, audits, learning from reviews, and survivor voice feeding directly into service design and strategy. Areas for ongoing development include deeper understanding of cumulative harm, strengthening consistency in capturing children's voices, and continued improvement of multi-agency processes such as MARAC.

Victim's Voice Programme:

This annual exercise gathers insights from victims and survivors to evaluate their experiences of services, identify effective practice and highlight areas requiring development. It incorporates the voice of the child, and the findings have led to tangible changes, such as updated school responses to attendance for children impacted by domestic abuse and enhanced refuge accommodation that no longer relies on shared facilities.

Family Courts – voice of the child:

The Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead is a member of the GM Family Courts Working Group, which is focused on improving the experience and outcomes of families involved in Manchester Family Courts. Rochdale is leading the voice-of-the-child workstream, reviewing and strengthening the processes that ensure children's views are heard in both public and private law proceedings.

Honour based abuse (HBA):

The HBA Working Group has previously been highlighted by GMCA as a positive example of partnership working, having created a collaborative environment that strengthened communication, improved information-sharing, and enhanced support for victims. The group, along with its associated action plan, is now undergoing review to refresh its membership and strategic direction, with a renewed emphasis on ensuring children are a central focus of future work.

Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) Sub-group:

The DARDR Sub-Group works to prevent future domestic-abuse-related deaths by reviewing cases, scrutinising multi-agency practice, and ensuring that learning from DARDRs is embedded across all partner organisations. In response to the national and local rise in domestic abuse-related suicides, the group also focuses on suicide prevention through a collaborative, multi-agency approach that emphasises early intervention, robust risk assessment, and tailored support for victims. By strengthening partnerships between police and wider safeguarding agencies, we aim to address the complex relationship between domestic abuse and suicide, safeguarding lives and reducing the likelihood of such tragic outcomes.



Families First Partnership Programme Report

The Families First Partnership (FFP) programme guide published in March 2025, was updated in March 2026 with delivery expectations, providing a framework for safeguarding partners to transform how support and protection are provided to families, focusing on early intervention and prevention to avoid crisis situations.

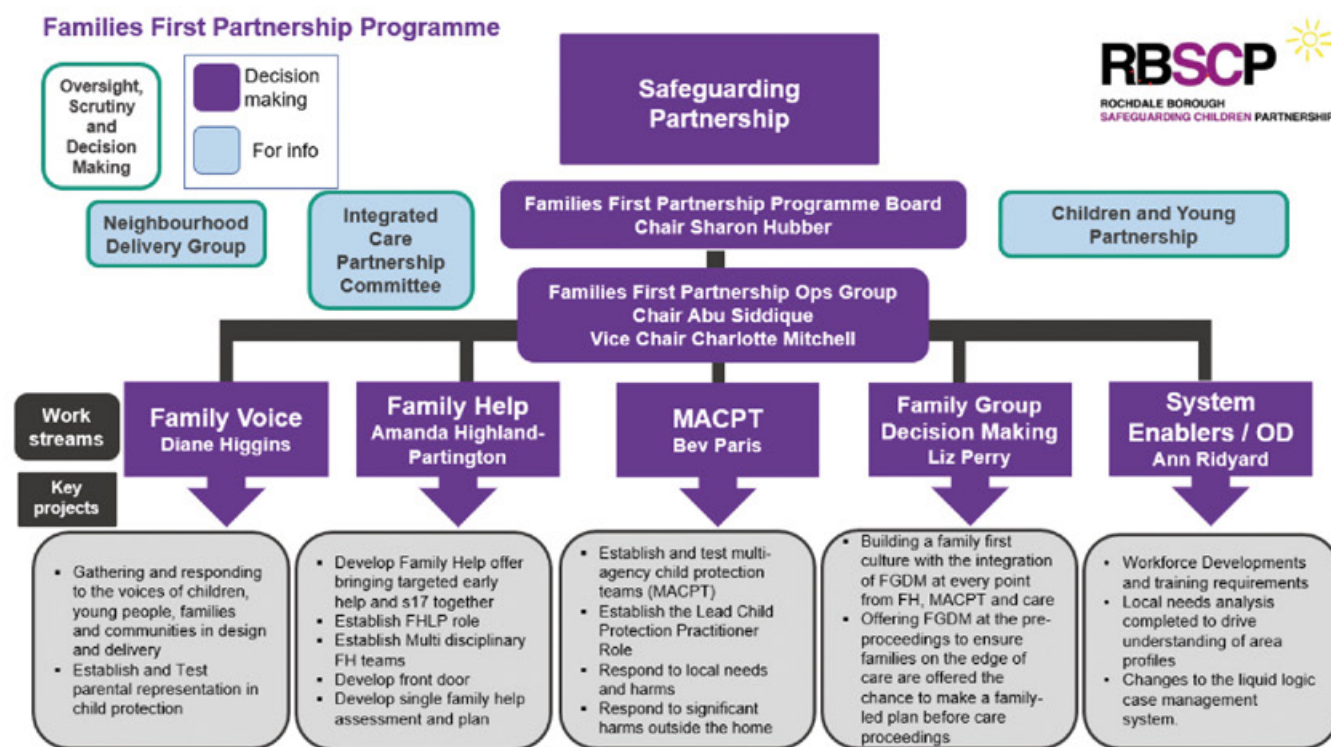
Rochdale partners work together to support the continued implementation of 1) Family Help, 2) multi-agency child protection teams and 3) support for family networks, through Family Group Decision Making and Family Network Support Packages. These three features are the core of FFP, which implemented together will reset the children's social care system to earlier and more effective help for families.

Rochdale has received grant funding from the DfE of approximately £1.7 million each year from 2025 to 2029. Safeguarding partners work together to agree priorities and how funding is used to build on local planning undertaken in Year 1 of the programme (2025-26) and complete remaining transformation activity.

Most of the grant is expected to be used to fund new or updated services with full operational delivery of reformed services by March 2027.

In September 2025 Rochdale Council's Cabinet approved the governance arrangements to oversee the co-design and implementation of FFP, they approved the use of £1.01m funded by the Prevention Grant to recruit a Programme Team to drive design and delivery. FFPP Governance arrangements, shown below, were implemented in Quarter 3 2025/26.





There is strong multi-agency representation and attendance from all safeguarding partners. The FFPP Board provides strategic oversight for the whole programme and the Operations Group ensures that the five workstreams deliver the plan. Workstream structures align to national reform themes including Family Help, Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), Multi Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT), Family Voice and System Enablers.

Members of the Programme Team were recruited and in post between February and April 2026 including a Programme Lead in April, x 2 Project Managers in March and a Project Support Officer in February. The Intelligence Analyst, System Analyst and Workforce Development Officer are still to be recruited and as a result elements of the programme plan including a performance management framework, single assessment, Liquid Logic system changes and workforce development plan are still to be developed and implemented.

A pilot of the Family Help model was established in Heywood in late February 2026. Two Family Safeguarding Teams and an Early Help Team comprising of Family Help Workers and Social Workers are co-located at Derby Street Family Hub and Targeted Early Help and Child in Need cases began being allocated from March 2026. Social Work management oversight is provided by two Social Work qualified Team Managers.

The EHASH Team continue to operate in the same way but direct Heywood Child in Need and Targeted Early Help cases to a Heywood tray for Team

Managers to discuss and allocate. An initial home visit is undertaken jointly between a Social Worker and a Family Worker. Based on the identified support needs, one of those workers will become the Family Help Lead Practitioner for the family.

Early qualitative feedback from staff in the pilot indicates a positive shift in practice towards more relationship-based and continuous support for families. Further clarity is needed in respect of roles / responsibilities, systems, processes and workload pressures. Having gathered this feedback, the Programme Team are working to;

- Improve communication and feedback loops by having a regular presence at Derby Street Family Hub, attendance at team meetings and links between the weekly Family Help Implementation Group and staff in the pilot.
- Undertake a time and motion study to understand workload pressures to provide additional resource, capacity or alternative duty rota patterns where needed.

- Complete a skills audit to determine workforce development requirements.
- Development of a blueprint to inform and guide the next phase of the roll out.
- Revise the Multi-Agency Response to Needs guidance, for the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership to agree and sign off.

The focus is on strengthening family led decision making and aligning existing practice with the wider reforms. Progress will include the development and review of practice standards, tools and pathways, recording and reporting requirements

There has also been delivery of Connector and Family Network Meeting (FNM) training, with further sessions planned. Plus, close working with ICT and data teams to develop system functionality and reporting.

Demand modelling of statutory child protection duties within Children's Services has taken place and an estimated 18 Lead Child Protection Practitioner roles will need to be re-aligned from existing resource to fulfil the requirements of the role.

The development of a MACPT model is in development with full costs to be finalised and proposals from all safeguarding partners will be approved through the RBSCP.

Priorities for the 2026/27 include:

- Refining the Heywood Family Help pilot, as identified above, whilst reviewing and responding to emerging resource and capacity.
- Extend and embed FGDM and Family Network Meetings into practice.
- Development of a fully costed MACPT model in Rochdale.
- Development of a single assessment alongside necessary system changes.
- Develop a performance management framework to monitor effectiveness of process changes and measure impact against set outcome measures.
- Planning phased rollout to ensure full implementation in March 2027.



14. Reflections and Forecasting

In 2024/25 there was a focus on responding to new legislation, initial reform planning and findings from inspection and peer reviews. This resulted in a notable commitment to ensuring the RBSCP Business Plan was fit for purpose and central to the priority needs in Rochdale.

During 2025/26 further work has been undertaken by the RBSCP to making a real difference for children and families in Rochdale. Planned developments, trajectory of improvement and momentum is evident from reported activity and achievements during the year, including the refreshed RBSCP MASA publication, RBSCP Business Plan Year 1 progress, continued strengthening of Education as a significant safeguarding partner, the embedding of Independent Scrutineer work, and the continued separation of the Rochdale Children Partnership with the strengthening of new RBSCP subgroups.

Assurance reporting to RBSCP and RBSCP Executive has been made more robust through new required highlight reporting to provide assurance of achievements, continuous progress and barriers or risks to effective RBSCP activity.

In addition to the new RBSCP Business Plan and associated Priorities, the partnership identified the following areas to develop during 2025/26:

- Participation & Voice Strategy
- Quality Assurance Framework and Impact
- Voice of Education
- Review LCSPR Process
- Northwest Safeguarding Improvements

Earlier sections have identified how each of these areas have been strengthened and improved to achieve greater responses and outcomes for children and families. In addition, further work was undertaken to:

- Improve Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB), through the Northwest safeguarding Hub **Fairness and Belonging Framework** developments.
- Development of a CSA Working Group to capture all of the CSA work and achievements to date and to complete the Centre of Expertise self-assessment in 2026/27 to highlight the journey so far and identify clear next steps for continuous improvement.

- Implementation of the **Families First Partnership Programme** workstreams and establishing the first pilot of the Family Help model in Heywood.
- Strengthen responses and activities to understand and mitigate the effects of **domestic abuse on children**, including review of Operation Encompass, a Children's DA Toolkit & development of a new Children's DA Subgroup (CSP) in 2025.
- Develop **Preparing for Adulthood** (PfA) Strategy to address identified gaps in transition outcomes for young people with care and support needs, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and **Disabilities (SEND)**. As well as ongoing work in respect of Complex safeguarding and Greater Manchester **Transitional Safeguarding** Group to share ideas, reflect and consider best practice across region.

It is evident that partners worked creatively to achieve the progress to date and are clear on what has been achieved and what the next steps are to continue to make a positive sustained difference to the daily lived experience of the children and families of Rochdale. RBSCP aims to strengthen local safeguarding arrangements and accelerate progress further in 2026/27, with a vision that if we collaborate better, we can improve child-centred, multi-agency practice, nurturing a culture of trust, accountability and support to our children.

15. RBSCP Strategic Priorities 2025-2027



The RBSCP Priorities 2025 - 2027 were developed to ensure RBSCP Vision and Values are reflected throughout all that we do:

Our Vision

Children and young people in the Rochdale Borough will be safe and will feel safe within their homes, schools and communities.

Our Values

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

For services to be effective, each person, practitioner and organisations should play their part.

A whole family approach to supporting families.

For services to be effective & create long lasting, positive change we need to support the whole family, regardless of the level of need.



The RBSCP Strategic Priorities 2025-2027 are:

1. Neglect

by introducing the Family Help model, professionals and Family Help Lead Practitioners are enabled and supported to recognise the signs of neglect, understand the impact of neglect on children, and respond at the earliest point of identification whilst ensuring children and their families are at the centre of everything we do.

2. Child Sexual abuse

multi-agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) receive high quality learning & development to recognise the signs of child sexual abuse and understand the impact of child sexual abuse on individuals and the wider community. MACPTs will deliver effective support whilst providing services that ensure the welfare and wellbeing of victims of CSA.

3. Domestic Abuse

through robust quality systems, data is shared accurately, and widely, to enable effective support for children and young people impacted by Domestic Abuse. The RBSCP will seek information that children tell us they feel safer as a result.

The RBSCP Business Plan 2025-27 highlights steps and will set clear timescales within each Priority, to evidence progress and impact for children and families of Rochdale during the activity period. Throughout RBSCP activity, we will ensure the voice of children, young people, families and practitioners will contribute and be heard.

How we will know we are achieving our Priorities:

1. Reduce the impact of Neglect

The RBSCP Neglect Strategy defines measurable which include tracking the number of Early Help Assessments which include a completed Neglect toolkit assessment. Also, the number of successfully completed Team around the Family (TAF) is measured to indicate the overall number of successful early help episodes. RBSCP will measure these data points, and other Early Help quality assurance information from Partners to measure how successful this priority has been.

2. Increase the identification of Child Sexual Abuse

The RBSCP will seek assurance that Learning & Development materials are seen to be effective in practice. This will be evidenced via a range of L&D related quality assurance methods with include meeting defined quality standards, case file audit and seeking feedback from practitioners.

3. Effective support for victims of Domestic Abuse.

The RBSCP will use quality assurance methods via partnership working with the Rochdale Safer Communities Partnership to be informed and assured of an effective Operation Encompass system. The RBSCP will also utilise Education expertise to ensure good quality safeguarding practice is carried out by Education partners once an Operation Encompass notification has been received.

In addition to the RBSCP Business Plan and associated Priorities, the partnership will continue to develop the following areas during 2026/27, to continuously improve our safeguarding responses and effectiveness:

- Develop and launch the Participation & Voice Strategy
- Embed new Quality Assurance Framework
- LCSRP Learning and Impact
- Effective Response to WTSC 2026 & Independent Scrutiny
- Families First Partnership Programme, Social Care Reform & Policy redesign
- Early Help Strategy and Neglect Strategy
- Fairness & Belonging
- Effective Induction of new RBSCP DSP or Strategic members.
- Respond to any Supreme Court Judgements regarding Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.



16. Appendices

1. MASA Publication

rochdalesafeguarding.com/assets/c31bdc8b/rbscp_masa_feb_2026.docx

2. RBSCP Business Plan

[RBSCP Business Plan](#)

3. Fairness & Belonging

Fairness and belonging for everyone

Shared understanding, insight and tools to strengthen fairness and belonging for everyone in the north west - children, families and professionals.

March 2026

What is this about?

The Fairness and Belonging For Everyone (FAB) workstream strengthens how we, as safeguarding partnerships across the North West, understand and respond to FAB.

Working with **Laurelle Brown Training and Consultancy**, we are drawing on regional insight, data and lived experience to support collaborative learning, leadership and governance that embed FAB in practice and drive consistent, system-wide improvement.

Why FAB?

We've heard that people use different language and approaches to describe this work, which can make it harder to connect and act together.

To bring clarity and consistency, parents, carers and senior leaders helped choose a shared name: **Fairness and belonging for everyone.**

What we want to change

Between March and June 2026, we are laying strong foundations for a joined-up and practical FAB approach.

Over time, we want to see some clear and practical shifts across the system. These include:

- **Leaders** feeling more confident and supported to recognise and respond to inequity
- Equity being more clearly considered in **governance, scrutiny and assurance**
- A stronger **shared understanding** of how inequity affects children and families
- Equity being more consistently reflected in **learning, training and improvement**
- Partnerships being **better connected** to share insight, learning and what works

Working together

We will continue working closely with MASAs and people with lived experience throughout.

Visit the **North West learning and support hub website** to learn more about the programme, Phase 1 findings and the problem statement, and share your views.

You can also join a conversation with Laurelle Brown and Emma Ford to hear more and find out how to get involved on: **Monday 20th April 2026, 9.30am - 10.15am**

To register your place, click **here**.

4. Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Process

[SIN/RR/LCSPR Criteria](#)



