



OSCP

Oxfordshire
Safeguarding
Children Partnership



**Annual
Report**
2025-6

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1. Foreword by the Senior Safeguarding Partners

We are pleased to present the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) Yearly Report for the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. We would like to thank our front-line practitioners and managers for their continued dedication to championing positive outcomes and wellbeing for children in Oxfordshire. Their daily commitment, professionalism, and care are what keep children safe.

Over the past year, we have continued to embed our safeguarding arrangements following the significant changes introduced in the previous year. This work will continue into 2026–27, with further information to be published on our website in line with the requirements of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)*. During this period, several sub-groups have met in person to strengthen their development and effectiveness, and we thank colleagues for their time and commitment.

This Yearly Report sets out the work, progress, and complex issues the partnership is addressing in line with statutory guidance.

Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services for Oxfordshire County Council, chaired the Partnership during this reporting period. Plans are underway to rotate the chair position to another designated safeguarding partner after 18 months, in line with the arrangements.

A significant development towards the end of this reporting period was the strengthening of education representation within the partnership's leadership. The Director for Education at Oxfordshire County Council, alongside the Chair of the Safeguarding in Education Subgroup, joined the Executive Group alongside the Delegated Safeguarding Partners. This demonstrates a clear commitment to ensuring that education is central to strategic decision-making and to the development of the safeguarding system in Oxfordshire.

This year also marked the formal publication and early implementation of the updated Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA). Our priority areas, neglect, harm outside the home, and the MASH partnership, remain in place to support long-term impact.

During the latter part of the reporting period, the partnership also began preparing for the implementation of the Families First reforms. This included supporting the development of Family Help arrangements and piloting a Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) model, helping partners test and strengthen integrated approaches to safeguarding children and supporting families.

This report highlights progress, challenges, key data trends, learning from reviews, and forward priorities. It demonstrates how arrangements have evolved in response to national reforms, supporting a transparent, child-centred and system-wide approach to safeguarding.

2. Independent Scrutineer Statement

I have been privileged to fulfil the role of Independent Scrutineer for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) during 2025/26. Over the past year, I have seen the partnership consolidate and strengthen its multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, whilst developing a clearer understanding of the risks and challenges that require continued attention to improve outcomes for children and young people. As Independent Scrutineer, my role is to provide constructive challenge and support, helping to strengthen the effectiveness, accountability and impact of safeguarding arrangements across Oxfordshire.

My approach to scrutiny has been to develop a 360-degree assessment of the partnership through direct observation, analysis of quantitative and qualitative information, consideration of the lived experiences of children, young people and families, and feedback from frontline practitioners. This provides a robust evidence base through which to challenge and support senior leaders and assess the effectiveness of partnership arrangements.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the OSCP, I have focused on leadership and governance, partnership effectiveness, outcomes for children and young people, performance management, and the extent to which learning from audits, reviews, inspections and quality assurance activity is driving improvement across the safeguarding system.

During 2025/26, the partnership has strengthened its leadership and governance arrangements considerably. The Designated Safeguarding Partners have continued to work effectively together through the Executive Group and, importantly, have strengthened engagement with the Lead Safeguarding Partners. This has significantly improved oversight, accountability and strategic leadership for safeguarding across Oxfordshire. The partnership has also made substantial progress in implementing the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children and has reviewed its governance arrangements to ensure greater focus on priority areas, particularly Child Exploitation and Harm Outside the Home and Neglect.

Whilst leadership within the statutory safeguarding partners has remained stable during the year, the partnership has recognised the need to prepare for significant organisational change in the future. The development of a partnership risk register is an important step forward and provides a framework through which emerging risks can be identified, monitored and mitigated. Over the coming year, I would expect to see the risk management framework continue to mature, with a particular focus on business continuity and maintaining effective safeguarding arrangements through periods of organisational change.

The partnership has continued to strengthen engagement with a broad range of agencies. However, there remains an opportunity to further develop strategic influence and engagement with key partners, particularly within education and probation. Additional investment by the Executive Group has enabled a review and strengthening of partnership infrastructure, including dedicated capacity for project management, participation and engagement, and data analysis.

I am particularly pleased to see the continued development of collaborative relationships with other strategic partnerships across Oxfordshire, including the Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board. This has resulted in a refreshed joint protocol that supports greater alignment of priorities and activity across the safeguarding and community safety landscape.

2. Independent Scrutineer Statement

One of the most significant areas of progress during the year has been the improvement in partnership performance information and quality assurance. The OSCP has strengthened both the quality and use of quantitative and qualitative data, providing the Executive with a more comprehensive understanding of safeguarding performance across the system. This enhanced oversight has enabled the partnership to identify areas requiring deeper scrutiny, including the operation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements and pathways through the safeguarding system.

The ongoing programme of single and multi-agency audit has continued to provide valuable insight into practice. I have observed strong examples of how audit findings have informed strategic development, particularly in relation to Child Exploitation and Harm Outside the Home, where audit activity directly informed the development of the partnership strategy and action plan.

The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment, undertaken in February 2026, provided an important independent assessment of safeguarding practice in Oxfordshire. The inspection identified both strengths and areas for further development. Significantly, inspectors concluded that when children are identified as being at risk of sexual abuse within their families, safeguarding responses are generally swift and effective, with timely access to therapeutic support and well-coordinated police investigations. The partnership has responded positively to the inspection findings and is committed to delivering further improvement through its action plan.

The partnership has also strengthened its focus on participation and engagement. New capacity has enabled the OSCP to place greater emphasis on hearing and responding to the voices of children and young people. Whilst this work remains at an early stage, strong foundations have been established to ensure that lived experience increasingly informs future safeguarding policy, practice and service development.

A strong learning culture continues to be central to the work of the OSCP. Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, audits and inspections has informed improvements in practice, governance and workforce development. In particular, learning arising from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review relating to neglect has supported strengthened training, professional practice and oversight arrangements. The partnership has also maintained a comprehensive programme of learning and development opportunities for leaders and practitioners.

Overall, I am confident that during 2025/26 the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has delivered a significant step forward in the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The partnership has strengthened its leadership, governance, performance management and learning culture whilst maintaining a clear focus on key safeguarding priorities, including exploitation and neglect. The challenge for 2026/27 will be to build on this strong foundation and demonstrate how these strengthened arrangements continue to improve outcomes and experiences for children and young people across Oxfordshire.

Ian Sutherland
Independent Scrutineer
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

3. Voice and Influence of Children

Strengthening the voice and influence of children, young people, and families remains a core commitment of the partnership. The 2024–2025 Annual Report identified participation and engagement as a key area for development, recognising the need to move towards a more comprehensive approach that empowers those with lived experience to contribute in meaningful and impactful ways.

In response, a Participation and Engagement Officer took up post in February 2026. Activity during this period has focused on establishing strong foundations for participation and engagement across the partnership, including building relationships with children, young people, and families, and developing a network of partner organisations to meaningfully inform OSCP strategy, learning, and practice.

Progress and Activity

Key activity has included:

- Engagement with internal and external services, as well as voluntary and community organisations, to raise awareness, promote involvement, and build a comprehensive partnership network
- Strengthening youth voice activity by expanding children and young people's forums within children's services, with 17 new members joining as a direct result of targeted engagement
- Mapping existing participation activity across partners to identify gaps and reduce duplication
- Developing policies, processes, and frameworks to support participation and engagement within OSCP
- Delivering regular engagement activity with a diverse range of children, young people, and families

There is early evidence that children and young people feel increasingly heard and involved, reporting that they are part of conversations and can see how their views are influencing change.

Impact and Learning

Early feedback highlights a positive shift in how children, young people, and families experience engagement. Participants report feeling empowered, valued, and able to influence change.

This work is reinforcing the importance of:

- Creating safe and inclusive spaces for participation
- Providing feedback loops so contributors can see the impact of their involvement
- Ensuring participation is embedded across practice, not treated as a one-off activity

3. Voice and Influence of Children

Voices from Children and Families

Insights from children and families highlight the value and impact of this work:

"I get out of it the fact that I'm helping with spreading the word for people in care... I've definitely noticed it now since you and Jo have started that we know what has changed and what's happening... Some words to sum it up would be: exciting, grateful, and knowing that I'm making an impact."

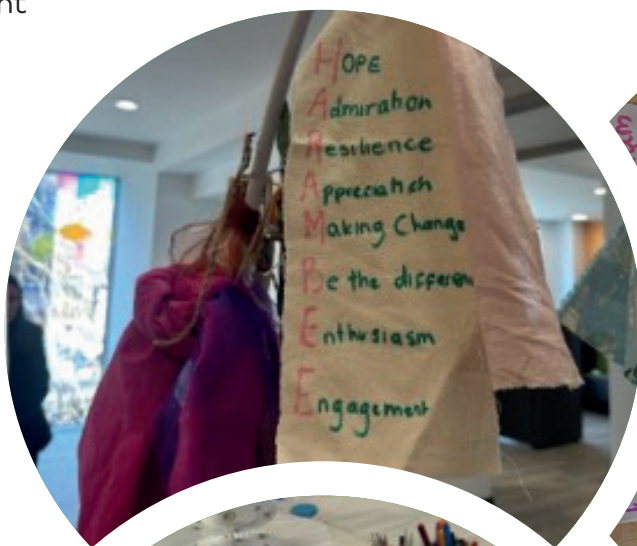
— Young person, Guardians For Us Forum

"It's a lot different than being on the receiving end of meetings... I know what to expect and I can have a say and some control."

— Young person, Youth Voice Forum

"I think being involved in participation and engagement is important because otherwise the services that need to change won't change... I feel very proud and privileged to be involved... I'm using what I've been through to help other people currently going through the system."

— Parent



4. About Oxfordshire – Children, Demographics and Education

Population and Demographics

Children and Young People

Oxfordshire, a diverse county in the South East, has around 763,000 residents in 2024, with over 150,000 children and young people representing about 20–21% of the population. The child population is growing and increasingly diverse, with varying needs and shifting age groups influenced by birth rates and migration.

Children's experiences are shaped by family, education, health, and community contexts, with these factors interacting to influence levels of need and vulnerability. This includes children experiencing poverty, exploitation, harm outside the home, mental health challenges, or instability within family life.

Understanding vulnerability across the system remains a key priority for the partnership, particularly where multiple risk factors intersect. Strengthening the use of data and intelligence across agencies will support a more nuanced understanding of emerging trends, enabling earlier identification of need and more targeted, coordinated responses.

The partnership continues to prioritise early help, ensuring that children and families receive the right support at the right time, while also maintaining a strong focus on safeguarding those at greatest risk of harm.

Education and Schools

Oxfordshire's education system includes a wide range of primary, secondary, special, and alternative provision settings; in Oxford city alone, over 50 schools support nearly 20,000 pupils.

Schools play a vital role in safeguarding, acting as universal services that are well placed to identify early signs of vulnerability, build trusted relationships with children and families, and provide safe, protective environments. They are key partners in multi-agency working, contributing to early help, statutory safeguarding processes, and ongoing support for children.

Learning from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI - see section 11 for more details.) highlights the important contribution of education in recognising and responding to risk, particularly in relation to issues such as exploitation, attendance, and children who may be less visible to services. Schools are often the first to notice changes in behaviour, patterns of absence, or indicators of harm, and their insights are critical to effective information sharing and decision-making.

The partnership continues to work closely with education partners to strengthen safeguarding practice, improve information sharing, and ensure consistent engagement across all settings, recognising the essential role of education in keeping children safe.

4. About Oxfordshire – Children, Demographics and Education

Children and Young People

The child population is growing and diverse, with varying needs and shifting age groups influenced by birth rates and migration.

Children's experiences are shaped by family, education, health, and community, driving the partnership's focus on early help and targeted support.

Education and Schools

Oxfordshire's education system includes many primary, secondary, special, and alternative schools; in Oxford city alone, over 50 schools support nearly 20,000 pupils.

Schools play a vital role in safeguarding, identifying risks, providing safe environments, and working with other agencies.

Why This Matters for Safeguarding

Oxfordshire's demographic and educational context highlights a growing, diverse child population, persistent inequalities, and the central role of education in safeguarding. This shapes partnership priorities and ensures safeguarding arrangements meet local needs.



5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.1 The Safeguarding Children Partnership enables local organisations and agencies to work together effectively to safeguard children. It ensures:

- A clear, shared vision for improving outcomes for children across all levels of need and types of harm
- Timely, appropriate, and effective responses to protect and support children
- Organisations and agencies challenge one another constructively and are held to account
- The views and experiences of children and families are heard and, alongside professional expertise and data, inform our understanding of strengths and areas for improvement
- Information is gathered, analysed, and shared to understand outcomes for children and identify emerging safeguarding risks
- Senior leaders promote and embed a learning culture that supports services to reflect on and continuously improve practice
- Senior leaders have a strong understanding of local practice and its impact on outcomes for children and families

5.2 Lead Safeguarding Partners

In Oxfordshire, the Lead Safeguarding Partners are:

- Martin Reeves, Chief Executive, Oxfordshire County Council
- Dr Nick Broughton, Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
- Jason Hogg, Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police

The three safeguarding partners work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Oxfordshire.

Through the Executive Group and a range of sub-group structures, the partnership ensures that learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews is embedded, delivers multi-agency training, and coordinates a programme of quality assurance activity to drive continuous improvement in safeguarding practice.

The partnership works collaboratively across a wide range of agencies to promote a culture of learning, apply best practice, and make a positive difference for children and young people in Oxfordshire.

5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.3 Delegated Safeguarding Partners / Executive Group

To support the Lead Safeguarding Partners in delivering these responsibilities, each has appointed a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) from within their organisation. DSPs are authorised to take decisions on behalf of the LSPs (although key decisions remain with the LSPs) and are responsible for ensuring full and active participation in local safeguarding arrangements.

In Oxfordshire, the Delegated Safeguarding Partner roles are:

- Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services (Oxfordshire County Council)
- Ben Clark, Chief Superintendent, LCU Commander – Oxfordshire (Thames Valley Police)
- Katherine Elsmore, Director of Safeguarding (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board)

The DSPs, acting on behalf of the LSPs, work together as the Executive Group and hold primary responsibility for implementing the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. They provide oversight of the quality and effectiveness of delivery against shared priorities and ensure that robust processes are in place to assess compliance and the impact of multi-agency practice.

The DSPs ensure strong partnership working with education and other relevant agencies to support the effective identification of, and response to, harm. They also ensure that information and data are shared appropriately, and that rapid reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are completed to a high standard and within required timescales.

In addition, DSPs are responsible for ensuring that high-quality multi-agency safeguarding training is in place and that the views and experiences of children and families are actively sought and responded to, so that all children, including those from different communities and groups, can access the help and protection they need.

The Lead Safeguarding Partners meet with the Delegated Safeguarding Partners and the Independent Scrutineer as the MASA Strategic Group up to three times each year. These meetings provide oversight of the effectiveness of local arrangements and ensure strong leadership, connectivity, and accountability across the partnership.

5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.4 Business Unit

The Business Unit ensures partners understand their roles in child safeguarding through training, learning, and resource development. Funded by partner contributions, the unit consists of four full-time, one part-time permanent staff, and three temporary full-time roles. The team collaborates across social care, education, health, police, schools, and voluntary sectors, and is supported by an Independent Scrutineer for external oversight. Committed to improving outcomes for children in Oxfordshire, the Business Unit coordinates over 60 meetings annually, supports multiple reviews, organises training for more than 10,000 practitioners, leads learning events, annual summits, practitioner activities, and manages safeguarding guidance and procedures.

Key responsibilities include:

- Facilitating meetings and supporting partnership groups
- Advancing priorities with subgroup and task group chairs
- Uniting strategic leadership to deliver local arrangements
- Promoting multi-agency practice for better outcomes
- Disseminating local and national learning from incidents
- Supporting scrutiny and incorporating findings
- Collecting, analysing, and reporting multi-agency data
- Delivering practice audits
- Developing and reviewing policies and guidance
- Designing, commissioning, and evaluating training
- Managing performance data for informed decisions
- Coordinating communications and website management
- Facilitating consultation and engagement on safeguarding
- Organising rapid and statutory Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.5 How do we achieve our arrangements:

Assessing the Effectiveness of Local Arrangements

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) is responsible for ensuring that there are effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place to protect and promote the welfare of children. This responsibility is shared across the Lead Safeguarding Partners, supported by Delegated Safeguarding Partners and relevant agencies.

The partnership uses a range of mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of its arrangements and ensure that safeguarding practice is of a high quality and delivering positive outcomes for children and families. These include:

- **Multi-agency governance and oversight:**
The Executive Group and Business Delivery Group provide strategic and operational oversight, monitoring progress against priorities and ensuring accountability across partners
- **Independent Scrutiny:**
The Independent Scrutineer provides objective challenge and assurance, assessing the effectiveness of the arrangements and the impact of partnership activity on children's outcomes
- **Quality assurance and audit activity:**
A programme of multi-agency audits, thematic reviews, and performance monitoring is used to assess the quality of practice, identify strengths, and highlight areas for improvement
- **Performance and data analysis:**
The partnership reviews multi-agency data to understand trends, identify emerging risks, and assess whether safeguarding responses are timely and effective
- **Learning from reviews:**
Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, rapid reviews, and national reports is systematically reviewed and embedded into practice, guidance, and training
- **Feedback from practitioners, children and families:**
Engagement activity, including practitioner forums and participation work, provides insight into how arrangements are experienced in practice and informs improvement activity

These mechanisms enable the partnership to build a comprehensive understanding of how effectively safeguarding arrangements are working across the system.

5. About the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Continuous Improvement and Strengthening Practice

The partnership is committed to a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This includes identifying areas of strength, recognising where improvement is needed, and taking coordinated action to strengthen safeguarding practice.

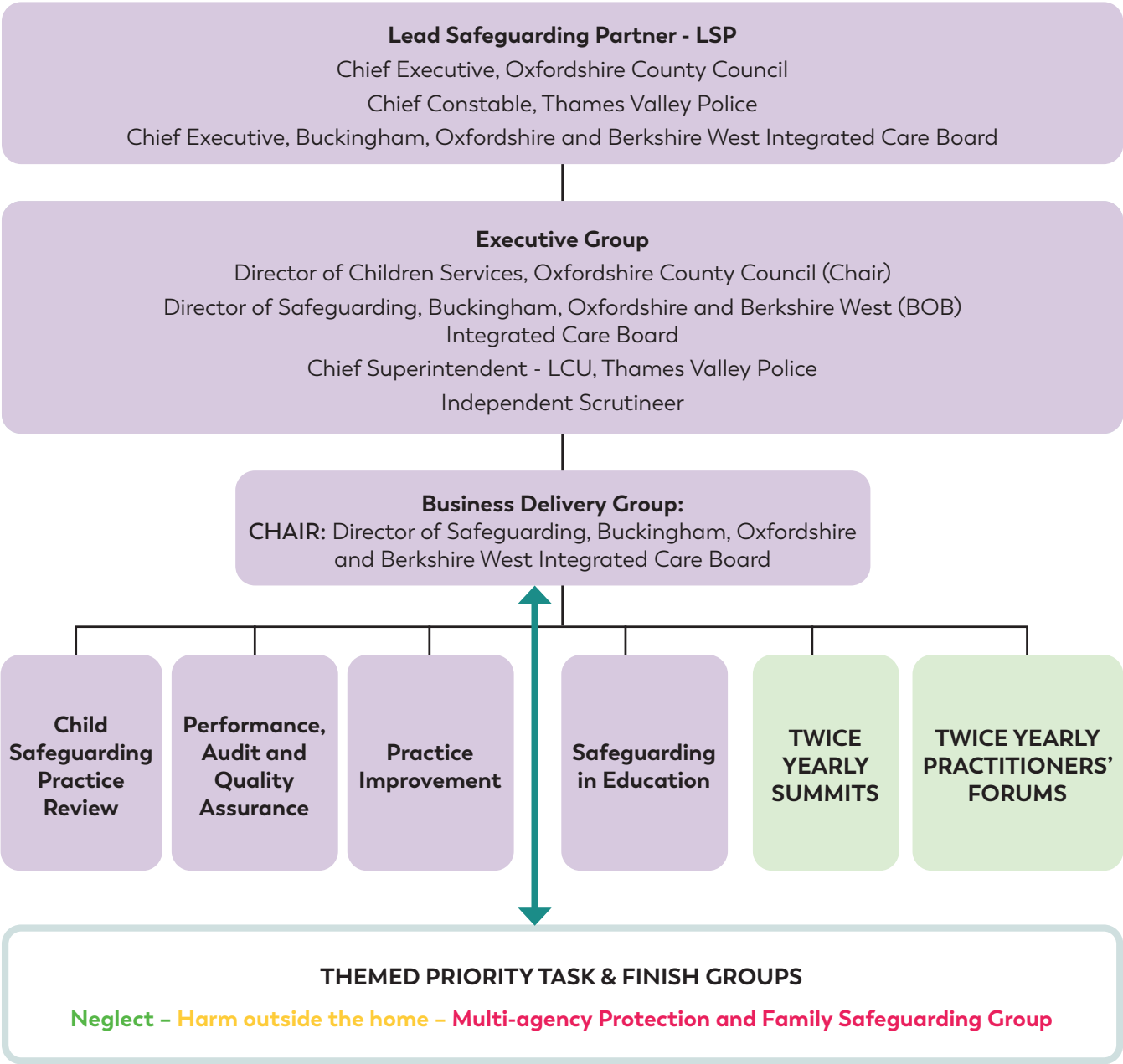
Key approaches to improvement include:

- **Continuous Improvement Planning (CIP):**
Strategic improvement plans are developed in response to local learning, inspection findings, and emerging priorities. These plans set out clear actions, responsibilities, and expected outcomes, and are subject to regular review
- **Learning and development:**
Multi-agency training, learning events, and practitioner forums ensure that learning from audits and reviews is translated into frontline practice
- **Strengthening systems and processes:**
Ongoing work to improve data quality, information sharing, and multi-agency coordination supports more effective and timely safeguarding responses
- **Embedding learning into practice:**
The partnership ensures that lessons from local and national scrutiny activity are reflected in policies, procedures, and operational guidance
- **Responding to inspection and external challenge:**
Findings from inspection activity, including the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), are used to drive improvement and strengthen the effectiveness of local arrangements



6. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Work

OSCP structure:



6. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Work

Partnership Governance Structure

Executive Group

The Executive Group provides strategic oversight of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) and meets bi-monthly. It sets focused agendas aligned to the work of the Business Delivery Group and wider partnership priorities. Agendas are agreed by the Director of Children's Services (as Chair) and the OSCP Business Manager.

Executive meetings include:

- Setting time-limited priorities for the partnership
- Commissioning and overseeing local learning reviews and frameworks, and assessing the effectiveness of multi-agency practice and performance
- Agreeing the OSCP improvement plan, including responses to Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) findings and national recommendations
- Defining and reviewing the model for independent scrutiny
- Considering partnership resourcing and funding arrangements
- Reviewing the partnership structure to ensure it remains effective
- Setting priorities for intelligence and analysis
- Overseeing data and information-sharing arrangements
- Developing communication and engagement strategies with partners, children, and families
- Approving the annual plan as a public safeguarding assurance statement

6. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Work

Partnership Governance Structure

Business Delivery Group

The Business Delivery Group meets bi-monthly, alternating with the Executive Group. It consists of nominated senior leads from statutory partners, subgroup chairs, and representatives from relevant agencies.

The Business Delivery Group:

- Ensures continuity of partnership functions through oversight of sub-groups and task and finish activity
- Leads the development of plans, projects, and activity to deliver partnership priorities
- Analyses data and performance information to assess effectiveness and impact
- Monitors front-line practice, escalating risks and issues to the Executive Group and highlighting good practice
- Receives and responds to findings from the Independent Scrutineer
- Leads the programme for the partnership summit and practitioner forums
- Reports directly to the Executive Group

Membership includes:

- ICB Delegated Safeguarding Partner – Chair
- ICB Designated Nurse and Designated Doctor
- Heads of Safeguarding (Oxford Health and Oxford University Hospitals)
- Deputy Director for Children's Social Care (and Chair of the CSPR Subgroup)
- Head of Service for QA, Safeguarding and Partnerships
- OSCP Business Manager
- Assistant Director for Early Help, Schools and Communities
- Public Health representative
- Thames Valley Police representatives (including Harm Reduction Unit and Public Protection Command)
- Representatives from education (schools, colleges, early years)
- Representatives from the voluntary and community sector

6. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Work

Partnership Governance Structure

Sub-groups and Task and Finish Groups

To complement the strategic leadership of the partnership, OSCP operates a structured sub-group model that supports both operational and tactical delivery. These groups are responsible for progressing key elements of the partnership's work from different perspectives across the governance framework.

Sub-groups:

- Deliver the core functions of the partnership
- Lead on priority areas and specific themes
- Maintain and update multi-agency procedures and protocols
- Oversee learning from serious safeguarding incidents and reviews
- Identify workforce development needs and inform multi-agency training
- Support the implementation of partnership priorities and improvement activity

Task and finish groups are established as required to drive forward time-limited pieces of work aligned to agreed priorities.



7. Priority Areas for 2026–2027

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has agreed to continue to prioritise the following areas:

Child Neglect

Neglect is defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may occur during pregnancy, for example as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including through the use of inappropriate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Provide suitable education
- Respond to a child's basic emotional needs

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026)

Harm Outside the Home

Harm outside the home refers to risks that occur beyond the family environment, including within peer groups, schools, communities, and online. Children may experience harm from both adults and other children.

This can include:

- Child criminal exploitation (including county lines and financial exploitation)
- Serious violence
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Online harm
- Child sexual exploitation (including group-based exploitation and teenage relationship abuse)

Children of all ages may be affected.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026)

7. Priority Areas for 2026–2027

Multi-Agency Protection (MASH Partnership)

Multi-agency protection refers to the coordinated approach between agencies, including local authorities, police, health, and education, to safeguard and support children and families.

Effective multi-agency arrangements depend on:

- Clear roles and responsibilities across partners
- Strong information sharing
- Timely and coordinated responses to risk
- A shared understanding of thresholds and decision-making

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026)



8. Performance and Learning Review

8.1 Learning from Reviews: Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR)

Throughout the 2025–2026 reporting period, the partnership upheld its statutory obligations regarding Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs). These processes continue to be integral to the partnership’s methodology for identifying learning opportunities, enhancing practice, and improving outcomes for children and families. During this timeframe, the partnership issued one serious incident notification which initiated a rapid review. It was subsequently agreed by both the partnership and the national panel that this review would progress into a Child Safeguarding Practice Review.

Learning from completed reviews is systematically considered, with insights informing multi-agency training, policy development, audit activities, and the partnership’s Continuous Improvement Plans.

Key Themes of Learning

Consistent themes have emerged across reviews concluded during this reporting period:

- The significance of early identification and professional curiosity, especially when children are unable or unwilling to disclose harm.
- The necessity for effective information sharing across and within agencies to facilitate timely and informed decision-making.
- The imperative to maintain a focus on the child’s lived experience, ensuring it guides assessment, planning, and intervention.
- Enhancing multi-agency oversight and coordination, particularly in complex cases involving multiple services.
- The requirement for consistent risk assessment and safety planning, including situations with dynamic or escalating risks.

8. Performance and Learning Review

Progress and Impact

In response to identified themes, the partnership has advanced several initiatives:

- Strengthened expectations surrounding professional curiosity, escalation, and reflective practice within the workforce, supporting practitioners to better recognise and respond to emerging risk and vulnerability.
- Created [one-page learning summaries](#) to ensure key messages are accessible and consistently shared across the partnership, supporting a common understanding of practice improvements.
- Incorporated review learning into multi-agency training, practitioner forums, and learning events, enabling practitioners to reflect on real examples and apply learning to their day-to-day work.
- Enhanced guidance and tools relating to neglect, exploitation, and safety planning, supporting more confident and consistent responses to children experiencing complex and overlapping vulnerabilities.
- Improved multi-agency audit activity, strengthening the partnership's ability to understand how learning is being embedded in practice and to identify where further support or challenge is required.
- Integrated review outcomes into the partnership's Continuous Improvement Plans, ensuring a coordinated, transparent, and measurable approach to driving and sustaining improvement.

There is increasing evidence that insights gleaned from reviews are positively impacting practice, with practitioners reporting heightened awareness of risk factors and greater confidence in utilising learning in their daily responsibilities.

Overview of Learning Events: Summits and Forums

In 2025–2026, the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) delivered a programme of multi-agency learning events, including a biannual summit and two practitioner forums. These events focused on learning from local and national safeguarding reviews.

Evaluation feedback was reviewed to understand what worked well and the extent to which learning influenced practice.

8. Performance and Learning Review

Reach and Participation

Practitioners from across the partnership attended these events. However, overall attendance has reduced compared to previous years, including the annual conference, with notable variation in representation across some agencies and sectors.

Event	Date/ Format	Attendance	Evaluation Responses	Notes
Biannual Summit (Summer 2025)	20 June 2025 / In person	67 delegates (including 13 speakers)	65 (63 in person, 2 online)	Bookings did not reach full capacity
Practitioner Forum (Sept 2025)	25 Sept 2025 / In person	115 attended; 15 did not attend (DNA)	50	Slower bookings than previous years; some sectors under-represented
Practitioner Forum (March 2026)	11 March 2026 / Online	88 booked via LMS, plus 11 additional attendees; 22 did not attend or left early	5	Low response rate due to LMS error

Learning Impact

Across all events, participants consistently reported that they:

- Improved their awareness and understanding of OSCP priorities, roles, and learning from safeguarding reviews
- Valued opportunities for multi-agency discussion and reflection, supporting understanding of different professional perspectives
- Identified clear actions to apply learning in their practice

Common intended changes to practice included:

- Increased confidence in respectful challenge and escalation
- Greater professional curiosity
- Improved use of multi-agency chronologies
- Strengthened information sharing
- Increased focus on direct, face-to-face work with children and families

8. Performance and Learning Review

What Worked Well

Feedback highlighted several strengths:

- High-quality, engaging delivery
- Strong value placed on multi-agency networking and discussion
- Practical, practice-focused learning with clear application to day-to-day work
- Effective integration of local and national safeguarding learning, particularly from reviews
- The importance of in-person engagement in strengthening professional relationships

Key Learning and Areas for Improvement

Evaluation identified several areas to strengthen future impact:

- Clearer communication regarding the purpose and target audience of different events
- Improved and more consistent representation across partner agencies and sectors
- Increased time for discussion, reflection, and problem-solving during sessions
- Improved accessibility of materials, including reducing the use of unexplained acronyms

Practitioner Feedback

Feedback from attendees demonstrates the impact and value of the programme:

“Great networking and thank you to those who put in the hard work organising such a successful conference.”

“The most useful forum I can remember attending.”

“The day was very well run and chaired.”

“Inspirational and excellent speakers.”

“It’s so important we have these multi-agency sessions to share and reflect.”

“The training was powerful and thought provoking.”

“Very informative and helpful to hear from other agencies.”

Feedback also reflected opportunities to strengthen practice, including improving information sharing with schools and ensuring consistent communication across agencies.

9. Continuous Improvement Planning

Three Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs) were developed towards the end of the 2025–2026 reporting year to underpin the partnership’s priorities, strategies, and outcomes. These plans are central to the partnership’s approach to reviewing and strengthening safeguarding practice, ensuring that improvement activity is sustained and responsive to emerging need.

Across priority areas, the CIPs support:

- **Child Neglect:** Strengthening early identification and intervention to ensure children receive appropriate care, supervision, and support
- **Harm Outside the Home:** Enhancing multi-agency responses to extra-familial harm, including exploitation and abuse across peer, community, and online contexts
- **Multi-Agency Protection (MASH):** Improving coordination, communication, and joint decision-making across partner agencies
- **JTAI into Child Sexual Abuse in the family.** Multi-agency action plan will be delivered through the Partnership.

By embedding continuous improvement planning across these areas, the partnership ensures that safeguarding practice remains dynamic, evidence-informed, and responsive to the evolving needs of children and families.



10. Key Achievements (April 2025 – March 2026)

Child Neglect

The OSCP multi-agency strategy for 2025–2029 places child neglect as a central priority across Oxfordshire. The partnership aims to ensure that children are seen, safe, and heard through earlier identification, timely coordinated intervention, and sustainable family support. This is underpinned by four key outcomes: that children are healthy, safe, supported, and successful.

Progress achieved under the previous strategy has provided a strong foundation for this work. During 2025–2026, key developments have included:

- Establishment of a multi-agency operational group to improve oversight and coordination
- Introduction of a neglect screening tool to support earlier identification
- Strengthened inter-agency relationships, with consistent representation and shared ownership
- Refresh and co-design of neglect tools to support greater consistency in practice
- Formal adoption of the NSPCC Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) by Children's Social Care and the 0–18 Service
- Continued use of multi-agency audits and practitioner forums to strengthen practice

There is increasing evidence that children's lived experiences are being more consistently reflected in assessment and planning. The partnership continues to promote a trauma-informed, strengths-based and evidence-informed approach, with a clear focus on relational practice and meaningful engagement with families.

Feedback from families has been central in shaping this work. Parents highlight the complex and contextual nature of neglect and the importance of understanding individual circumstances. Children describe neglect in both material and emotional terms, reinforcing the importance of emotional presence and supportive relationships.

Learning from reviews and practice has identified areas for improvement, including:

- Inconsistent recognition and escalation of early warning signs
- Disengagement being normalised in some cases
- Children's lived experiences not always sufficiently informing decision-making

In response, the partnership has strengthened expectations around the use of chronologies, escalation processes, and evidencing impact over time.

Data for April 2025 – March 2026 indicates that:

- Neglect is identified in 21% of Strengths and Needs Assessments
- 33% of Child and Family Assessments
- 60% of Child Protection Plans

Neglect is strongly associated with inequality, with children living in poverty more than twice as likely to be assessed at risk. While Oxfordshire is generally an affluent county, there remain areas of higher deprivation, including Greater Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill, and Banbury Ruscote. These findings continue to inform targeted early help and prevention activity.

10. Key Achievements (April 2025 – March 2026)

10.1 Preparing for Families First and Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT)

During 2025-2026, the partnership has undertaken significant preparatory work to support the implementation of the national Families First reforms and the transition towards a strengthened multi-agency approach to safeguarding and family support.

Partners have worked collaboratively to review local safeguarding arrangements, governance structures, pathways, thresholds, and quality assurance processes to ensure alignment with the expectations set out within Families First reforms and the emerging requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

A key area of development has been the piloting of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT). The pilot brings together professionals from across agencies to strengthen joint decision-making, information sharing, risk assessment, and child protection planning. Early learning from the pilot is informing the future design of safeguarding arrangements and helping partners understand how an integrated multi-agency model can improve outcomes for children and families.

Alongside the MACPT pilot, the partnership has supported local planning for the introduction of Family Help arrangements, including engagement with partners, review of thresholds and pathways, workforce development, and consideration of how services can work more effectively together to provide the right help at the right time.

This work positions Oxfordshire well to respond to national reform and reflects the partnership's commitment to delivering integrated, child-centred safeguarding and family support services.



10. Key Achievements (April 2025 – March 2026)

Harm Outside the Home

The Harm Outside the Home Strategy (2025–2028) sets out Oxfordshire’s multi-agency approach to safeguarding children and young people from exploitation and extra-familial harm. The strategy focuses on prevention, protection, disruption of perpetrators, and the provision of victim-centred support, aligned to national guidance and local learning.

The ambition is to create safer environments across communities, schools, peer groups, and online spaces so that children and young people are better protected from harm.

The strategy addresses a range of risks, including:

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE), including county lines
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Peer-on-peer abuse and teenage relationship violence
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Online exploitation
- Children missing from home or education

Key principles shaping delivery include:

- A contextual safeguarding approach, recognising that harm occurs beyond the family home
- A whole-family approach, strengthening early help and co-produced support
- Trauma-informed, victim-centred practice, recognising children as victims first
- A strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, addressing disproportionality
- The importance of voice and participation, using lived experience to shape delivery
- A commitment to learning and intelligence, using data and audit findings to inform action

Delivery is structured around the “Four Ps” framework:

- Prepare: Strengthening workforce knowledge, improving use of data, and building community awareness
- Prevent: Delivering coordinated prevention activity in communities and schools, including online safety awareness
- Protect: Ensuring consistent multi-agency planning and support, including effective use of MACE arrangements and transitional safeguarding
- Pursue: Identifying and disrupting perpetrators and unsafe locations, and strengthening accountability and outcomes

Governance is provided through the Child Exploitation / Harm Outside the Home Task and Finish Group, reporting into the OSCP governance structure. Progress is reviewed quarterly, with annual reporting and ongoing feedback from children, families, and practitioners to support continuous improvement.

10. Key Achievements (April 2025 – March 2026)

MASH Partnership – Key Achievements

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) coordinates responses for children at risk in Oxfordshire, overseen by the MASH Partnership Group to ensure timely and effective safeguarding.

Demand and System Pressures

Rising demand has strained capacity, increasing backlogs and reliance on single-agency decisions. The partnership is focusing on system-wide solutions to address these risks.

Strengthening Multi-Agency Working

Progress includes enhanced engagement, new escalation pathways, improved information quality, and better child voice capture—leading to more coordinated decision-making.

Data Quality and Intelligence

Efforts to improve data consistency, accuracy, and dashboard alignment have helped the partnership better understand demand and assess effectiveness.

Audit and Quality Assurance

A commissioned multi-agency audit targets contact quality, thresholds, information sharing, and the impacts of system pressures to assure performance.

Learning and Practice Improvement

Key needs include fostering professional curiosity, ensuring oversight, and elevating the child's experience. Feedback and learning dissemination practices have been strengthened.

Impact and Next Steps

MASH continues its vital safeguarding role despite ongoing pressures. Priorities are managing demand, improving oversight and consistency, leveraging data for performance, and integrating audit findings into practice. Ongoing efforts aim to further benefit children and families through collaboration and governance.

11. Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

A Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) examines how effectively local agencies work together to safeguard children in relation to a specific theme. In February 2026, Oxfordshire was subject to a JTAI focusing on the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment (CSAFE).

The inspection took place from 9 to 13 February 2026 and was carried out by inspectors from:

- Ofsted
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP)

The inspection assessed how well agencies collaborate to identify, protect, and support children affected by child sexual abuse within the family.

Headline Findings

During 2025–26, the partnership worked collectively to prepare for and respond to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) focused on the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment.

The inspection reflected the strength of multi-agency collaboration across Oxfordshire, demonstrating committed and engaged leadership, well-established governance arrangements, and a shared focus on safeguarding children through a child-centred approach.

Partners worked closely throughout all phases of the inspection, including pre-inspection preparation, coordinated information sharing, and multi-agency audit activity. This included joint review of cases, shared analysis of practice, and regular cross-partnership communication to ensure a consistent and transparent approach.

The partnership's established governance structures enabled effective oversight and coordination, with Delegated Safeguarding Partners and senior leaders working collectively to provide assurance, respond to emerging lines of enquiry, and support practitioners during the inspection process.

Importantly, the JTAI process itself strengthened partnership working. It provided a shared opportunity for agencies, including children's social care, police, health, probation, and education, to reflect together on practice, identify strengths, and agree priority areas for improvement. This collaborative approach has continued beyond the inspection, with partners jointly developing and implementing an action plan to address identified themes and drive system-wide improvement.

The inspection also reinforced the importance of effective multi-agency information sharing, consistent risk identification (including where there is no disclosure), and coordinated safety planning, areas which the partnership is actively progressing through its continuous improvement activity.

11. Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

Areas for Improvement

Inspectors identified the following key areas requiring further development across the partnership:

- Strengthening the involvement of the probation service in partnership working at a strategic level
- Improving the coordination and analysis of performance information and data to better understand the prevalence and nature of child sexual abuse in the family environment
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of safety planning for children
- Strengthening information sharing between and within partner agencies to support effective risk identification and assessment
- Improving identification of children at risk of child sexual abuse in the absence of clear disclosure
- Expanding the reach and impact of training on child sexual abuse beyond specialist roles
- Strengthening the identification and assessment of risk posed by adult sex offenders
- Improving the effectiveness and oversight of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Increasing professional confidence and curiosity where children's behaviour may indicate abuse

Strengths

The inspection also recognised several significant strengths across the partnership:

- Strong and consistent professional networks supporting children and families where abuse has been identified
- The contribution of local authority clinical psychologists in supporting practitioners to understand barriers to engagement
- Positive, trusting relationships between children, social workers, and investigating officers during police investigations
- Timely and effective police investigations once abuse has been identified
- Prompt access to therapeutic support for children
- Joint training between police officers and social workers to strengthen practice in achieving best evidence interviews
- The valuable role of education providers in identifying and supporting children affected by abuse

11. Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

Response and Continuous Improvement

In response to the inspection, safeguarding partners have committed to a coordinated programme of improvement. A Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is being developed collaboratively to:

- Clearly set out partner roles and responsibilities
- Identify priority actions and areas for development
- Define measurable objectives and outcomes
- Identify risks and mitigation actions

The plan will be subject to regular review and updating, ensuring that progress is monitored, improvements are embedded, and risks are actively managed.

This approach supports the partnership's ambition not only to address areas for improvement identified through the inspection, but also to build on existing strengths and continue to improve outcomes for children and families across Oxfordshire.



12. Data and Performance: Understanding Children’s Experiences in Oxfordshire

Building a Shared Intelligence Picture

Significant progress has been made in developing a shared multi-agency intelligence platform through the Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance (PAQA) subgroup, providing a stronger evidence base to support strategic decision-making and safeguarding activity across partner organisations. This represents an important step forward in creating a more connected and comprehensive understanding of vulnerable children and young people.

During 2025/26, progress has been made in bringing together intelligence and performance information from Children’s Social Care, health partners and Thames Valley Police to support strategic oversight and identify emerging safeguarding risks. This has strengthened the partnership’s ability to understand trends relating to child protection, missing children, exploitation, domestic abuse and wider safeguarding demand. Whilst significant progress has been made, work continues to improve the quality, consistency and accessibility of data across agencies to support an increasingly comprehensive understanding of vulnerability, risk and outcomes for children and young people across Oxfordshire.

PAQA Dashboard in Action

Daily refreshed data

Providing timely information to support strategic decision-making.

Shared intelligence

Bringing together information from social care, health and policing services.

Earlier identification of risk

Helping partners identify patterns and emerging vulnerabilities.

Better outcomes

Supporting more informed safeguarding responses for children and families.

The development of the Partnership Analytics and Quality Assurance (PAQA) dashboard has significantly enhanced the Partnership’s ability to monitor safeguarding activity, identify emerging trends and access timely, consistent data across agencies. The following analysis is drawn from the growing shared data asset and provides insight into the experiences and outcomes of children and young people across Oxfordshire.

Data highlights 2025/26

97.8% of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale.	Approximately 800 Children We Care For.	17.9% of pupils recorded attendance below 90% .	Elective Home Education increased to around 1,500 children.	Continued development of integrated multi-agency datasets
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12. Data and Performance: Understanding Children's Experiences in Oxfordshire

Protecting children at risk

What we know

Oxfordshire continues to perform strongly in the timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences. By January 2026, 97.8% were completed within statutory timescales following a Section 47 enquiry, significantly above statistical neighbour averages. The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans also remains below comparator authorities.

Why this matters

This suggests children who are experiencing, or are at risk of, significant harm are receiving timely safeguarding responses. The partnership continues to monitor both timeliness and quality to ensure that interventions remain focused on children's lived experiences.

Understanding demand and need

What we know

The number of Children We Care For has remained relatively stable at approximately 800 children throughout the reporting period. Whilst stability has been maintained, demand remains significant and reflects national trends.

Why this matters

Understanding placement demand, permanence planning and outcomes for children remains a key area of partnership focus. Enhanced data sharing is helping partners understand trends and plan services more effectively

Ensuring children remain visible

What we know

Attendance remains an important safeguarding indicator. During 2025/26, 17.9% of pupils recorded attendance below 90%, whilst 3% were severely absent. Elective Home Education has increased significantly, with numbers rising from approximately 800 to 1,500 children.

Why this matters

School attendance is a key indicator of children's wellbeing and visibility. Children who are persistently absent from education may be at greater risk of unmet need, vulnerability and harm. Understanding the factors contributing to absence and the significant increase in Elective Home Education remains a priority for the partnership. These findings reinforce the importance of partnership activity relating to neglect, harm outside the home and the role of education in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns.

12. Data and Performance: Understanding Children's Experiences in Oxfordshire

Building a fuller picture through health data

What we know

Health data provides valuable insight into children's experiences and wellbeing. Improving the integration of health and safeguarding information enables partners to develop a richer understanding of need, identify vulnerability earlier and strengthen multi-agency decision-making.

Why this matters

Bringing together information that has traditionally sat in separate systems improves opportunities to identify emerging need earlier and strengthen multi-agency decision-making.

Looking Ahead 2026–2027

The partnership is moving beyond reporting activity towards developing a richer understanding of children's lived experiences and outcomes. As additional datasets are incorporated and analytical capability continues to develop, PAQA will play an increasingly important role in identifying emerging vulnerability, evaluating the impact of partnership activity and providing assurance that safeguarding arrangements are improving outcomes for children and young people across Oxfordshire. The continued development of a shared intelligence approach will support earlier intervention, more informed decision-making and stronger multi-agency safeguarding practice.

13. Multi-Agency Training

This section provides an overview of the multi-agency training programme coordinated and delivered by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) for the period 2025–2026. It outlines the training model, courses delivered, participation levels, organisational engagement, and the impact of training on professional practice.

Training Model

OSCP delivers a locally focused training programme led by frontline practitioners who volunteer as part of a dedicated training pool. Trainers are supported by the OSCP Business Unit under the oversight of the Training Coordinator.

This model continues to demonstrate its effectiveness and popularity, enabling the partnership to provide high-quality training at no cost to participants while benefiting from the expertise and experience of practitioners across the system.

Courses Offered and Attendance (2025–2026)

During the reporting period, a broad range of core and themed training was delivered through webinars, in-person sessions, and eLearning.

Course Type	Number of Courses	Offered Places	Attended
Core courses – webinar	94	2,358	2,208
Core courses – in-person	24	514	391
Early Years core courses – webinar	57	1,429	1,301
Early Years core courses – in-person	6	152	143
Themed courses – webinar	90	2,408	1,453
Themed courses – in-person	14	396	241
Total	285	7,257	5,737
Practitioner Events	2	233	180
Summit	1	140	58
eLearning	-	-	11,548

13. Multi-Agency Training

Attendance by Organisation

The training programme attracted participation from a wide range of organisations, demonstrating strong multi-agency engagement and commitment to safeguarding practice.

Category	Count
Adult Social Care	40
Childminders	270
Children's Social Care	385
District Council	164
Early Years (Other)	137
Foster Carers	13
GPs	15
Health	243
Housing	43
Oxfordshire County Council	172
Police	30
Private, Community and Voluntary Sector	471
Schools	2,239
Other	596
eLearning	-

13. Multi-Agency Training

Impact of Training on Practice

The Practice Improvement Subgroup has piloted an evaluation approach to better understand the impact of training on professional practice. This pilot used a narrative-based methodology, specifically “Most Significant Change” conversations, following training on child sexual abuse.

Findings from this pilot indicate:

- Increased practitioner confidence in responding to safeguarding concerns
- Greater professional curiosity and more effective challenge
- Evidence of changes in day-to-day decision-making and practice

As a result of this pilot, the partnership has agreed to extend this evaluation approach to other priority areas, including neglect and harm outside the home.

Summary and Impact

The 2025–2026 training programme has provided a robust, accessible, and inclusive offer, with strong engagement from a wide range of partner organisations.

The continued commitment to delivering high-quality, free multi-agency training—combined with strengthened evaluation of its impact—supports a confident and skilled workforce, better equipped to safeguard and support children and families across Oxfordshire.



14. Next Steps (2026–2027)

During 2026–2027, the focus will be on building on further embedding the voice of children, families, and communities across all areas of the partnership’s work.

Key priorities include:

- Gathering feedback from children, young people, and families on OSCP’s training and learning offer, and creating opportunities for lived experience to shape delivery
- Finalising and publishing the OSCP Participation and Engagement Framework and remuneration policy
- Working alongside the Independent Scrutineer to embed children’s voices within scrutiny activity
- Continuing to build trusted relationships with children and families to support safe and meaningful sharing of experiences



15. Funding/Budget Arrangements

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) is funded through contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners, the local authority, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, and Thames Valley Police. These partners share responsibility for ensuring that sufficient resources are in place to deliver effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), the safeguarding partners agree the level of funding required to support the delivery of the partnership's statutory responsibilities. This includes:

- Business and analytical support
- Independent scrutiny
- Partnership infrastructure
- Delivery of core functions such as Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Multi-agency training and learning events

Funding contributions are agreed collectively by the Lead Safeguarding Partners and are expected to be equitable and proportionate, reflecting each partner's role and responsibilities within the safeguarding system.

During 2025–2026, partner organisations have continued their commitment to funding the partnership to ensure the effective delivery of safeguarding arrangements. The majority of the budget continues to be allocated to staffing the Business Unit, which provides the essential infrastructure to coordinate multi-agency activity and support delivery against partnership priorities. Professional services, including commissioned Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, represent a further significant area of expenditure.

Funding arrangements are subject to ongoing review by the safeguarding partners to ensure that resources remain sufficient to meet the needs of the partnership and respond to emerging priorities, risks, and national requirements.