



# Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2020-21

Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees  
**SAFEGUARDING  
CHILDREN  
PARTNERSHIP**





# Foreword by the Independent Chair

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP) Annual Report 2020-21 to you and many thanks for taking the time to read it.

The report accurately and concisely identifies the achievements of the HSSCP during this year and the challenges during this period. It will be of no surprise to anyone that the most significant challenge was to ensure the continued effective safeguarding of children and young people during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The lock downs meant that children were largely out of sight of agencies far more than normal and particularly so for schools who play a fundamental role in safeguarding children. All partners came together, and continue to do so, in adapting their arrangements to ensure that children were kept as safe as was possible. This included partners carrying out risk assessments on vulnerable children with schools and ensuring physical contact and support was maintained throughout the lock downs.

All partners and staff are to be commended on their response during these particularly difficult times for their dedication, professionalism, and innovation. Thank you.

Unfortunately, there are also times where agencies responses to safeguarding children and young people has not achieved what was required. The report contains details of how the HSSCP has identified these incidents and ensured the appropriate learning across partners. Recognising when things have gone wrong and effectively addressing that is a strength of the Partnership and their Rapid Review Process continues to be held in high regard by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

The HSSCP reacts well to Safeguarding issues, however, during the year I challenged the partners to be clearer about their strategic priorities, how they would deliver these priorities and associated impact, as well as independent scrutiny arrangements. This was recognised by the HSSCP, and the next steps are included with in this report.

This will be my final introduction to the Annual Report as after seven years carrying out the role of Independent Chair I am standing down. I would like to express my gratitude to all I have worked with over these seven years, it has been a pleasure and privilege to work with so many people determined to do their very best for the benefit of all children in Hartlepool and Stockton, their families, and the wider community. Thank you.



Dave Pickard  
HSSCP Independent Chair



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# About The Partnership



## HSSCP Vision, Aims and Objectives

**“Every child in Hartlepool and Stockton will feel safe, secure and be protected from harm, enabling them to reach their full potential.”**

HSSCP Published Arrangements, 2019

The Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP) went live in April 2019, replacing the two existing Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB's), in response to the changes set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018. The new arrangements aimed to build upon and strengthen the existing partnership working between all LSCB partners and between the two Local Authority areas.

HSSCP covers the two local authority areas of Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees Borough Councils. The local authorities were already closely aligned with a willingness to work together; underpinned by a shared Children's Hub which is the front door to Children's Services across both local authorities. Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees also share a co-terminus Clinical Commissioning Group and Police force.

HSSCP's vision is to ensure that **“Every child in Hartlepool and Stockton feels safe, secure and protected from harm, enabling them to reach their full potential.”** In order to achieve this the Partnership aims to understand what is working well in its collective safeguarding practice, to identify what needs further development and to ensure effective and co-ordinated multi agency working across our whole system. This 'Active learning' approach has the child at its core and harnesses the importance of working with practitioners to influence front line safeguarding practice in order to learn and improve together.



The Partnership's Objectives are to:

- achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families and provide the right services that meet need in a co-ordinated way;
- improve safeguarding practice across all partners thus impacting positively on the lives of children;
- improve safeguarding practice, via identification and analysis of issues/ threats / barriers to effective multi agency working;
- enable shared learning with front line staff across all partner agencies;
- establish and embed peer challenge as a process for learning and improvement;
- embrace a culture of challenge with organisations and agencies holding one another to account;
- share information effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for families; and
- deliver on key elements that inform the basis of effective safeguarding practice i.e.:
  - ◇ Effective governance
  - ◇ Quality assurance and intelligence; and
  - ◇ A culture of learning and improvement



## HSSCP Membership

### HSSCP Safeguarding Partners

The partners in Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership include the following in accordance with Working Together 2018 (and Children and Social Work Act 2017):

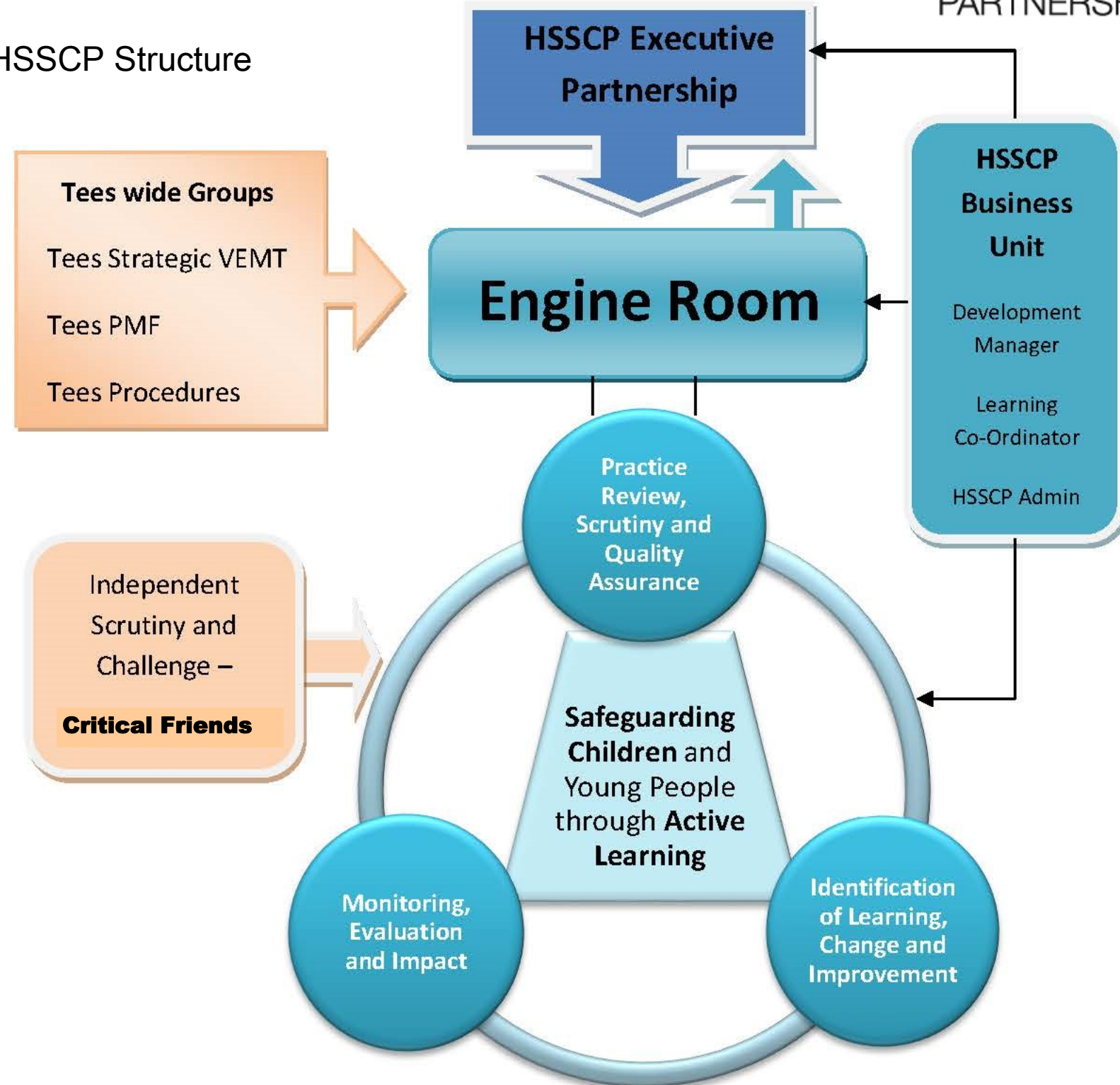
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council
- Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group
- Chief Officer of Cleveland Police

### HSSCP Relevant Agencies

The safeguarding partners identified the following local relevant agencies, whose involvement is integral to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people across Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees, as members of the wider partnership:

Adoption Tees Valley
British Transport Police
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
Children, young people and families
Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service
Colleges, schools and Early Years settings
Community / Voluntary Sector Organisations
Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
Faith organisations
Hartlepool Local Authority: 0-19 Housing Public Health Sports and Leisure Youth Offending Team
Local Housing providers
National Probation Service (NPS)
NHS England
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
Residents of Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees
Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority: 0-19 Housing Public Health Sports and Leisure Youth Offending Teams
Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)
Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)
The Police & Crime Commissioner

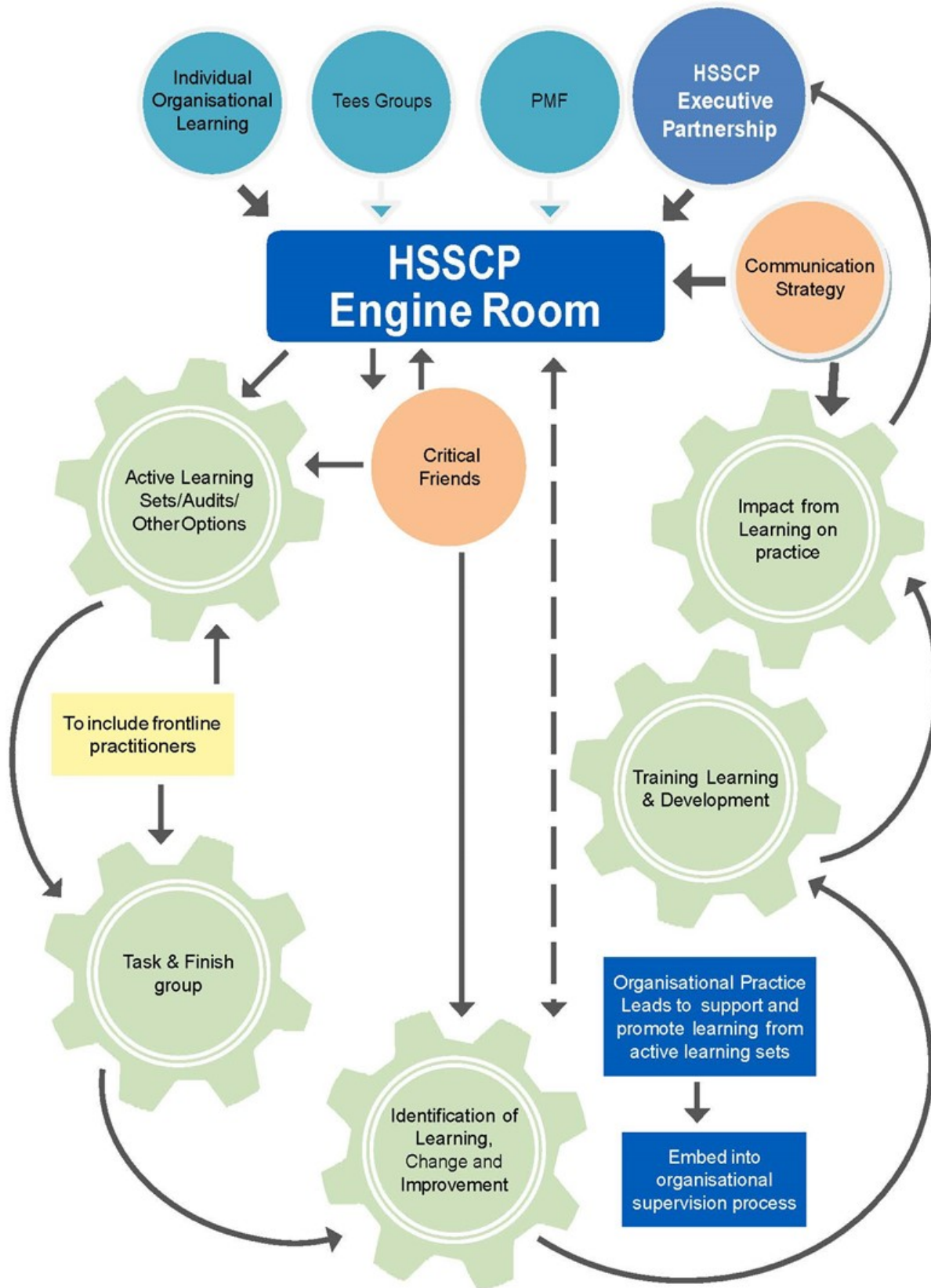
## HSSCP Structure



Membership of the HSSCP Executive is made up of the four Statutory Safeguarding Partners, the HSSCP Business Manager and the HSSCP Independent Chair. The four Safeguarding Partners, as well as some key Relevant Agencies are represented within the HSSCP Engine Room and Tees wide groups. Wider representation is drawn upon for HSSCP Active Learning and Task and finish groups.



## HSSCP Key Roles and Functions



### The HSSCP Executive

Functional responsibility of the Executive is shared between the four Safeguarding Partners who have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements. The Executive meet formally bi-monthly to review and determine how the safeguarding arrangements are progressing; to celebrate good practice, identify areas for learning and improvement, provide direction as appropriate and receive assurance reports. The Executive:

- Promote effective multi agency working to safeguard children and promote their welfare
- Share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- Ensure that services are commissioned in a co-ordinated way; through liaison with other key partnerships and Boards
- Promote co-operation and integration between universal services such as schools, primary and secondary health care, adult services, early years settings, youth services and colleges, voluntary and community and specialist support services
- Oversee core safeguarding functions of the partnership arrangement
- Scrutinise reports on learning activity presented to them by the 'engine room'
- Provide further challenge where necessary when seeking assurance, evidencing impact and improvement
- Liaise with other key local partnerships and boards; feeding back any relevant information to the 'engine room'
- Propose any relevant lines of enquiry for learning activity
- Ensure all statutory function and requirements are met
- Approve the appointment of reviewers for local case reviews; and
- Publish a threshold statement in liaison with the Hartlepool & Stockton-On-Tees Children's Hub Management Board which sets out the local criteria for action required to safeguard and promote a child's welfare in a way that is transparent, accessible and easily understood

The Executive Partnership meetings are chaired by an independent chair in order to provide independent scrutiny and challenge and ensure that the partnership arrangements are effective and embedded.

### The Engine Room

The Engine Room is chaired by a statutory partner on a rota basis and meets every 6 weeks. This group is accountable to the HSSCP Executive. The functions of the Engine Room carried out on behalf of the Executive Partnership include:

- Analysis of data and soft intelligence to identify, scrutinise and determine action required to address any emerging themes;
- Identification of Key Lines Of Enquiry (KLOE) for deep dive analysis;
- Receiving recommendations from relevant Performance Management Framework (PMF) groups and the HSSCP Executive for further exploration
- Commissioning Action Learning Sets
- Identification and commission of training following findings from action learning sets
- Quality assurance
- Multi-agency audits
- Consider requests for learning on 'near-miss' cases
- Identifying and ensuring dissemination of good practice, in order to celebrate and learn
- Impact testing – Monitor and review change for improvement / learning
- Report learning and impact to HSSCP Executive

### Independent Scrutiny

The HSSCP structure sets out two pathways for providing independent scrutiny; the first being within the HSSCP Executive in the form of an Independent Chair, the second being within the Active Learning in the form of Independent Critical Friends.

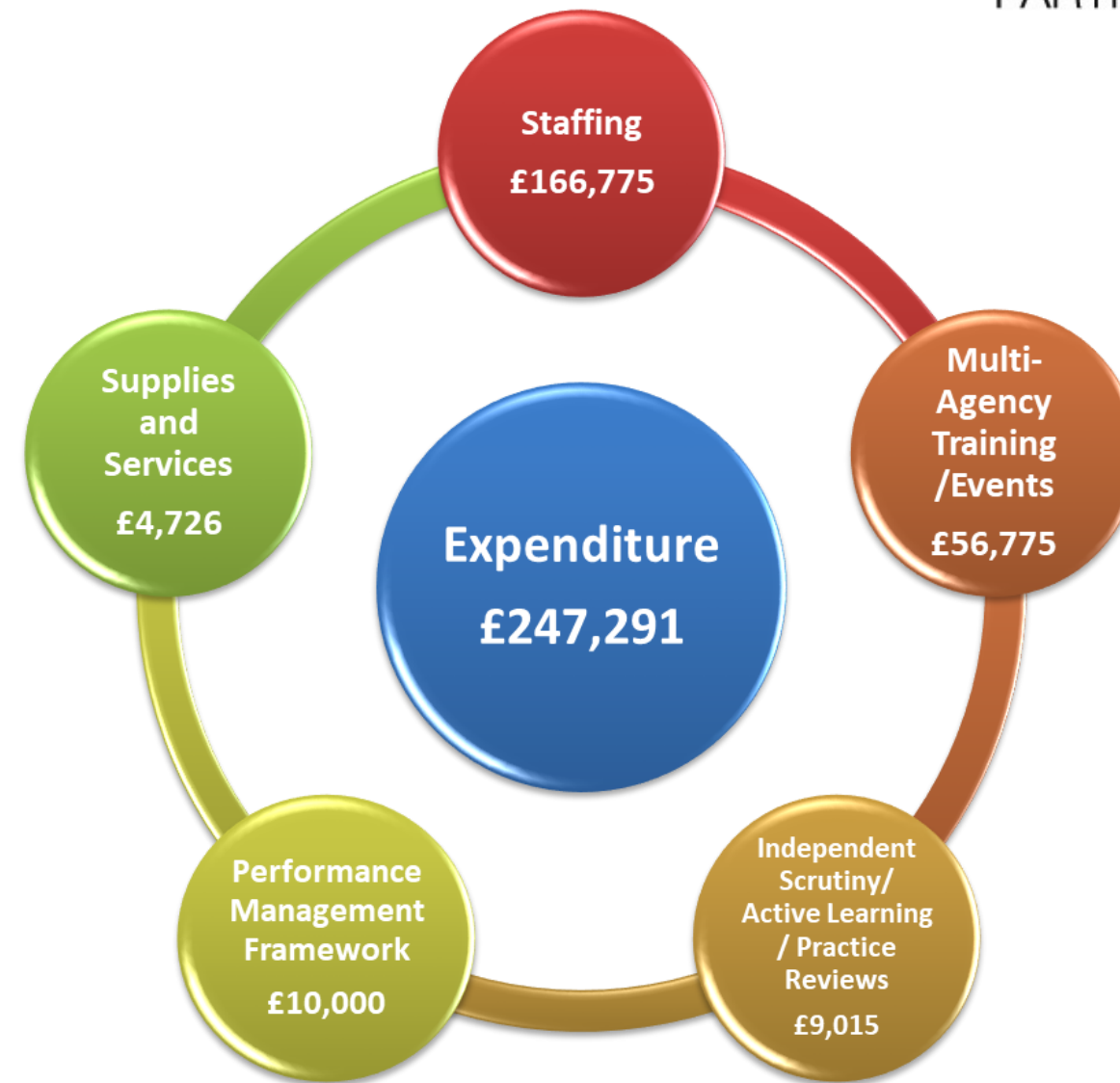
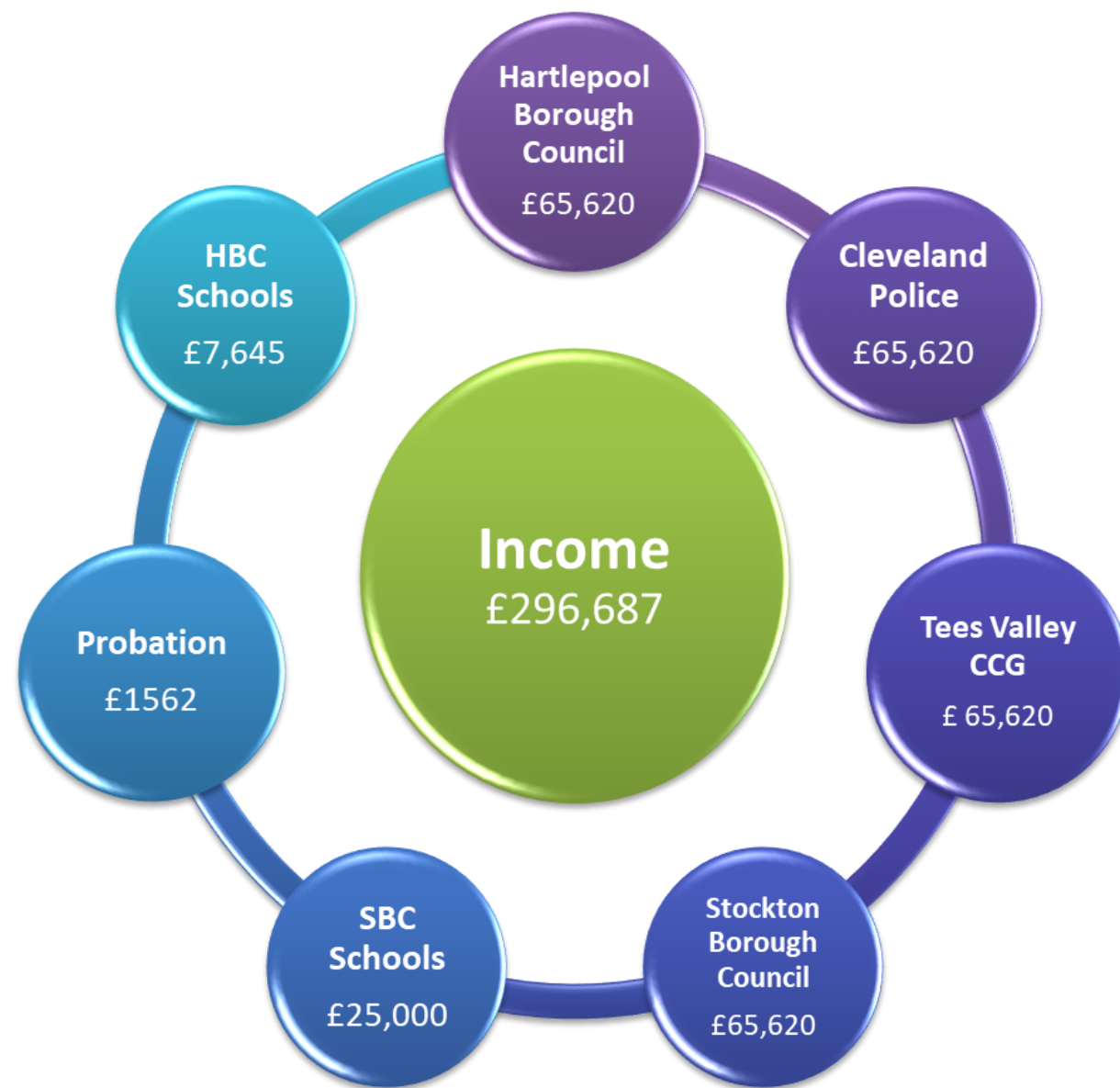
### Active Learning

The HSSCP model is based on an active learning approach. Themes identified within the Engine Room, through qualitative and quantitative data analysis, local reviews, national reviews and audit practice across the system (single agency and multi agency), lead to deep dive scrutiny reviews being commissioned. These are facilitated by independent critical friends and include front line practitioners from across all safeguarding organisations. This model promotes practitioners' engagement in the work of HSSCP and practice learning as practitioners take part in the activity. The findings from the active learning are collated in reports that make clear recommendations for action. Outputs from the 'active learning' are reported to the Executive to ensure that the learning is promoted at a strategic and practice level and disseminated across the safeguarding system.



## FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Partner agencies continued to contribute to HSSCP’s budget for 2020/21. This income ensured that the overall cost of running HSSCP was met; with a total carry forward of £151,436 into 2021-22.



Finance 2020 - 21	
Income	296,687
Expenditure	247,291
Reserves subtotal	49,396
HSCB carry forward from 2019-20	102,040
<b>Total reserves carried forward into 2020-21</b>	<b>151,436</b>



HSSCP

Annual Report 2020-21



# About Hartlepool



## HARTLEPOOL DEMOGRAPHICS



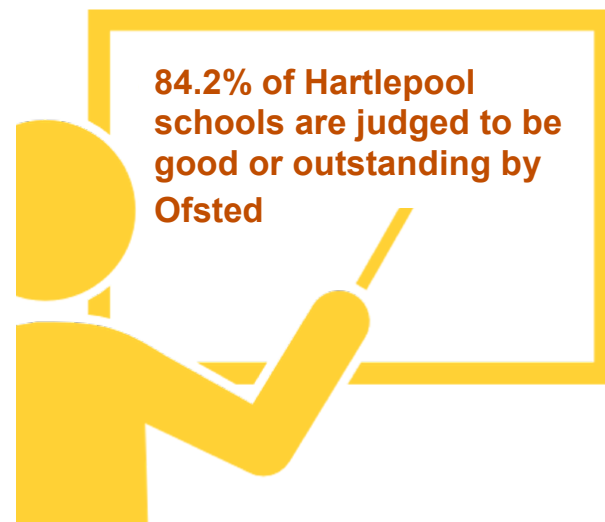
Hartlepool has a population of **93,663** living in...



With...



and...



\* **Average Attainment 8 score is 46.8**



*NB: National Progress and Attainment 8 scores are unavailable for 2020-21 due to Covid-19.*

### Hartlepool Context

There are **38 schools** in Hartlepool with 30 mainstream primary, 5 mainstream secondary, 2 special schools (one primary, one secondary) and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. With **84.2%** of Hartlepool schools judged to be good or better by Ofsted, the potential for children achieving positive outcomes is high. The **number of children who are home educated is 101** which, although small when compared to all children accessing school, is monitored and reviewed by the Partnership annually to ensure oversight of this cohort of children and young people. Based on the 2021 January School census **17.8% of the school population were SEND** (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). The number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans or Statements of SEN in Hartlepool is 708 (216 primary age children, 294 secondary, 198 post-16). The figure that had an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) was 3.1% and 14.8% have SEN support.

In 2021, the End Child Poverty data classified Hartlepool as being **within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country**. The proportion of **children living in poverty being 38%** (2020) compared to 37% across Teesside and 31% nationally. Living in an area of high deprivation, the children and young people of Hartlepool, their families and the professionals who work to support them, therefore face many challenges. There is a large body of evidence and research to show that **children who live in poverty are more likely to face additional traumatic experiences** or be exposed to a range of risks that can have a serious impact on their mental health and life chances. The University College London (UCL, July 2020) found that poverty was strongly associated with an increased odds of a child reporting ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) such as being sexually abused, coping with parental separation, or their parents experiencing issues with mental health, drug or alcohol abuse. With Hartlepool's deprivation being higher than the national average for children already living in poverty and many families experiencing uncertain employment prospects as a result of COVID-19, the research suggests that the impact is only likely to increase; putting further pressure on families.

It is therefore important for the Safeguarding Partnership to be fully aware of this cohort of children and young people and ensure that these are considered within aspects of the partnerships work programme.





## HARTLEPOOL SAFEGUARDING SNAPSHOT





Throughout 2020-21 there were approximately:


**20,054** children & young people under 18

Which equates to:

**21%** of the total population

 **38%** of children living in poverty


 **39.1%** of primary school children in receipt of free school meals (the national average is 20.8%)

 **444** average contacts to the Children's Hub\* per Month


 **1512** referrals to children's social care





 **14%** were re-referrals


 **386** Early Help episodes were opened.

 **82** Early Help cases escalated to Social Care.


 **1438** open Child in Need cases


 **245** children subject to a Child Protection Plan

 **2075** children and young people receiving services through Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support


 **12** children and young people identified as being at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation


 **352** missing episodes by 151 young people


 **150** missing episodes by 38 Hartlepool looked after young people


 **355** children and young people looked after





 **1305** children present during a domestic abuse incident

 **258** domestic abuse incidents witnessed by children within 12 months of a similar incident

 **150** cases discussed in MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

 **321** children involved in MARAC

 **47** referrals in relation to allegations against staff working with children and young people

 **1** new Private Fostering arrangements reported

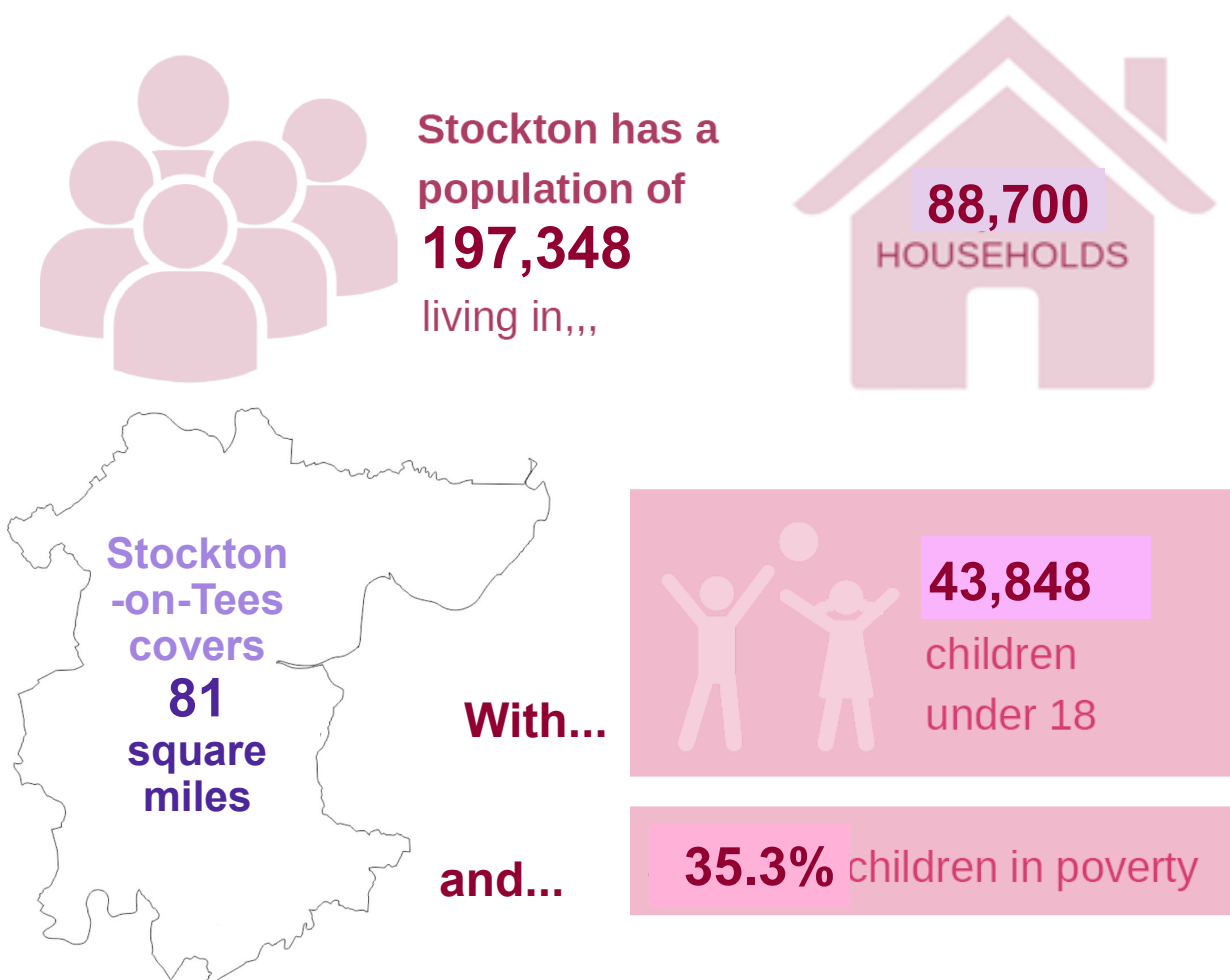
\* NB: The Children's Hub is the multi-agency front door for referrals into Children's Social Care.

# About

# Stockton-on-Tees



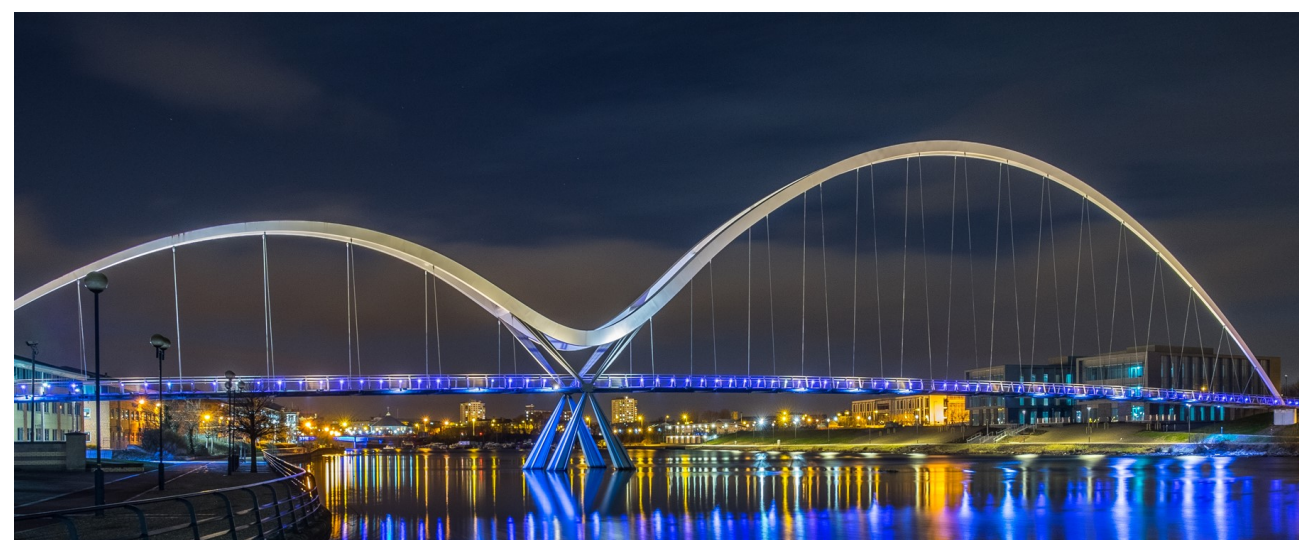
## STOCKTON-ON-TEES DEMOGRAPHICS



### Stockton Context

There are 81 schools in Stockton with 60 primary (38 academy, 21 maintained and one Free School), 13 secondary (11 academy, one maintained and one Free school) 4 academy special schools (one primary, three secondary), 3 independent schools with primary and secondary children and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. With 93.6% of Stockton schools judged to be good or better by Ofsted, the potential for children achieving positive outcomes is high. The **number of children who are home educated is 191** (as of March 2021) which, although small when compared to all children accessing school provision, is monitored and reviewed by the Partnership annually to ensure oversight of this cohort of children and young people. Based on the January 2021 school spring census **15.6% of the school population were SEND** (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). This figure includes those that had an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and those that have SEN support. The number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans or statements of SEN in Stockton is 1667 (649 primary age children, 701 secondary, 317 post-16) .

The latest available data from End Child Poverty (May 2021) shows **35.3% of children are living in poverty in Stockton-on-Tees** (after housing costs are included), compared to an average of 37% in the North East and 31% nationally. Living in an area of high deprivation, the children and young people of Stockton-on-Tees, their families and the professionals who work to support them, therefore face many challenges. There is a large body of evidence and research to show that **children who live in poverty are more likely to face additional traumatic experiences** or be exposed to a range of risks that can have a serious impact on their mental health and life chances. The University College London (UCL, July 2020) found that poverty was strongly associated with an increased odds of a child reporting ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) such as being sexually abused, coping with parental separation, or their parents experiencing issues with mental health, drug or alcohol abuse. With Stockton's deprivation being higher than the national average for children already living in poverty and many families experiencing uncertain employment prospects as a result of COVID-19, the research suggests that the impact is only likely to increase; putting further pressure on families. It is therefore important for the Safeguarding Partnership to be fully aware of this cohort of children and young people and ensure that these are considered within aspects of the partnerships work programme.



## STOCKTON-ON-TEES SAFEGUARDING SNAPSHOT



Throughout 2020-21 there were approximately:

**43,848** children & young people under 18

Which equates to:

**22%** of the total population

**35.3%** of children living in poverty  
(Source - End Child Poverty data May 2021)

**24.7%** of mainstream primary school children in receipt of free school meals (the national average is 20.8%)

**829** average contacts to the Children's Hub per month

**2982** referrals to children's social care



**23.2%** were re-referrals

**215** Early Help Episodes were opened.

**19** Early Help cases escalated to Social Care.

**2327** open Child in Need cases

**321** children subject to a Child Protection Plan

**5787** children and young people receiving services through Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support

**14** children and young people identified as being at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation

**973** missing episodes by 299 young people

**438** missing episodes by 73 Stockton looked after young people

**579** children and young people looked after

**2** new Private Fostering arrangements reported



**2003** children witnessing a domestic abuse incident

**250** cases discussed in MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

**515** children involved in MARAC

**104** referrals in relation to allegations against staff working with children and young people



# Key Successes and Achievements

## SAFEGUARDING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on our lives, both professionally and personally, throughout 2020-21. Agencies working in child safeguarding had to adapt quickly to continue to meet statutory requirements, maintain support for vulnerable children and families, and do so in ways that ensured COVID-safe practice.

Despite the obvious challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has presented to us all, the strength and collaborative approach of the Partnership and partner organisations has really shone through. HSSCP have been impressed by how well agencies have worked together across Hartlepool and Stockton in response to Covid-19 in terms of ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements were in place, despite the challenges it brought.

HSSCP would like to extend thanks to all staff who went above and beyond to ensure children were and continue to be safeguarded.



All Partnership meetings continued virtually



Practice Reviews continued to be undertaken virtually; with specific questions added to templates in relation to the impact of Covid-19.



Face to face training was stood down and replaced by a virtual training offer



In light of the pandemic and lockdown measures implemented, HSSCP carried out a media campaign aimed at the public; asking for them to keep a caring eye on children during the first national lockdown.

HSSCP released a press statement and social media posts and produced and distributed a poster to raise further awareness about the impact of restrictions on vulnerabilities and safeguarding.



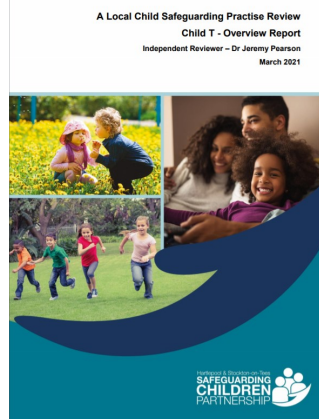
**CASE REVIEWS**

In 2020-21 HSSCP undertook six Rapid Reviews into serious safeguarding incidents; four of which progressed to Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Three of these were completed during 2020-21 and the fourth is scheduled to be completed during 2021-22.

➔ The **EMMA LCSPR** was concluded and a [Report](#) and [Executive Summary](#) published.

➔ The **Child T LCSPR** was finalised and the [report](#) published.

➔ The **Child M LCSPR** was completed and a [report](#), [briefing](#) and resources published.



Learning from all review activity formed the basis for a 'combined learning action plan' - which is a live document being progressed the Partnership. Some of the actions and work being completed in light of recommendations made are:

- ➔ Four briefings were delivered to 320 multi-agency professionals to disseminate the key messages and learning arising from the reviews undertaken by the partnership across 2019-21.
- ➔ Neglect Training to re-launch the Neglect Statement of intent was commissioned and delivered with further Neglect Active Learning commissioned for the 21-22 training programme.
- ➔ Tees Procedures group carried out a review of its assessment guidance and its Children Returning Home procedure. Work is underway on guidance for Complex Case Discussions.
- ➔ Training on Adverse Childhood Experiences to be commissioned and included in the 21-22 HSSCP training programme.

**Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review - Child M**

**Review Methodology**  
This review was carried out using a 'systems approach' via an Appreciative Inquiry model. An Appreciative Inquiry model is used in order to understand what has happened, within a participative framework that embraces professional curiosity and challenge, and focuses on what works well and what is valued. Key learning themes that were identified through the rapid review meeting were explored through a facilitated event undertaken with multi-agency middle managers. The event examined the identified learning through a systems approach to discussing multi-agency best practice rather than specifically examining actions of individual organisations in this particular case. This approach supports systemic learning and practice improvement and focused on the following identified learning themes:

- Communication, information sharing and joint working;
- Involvement assessments;
- Evidence based decision making;
- Fixed thinking and breaking / undertaking Safeguarding Supervision; and
- Making change happen.

**Learning Themes**  
The cross-cutting theme of 'Fixed Thinking' was highlighted in aspects of multi-agency working which impacts upon professional's ability to understand risk, evaluate and integrate new information and reflect and challenge them selves on how this changes working hypotheses. Four key impacts to unlocking fixed-thinking have been identified:

- Engaging fathers
- Father Inclusive Practice
- Recording fathers
- Give 1:1 time to the father

**Unlocking Fixed-Thinking**

**Father Inclusive Practice**  
The extent to which fathers are engaged within the safeguarding process can have a considerable impact upon the understanding of risk for the child and family. Professionals can have fixed-thinking in terms of the role of fathers in a family and in their role in parenting children. Fathers can be overlooked both as a resource for their children as well as in terms of their own vulnerabilities and how these might impact upon the child and the family dynamics as a whole. Child M's father was an integral member of the household; he was not an 'absent parent', yet his vulnerabilities and how these might impact upon parenting were absent from professional understanding and analysis.

**Self-Reported Information**  
When working with families, much of the information and insight into the family comes from them directly and is 'self-reported'. Professionals need to ensure that they triangulate what parents are saying by establishing the facts, gathering evidence, and communicating well with all involved. There is a need for all professionals to have a conscious and healthy inquisitiveness, not taking information at face value but clearly, reflect back what they are being told and verify information. It is important to make it clear in recording the origin of a piece of information and if it self-reported, this avoids the risk of becoming assumed as fact through the passage of time. Wherever possible, check out details of self-reported information by asking who, where and when and confirm/validate the information. Child M's mother told professionals that there had been previous social work involvement with her eldest child but the case was closed. This led to new professionals being unaware there was ongoing social work involvement. Professionals should seek to:

- Understand where a piece of information originated from.
- Clarify and verify the accuracy of the information wherever possible.
- Find out more information to better understand the information you are being told.
- Reflect upon the self-reported information and what this means in the context of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Reflect with colleagues and families.
- Use a decision making tool to show your workings out to what information was received, what did it tell you, what possible options are there and which option has been selected and why.

**Evidence-Based Decision Making**  
Professionals need to take time to hypothesise in order to be able to adapt their thinking and respond to changes in family circumstances and risk. When professionals encounter new information, a new development or a practice dilemma, they need to take time to hypothesise about what is happening, how this situation or new information changes their working assumptions, what the impact could be and what this means in terms of adapting or reviewing the existing plan. For Child M, the elder sibling's case was due to close and therefore, with no ongoing concerns for the sibling, a pre-birth assessment was not considered. Understanding the potential impact of new information or changes in a family with existing vulnerabilities is fundamental. Being open to allowing new information in and re-evaluating a working hypothesis allowing professional thinking and understanding to adapt in light of changes is essential to fully understand and respond to risk. Professionals should articulate within their records where they have received new information, an incident / development or a practice dilemma and how they consider this impacts upon their decision making, what factors they have taken into account and why they are making a specific decision. This promotes evidence based decision making and avoids hindsight bias. Professionals should seek to:

- Create and allow time and space to reflect, ideally as a multi-agency 'team around' when thinking about a specific case.
- Ask managers and colleagues who may bring a fresh perspective to a particular challenge or dilemma for alternative hypotheses.
- Present cases from the child, young person, adult or another family member's perspective to help see things in other ways - 'What does it feel like to be this child living in this household today?' How would the child describe it?
- Invite a multi-agency colleague along to case supervision

**Creating Opportunities for Multi-Agency Reflection**  
Nurturing professional curiosity and challenge are a fundamental aspect of working together to keep children and young people safe. For many agencies, the use of reflective supervision is a means of improving decision-making, accountability, and supporting professional development among practitioners. Supervision is also an opportunity to question and explore an understanding of practice in specific cases. Group supervision and multi-agency reflective discussions can be even more effective in promoting curiosity and safe uncertainty, as practitioners can use these spaces to think about their own judgments and observations. It also allows multi-agency partners to learn from one another's expertise, discipline and experience, and the issues considered in one case may have similarities to other cases.

- Create and allow time and space to reflect, ideally as a multi-agency 'team around' when thinking about a specific case.
- Ask managers and colleagues who may bring a fresh perspective to a particular challenge or dilemma for alternative hypotheses.
- Present cases from the child, young person, adult or another family member's perspective to help see things in other ways - 'What does it feel like to be this child living in this household today?' How would the child describe it?
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**HSSCP Learning from Review of Practice**

**Unlocking Fixed Thinking**  
The extent to which fathers are engaged within the safeguarding process can have a considerable impact upon the understanding of risk for the child and family. Professionals can have fixed-thinking in terms of the role of fathers in a family and in their role in parenting children. Fathers can be overlooked, both as a resource for their children as well as in terms of their own vulnerabilities and how these might impact upon parenting, protection and risk for the children. Professionals should seek to:

- Engage fathers
- Father Inclusive Practice
- Recording fathers
- Give 1:1 time to the father

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**HSSCP Learning from Review of Practice**

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**HSSCP Learning from Review of Practice**

**Unlocking Fixed Thinking**  
Professionals need to take time to hypothesise in order to be able to adapt their thinking and respond to changes in family circumstances and risk. When professionals encounter new information, a new development or a practice dilemma, they need to take time to hypothesise about what is happening, how this situation or new information changes their working assumptions, what the impact could be and what this means in terms of adapting or reviewing the existing plan. For Child M, the elder sibling's case was due to close and therefore, with no ongoing concerns for the sibling, a pre-birth assessment was not considered. Understanding the potential impact of new information or changes in a family with existing vulnerabilities is fundamental. Being open to allowing new information in and re-evaluating a working hypothesis allowing professional thinking and understanding to adapt in light of changes is essential to fully understand and respond to risk. Professionals should articulate within their records where they have received new information, an incident / development or a practice dilemma and how they consider this impacts upon their decision making, what factors they have taken into account and why they are making a specific decision. This promotes evidence based decision making and avoids hindsight bias. Professionals should seek to:

- Create and allow time and space to reflect, ideally as a multi-agency 'team around' when thinking about a specific case.
- Ask managers and colleagues who may bring a fresh perspective to a particular challenge or dilemma for alternative hypotheses.
- Present cases from the child, young person, adult or another family member's perspective to help see things in other ways - 'What does it feel like to be this child living in this household today?' How would the child describe it?
- Invite a multi-agency colleague along to case supervision

**Adaptive and Responsive Thinking - Evidence-Based Decision-Making**  
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**HSSCP Learning from Review of Practice**

**Unlocking Fixed Thinking**  
Nurturing professional curiosity and challenge are a fundamental aspect of working together to keep children and young people safe. For many agencies, the use of reflective supervision is a means of improving decision-making, accountability, and supporting professional development among practitioners. Supervision is also an opportunity to question and explore an understanding of practice in specific cases. Group supervision and multi-agency reflective discussions can be even more effective in promoting curiosity and safe uncertainty, as practitioners can use these spaces to think about their own judgments and observations. It also allows multi-agency partners to learn from one another's expertise, discipline and experience, and the issues considered in one case may have similarities to other cases. Professionals should seek to:

- Create and allow time and space to reflect, ideally as a multi-agency 'team around' when thinking about a specific case.
- Ask managers and colleagues who may bring a fresh perspective to a particular challenge or dilemma for alternative hypotheses.
- Present cases from the child, young person, adult or another family member's perspective to help see things in other ways - 'What does it feel like to be this child living in this household today?' How would the child describe it?
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## CASE REVIEWS

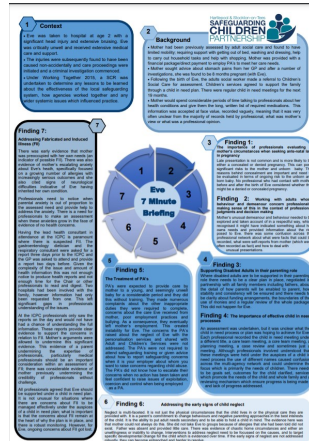
### Reviews carried over into the new partnership - EVE

A [seven-minute briefing](#) was published for the **SLSCB Eve SCR** which carried over into the partnership from Stockton's Safeguarding Children Board.

A Tees-wide [Concealed Pregnancy](#) procedure and a guidance document on [Working with Families who Find it Hard to Engage](#) have been developed as a result of recommendations arising from the Eve SCR and can be found on the Tees Procedures website.

A Review of the [Tees Multi-Agency Recording Standards](#) took place with additions being made around the recording of parental self-reporting. A review of the Fabricated Induction of Illness procedure is also underway.

A [checklist](#) between Children's and Adult services was developed to provide guidance regarding situations where there is a child(ren) with support, care or protection needs and a parent with care and support needs and the '[Think Family](#)' guidance was reviewed and updated.



## KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY ( KLOE )

As outlined in last year's annual report, the partnership commissioned deep dives into two key lines of enquiry during 2019-20.

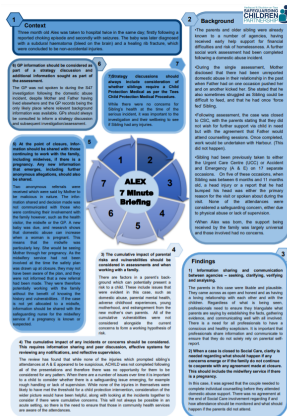
The first, on the theme of '**Children Placed at a Distance**', was completed in March 2020 and a task and finish group was established to lead on actions arising from recommendations made. This resulted in:

- ➔ A review of provision re advocates and independent visitors resulting in a piece of work which looks at recruitment of Local Authority employees to the Independent Visitor role.
- ➔ A review of existing policies/procedures in relation to placing children (out of area) to ensure that they are clear and easy to follow.
- ➔ A review of existing templates (incorporating Value in Care / Words that Care).
- ➔ Development of a seven minute briefing / checklist to share good practice and development areas in relation to planning out of area placements.

The second KLOE, on the theme of '**Children Missing from Home / Care**', was completed in September 2020 and the recommendations fed into the partnership's Contextual Safeguarding arrangements planning group as part of HSSCP's key priorities for the coming year. This resulted in:

- ➔ HSSCP delivered a multi-agency Conference to raise awareness around Contextual Safeguarding, including 'missing', in November 2020.
- ➔ Police now have dedicated Child Exploitation Team (CET).

### Reviews carried over from 2019-20



#### ALEX LCSPR

A [seven-minute briefing](#) was published for the **ALEX LCSPR**.

Learning arising from the LCSPR was shared with multi-agency professionals in a series of briefings which took place in March 2021 and have also been included in newly commissioned Neglect training being delivered as part of the HSSCP training programme in 21-22.

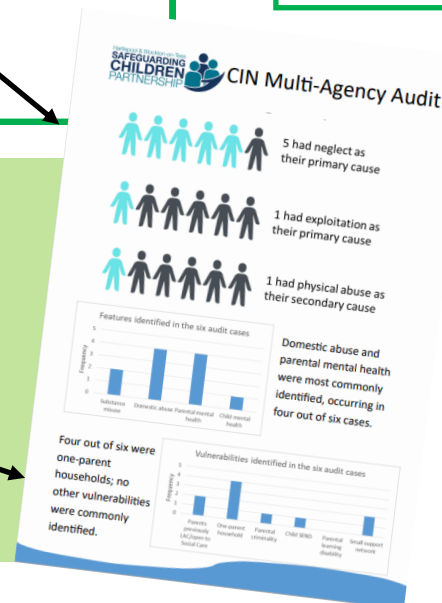
The review identified work for the partnership around step-down processes.

### Multi-Agency Audits

The partnership undertook two multi-agency audit days during 2020-21.

The first being on the theme of Domestic Abuse; the output of which has fed into one of HSSCP's key priorities for the coming year.

The second audit day focussed upon Child in Need cases, step-up / step-down and decision-making.





## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

HSSCP had to stand down all face-to-face training from March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. From September 2020, the majority of Safeguarding Children courses, that would usually have been classroom-based, were instead delivered virtually and a new virtual training programme was issued to the multi-agency workforce.

HSSCP saw an increase throughout 2020-21 of professionals both attending the multiagency (virtual) training and in those accessing e-learning courses.



**58 multi-agency training sessions delivered**



**8,578 e-learning sessions completed**

**1,185 people attended multi-agency training**



**328 people attended the safeguarding learning review briefings.**



**120 people attended the themed conference**



Even though it was virtual, it was an inclusive experience that encouraged interaction.

It gave great insight and made me think differently about my practice!

One of the best conferences I've ever attended, with national leaders. Learned so much and it has given me lots to reflect on about my own practice about that of my service and the wider partnership. Given the additional challenges presented for the organisers and speakers of having to deliver this virtually due to the national lockdown, my hat off everyone involved. Brilliant!

The training has greatly supported me in understanding what has happened to a child I am working with.

Practice has improved as the staff member now understands the signs of safety model and feels confident and able to embed and use it in practice.

## COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

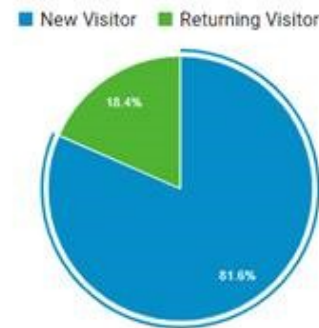
HSSCP continued to engage with partners and professionals and share key messages across the multi-agency workforce. The partnership produced and circulated their monthly e-bulletins which provide a range of useful articles, resources and tools on key up-to-date safeguarding issues and themes. Quarterly newsletters, updating professionals on the work undertaken each quarter, were also shared. The HSSCP website continues to be regularly updated with partnership news and publications and key messages are also shared via HSSCP's Twitter account.



**81.8%** new visitors to the HSSCP website



**25,490** page views on the new HSSCP website



Monthly e-bulletins were circulated to **888** partner representatives for wider distribution. These outlined key messages around pertinent safeguarding themes.



**6** Termly Safeguarding Forums were delivered to Designated Leads and Head Teachers across Hartlepool and Stockton Schools.



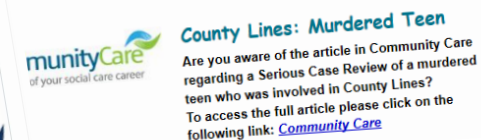
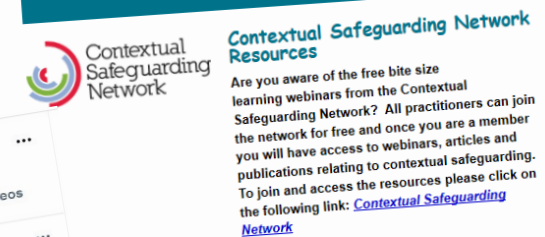
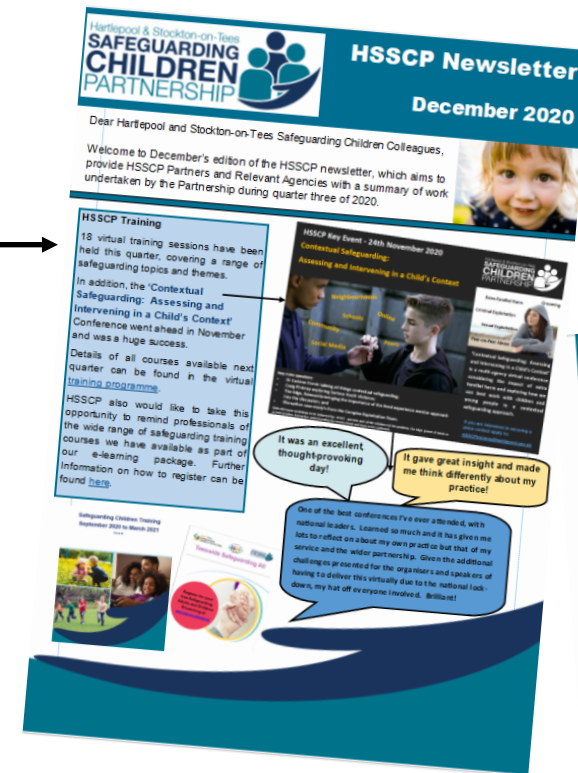
**4** Quarterly newsletters were circulated to partner agencies to communicate HSSCP activity.



HSSCP now have a **Twitter** account - [@HSSCP1](https://twitter.com/HSSCP1)



**3** seven minute briefings and **3** LCSPR reports were distributed to partner agencies, sharing learning arising from reviews undertaken.



Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership Update

February 2021





# Next Steps

## NEXT STEPS

### HSSCP Priorities for 2021-22

The HSSCP Executive and Engine Room have undertaken development work to identify key priorities for the Partnership for 2021-22. These are:

**Business Priority:**

- 1) Partnership Development (to include governance, engagement)

**Thematic Priorities:**

- 2) Contextual Safeguarding
- 3) Domestic Abuse

**Practice Themes:**

- 4) Learning from reviews and good practice (to include active learning, audit, impacting upon frontline practice)

These key priorities have formed the basis for the HSSCP Business Plan for the coming year and work is already underway against each of these.



For more information about HSSCP, visit the HSSCP website by clicking the image below:







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