

EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

– 22 September 2026

OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (OSCP) ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - a) note the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2025/26; and
 - b) consider the key safeguarding messages, achievements and areas for continued improvement identified by the Partnership.

Executive Summary

2. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) Annual Report 2025/26 provides an assessment of the effectiveness of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across Oxfordshire.
3. The report highlights progress made by safeguarding partners in improving outcomes for children, strengthening multi-agency working, learning from reviews and audits, and responding to emerging safeguarding issues.
4. Priorities during the year included child neglect, harm outside the home and MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) alongside continued oversight of serious incidents, quality assurance activity, and partnership learning.
5. The Committee is invited to note the report and consider the key findings and priorities for 2026/27.

Background

6. Responsibility for Oxfordshire's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements is shared by the three statutory safeguarding partners: Oxfordshire County Council, NHS Thames Valley Integrated Care Board and Thames Valley Police.
7. NHS Thames Valley Integrated Care Board was established on 1 April 2026, bringing together the former NHS Frimley and NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Boards.

8. The three safeguarding partners work together to co-ordinate their safeguarding services for children, provide strategic leadership, engage relevant agencies and implement learning from local and national reviews, including serious child safeguarding incidents. These arrangements are known as the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Key Issues

9. The OSCP Annual Report 2025/26 sets out the principal safeguarding challenges and areas for improvement in Oxfordshire. These include:
 - neglect;
 - child exploitation and harm outside the home; and
 - the effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub partnership.
10. The report identifies the following key messages for system leaders:
 - strengthen the voice of children and families in planning, scrutiny and service delivery;
 - further develop the Partnership's use of data to inform targeted safeguarding activity;
 - maintain a collective focus on high-impact safeguarding issues, including neglect, exploitation and harm outside the home; and
 - continue to build a culture of learning, constructive challenge and continuous improvement.
11. During 2025/26, one serious incident notification was submitted to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, resulting in a Rapid Review. The Partnership and the national Panel subsequently agreed that the case should progress to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review.
12. One Child Safeguarding Practice Review remains active, and the Partnership is finalising the relevant arrangements with the national Panel.

Common Learning Themes

13. Common safeguarding themes identified through local and national reviews include:
 - the importance of early identification and professional curiosity, particularly where children are unable or unwilling to disclose harm;
 - effective and timely information sharing within and between agencies to support informed decision-making;
 - maintaining a clear focus on the child's lived experience throughout assessment, planning and intervention;
 - strong multi-agency oversight and co-ordination, particularly in complex cases involving several services; and

- consistent risk assessment and safety planning, including where risks are dynamic or escalating.

Strategic Policies and Priorities

14. The report outlines the Safeguarding Children Partnership's priorities, the learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, the outcomes of quality assurance work and the summarised findings with respect to the unexpected child deaths in Oxfordshire.

Financial Implications

15. There are no additional financial implications arising directly from noting this report.

Legal Implications

16. There are no legal implications for the Local Authority

The Council has general legal powers under the Children's Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 to support children in their area.

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 establishes Local Safeguarding Children Boards which safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area.

Section 17 of The Children Act 1989 places a general duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area by providing a range of services appropriate to those children's needs

Section 10 of The Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to work with other agencies for the benefit of children. They should work together to promote the wellbeing of children and young people in their area.

Staff Implications

17. There are no additional staff resources being requested by way of this report for the work outlined in the Annual Report.

Sustainability Implications

18. The Partnership continues to work in a virtual environment, reducing travel congestion, and no longer prints any materials for meetings or training sessions, instead making these available electronically. It has also reduced printing & design costs by making more things, such as this annual report, plain text on the OSCP website.

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

19. Effective safeguarding partnership arrangements will need to continue throughout the transition to new unitary arrangements. Safeguarding partners will continue to monitor and respond to any risks associated with organisational change to ensure that children remain protected and that statutory safeguarding responsibilities continue to be discharged effectively.

Risk Management

20. The Partnership is made up of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies who contribute to and participate in its work, supported by a small Business Unit. The effectiveness of the Partnership relies upon the continued engagement, commitment and contribution of partner organisations.
21. Should partner engagement reduce significantly, there is a risk that the Partnership's ability to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, as set out in the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*, could be affected. This could result in reputational risks for the safeguarding partners and may be highlighted through external inspection and assurance activity, including Ofsted inspections where relevant.
22. The Partnership maintains and regularly reviews a Partnership Risk Register through its governance arrangements. This includes monitoring risks relating to partner engagement, capacity and delivery of statutory functions, with mitigating actions identified and overseen by the safeguarding partners and relevant governance groups

Lisa Lyons
Director of Children Services

Annexes:

1. [OSCP-Annual-Report-2025-26.pdf](#) ;
2. [OSCP Annual Report at a glance](#)

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