Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2025/2026

Working together to safeguard children and adults in Bury

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Introduction

It is with great commitment and shared ambition that we present the 2025–26 Annual Report of the Bury Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP).

This report outlines how we have fulfilled our statutory responsibilities in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, including assessing the effectiveness of our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, demonstrating the impact of our work, and ensuring the voices of children and young people remain central to our practice.

Over the past year, partners across Bury have worked collaboratively to strengthen safeguarding arrangements, respond to emerging needs, and promote a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous learning. This report reflects both the progress we have made and our ongoing commitment to ensuring that all children in Bury are safe, supported, and able to achieve their full potential.

During 2025-26, partners strengthened neglect practice through the implementation of Graded Care Profile 2, achieved positive outcomes from the SEND monitoring inspection, enhanced learning from reviews through thematic tracking, and expanded workforce development reaching over 800 practitioners. Challenges remain around demonstrating impact through partnership data, improving consistency of multi-agency performance information, and strengthening arrangements for transitional safeguarding.

Chair's Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce the Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for 2025/26. As Executive Director of Children's Services and Chair of the Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership, I am pleased to present this report, which highlights the collective commitment of our partners to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people across Bury.

Jeanette Richards

Executive Director of Children's Services
Chair, Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership.

This report sets out the work undertaken by the partnership over the last twelve months to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people across Bury. It reflects the commitment of our statutory safeguarding partners, relevant agencies, schools, voluntary sector organisations and practitioners who work tirelessly every day to protect children and improve outcomes for families.

During the year we have continued to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements, building on the progress made across the wider children's system. We have seen positive inspection outcomes, including improvements identified through the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services and the SEND Monitoring Inspection. Partners have worked collaboratively to address key priorities including neglect, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse, complex safeguarding and workforce development. We have also continued to embed learning from reviews and scrutiny activity, ensuring that we remain focused on continuous improvement.

Whilst there is much to celebrate, we recognise that challenges remain. Like partnerships across the country, we are operating in a period of significant change, with the implementation of Families First reforms, evolving safeguarding risks and continuing pressures across public services. We remain committed to ensuring that the voice and lived experience of children and young people informs our decision-making and that we can clearly demonstrate the impact of our work through stronger performance and outcome measures.

I would like to thank all professionals, volunteers and partner agencies for their ongoing commitment to safeguarding children and young people in Bury. The dedication, expertise and willingness to work together across organisational boundaries continues to be one of our greatest strengths.

As we move into 2026/27, we will continue to build on our progress, strengthen our partnership arrangements and maintain our focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Area Profile

Local Context

Bury is a metropolitan borough with a population of approximately 199,000, including a significant and growing proportion of children under 18. The borough includes six townships: Bury, Radcliffe, Whitefield, Prestwich, Ramsbottom, and Tottington. These communities are marked by rich cultural diversity, pockets of deprivation, and a dynamic voluntary and community sector.

- Population: Approx. 196,000
- Children under 18: 44,374 (ONS mid-year estimate as of June 2025)
- Bury comprises six townships including Bury, Radcliffe, Prestwich, Whitefield, Ramsbottom and Tottington, with a diverse demographic and a growing proportion of children with complex needs and SEND.

Recent Inspections

ILACS

Bury's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) took place between 9 and 20 June 2025. Ofsted judged the overall effectiveness of children's services as 'Requires Improvement to be Good', representing significant progress from the previous 'Inadequate' judgement in 2021. The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families was judged to be 'Good'. Ofsted reported that services had improved substantially since the last inspection, noting that "far more children are receiving services that are making a positive difference to their lives and helping to ensure that they are safe and well cared for than was found at the time of the last inspection".

The inspection represented the culmination of a three-and-a-half-year improvement journey, supported by six Ofsted monitoring visits, Department for Education reviews, peer challenge from partner local authorities, and a national review of services for care leavers. Inspectors recognised the council's sustained and determined approach to improvement, underpinned by effective multi-

agency partnerships, external scrutiny, significant investment in services and workforce stability, and a comprehensive quality assurance framework.

The report highlighted strengths across a range of services, including effective early help and safeguarding arrangements, improved permanence planning, support for disabled children, contextual safeguarding, kinship care, adoption planning and services for care leavers. Children and young people were found to be listened to and involved in shaping services, while staff described a more positive organisational culture and greater workforce stability. Ofsted also recognised positive feedback from key partners, including the judiciary and Cafcass, regarding the quality of practice and focus on children's lived experiences.

While acknowledging the considerable progress made, inspectors identified areas where further improvement is required to achieve consistently good services for all children and families. These included strengthening planning, supervision, management oversight and the consistency of social work practice, ensuring that drift and delay are identified and addressed promptly and that all children receive timely and effective support. Leaders were recognised as having a clear understanding of these priorities and robust plans in place to continue the improvement journey.

SEND

Following the Local Area SEND Inspection in 2024, the Bury Local Area Partnership recognised that significant improvements were required to ensure that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and their families, received the right support at the right time.

Since the inspection, partners across education, health and social care have worked collaboratively and at pace to deliver the SEND Priority Impact Plan and drive sustainable improvement across the local area. This has included strengthening strategic governance arrangements, refreshing the SEND Strategy, reducing waiting times across a number of health services, and improving the quality and consistency of support available to children, young people and their families.

A key focus of the partnership's improvement work has been strengthening the graduated approach to SEND support. This aims to ensure that children and young people receive help as early as possible through the timely identification of need, the provision of appropriate support, and regular review to ensure interventions remain effective and responsive to changing circumstances.

The partnership recognises that meaningful and lasting improvement takes time. However, there has been significant progress across all areas identified for improvement, supported by strong collaboration between partners and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

In March 2026, the Local Area Partnership welcomed a SEND Monitoring Inspection from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The inspection took place between 9 March 2026 and 11 March 2026 and provided an opportunity for inspectors to evaluate progress against the areas for improvement identified in the 2024 inspection. The monitoring inspection report, published on 29

June 2026, confirmed that effective action had been taken in all six areas of the Priority Impact Plan, demonstrating the positive impact of the partnership's improvement activity.

While this represents a significant milestone, the partnership remains committed to continuous improvement. Work will continue to strengthen the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, informed by the voices of children, young people and families and aligned with emerging national SEND reforms.

This commitment is underpinned by the Bury SEND Strategic Vision 2025-2028, which sets out a shared ambition for children and young people with additional needs to be supported to thrive, achieve their potential and lead fulfilling lives. Through continued partnership working, Bury aims to ensure that children, young people and their families can access the right support, at the right time, and have greater confidence in the services available to them.

Progress Against Statutory Requirements

Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership

Bury's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements set out how local organisations work together to protect and promote the welfare of children, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. The arrangements are led by the statutory safeguarding partners: Bury Council, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board and Greater Manchester Police, who share accountability for ensuring effective collaboration, information sharing and coordinated responses to risk. Through the Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership, these partners and wider relevant agencies work collectively to identify need, safeguard children, commission and learn from reviews, and continuously improve practice. The arrangements are underpinned by a clear governance structure, including the Safeguarding Executive and a range of subgroups, which provide strategic direction, performance oversight and learning. A strong emphasis is placed on early intervention, the voice of children and families, and a coordinated, multi-agency approach to ensure children receive the right support at the right time and are protected from harm. Our website provides more information on our work.

Greater Manchester Safeguarding Alliance

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

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

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

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

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

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

In 2026-27, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed against the new Working Together 26 guidance, including a review of the Alliance's membership with the ambition to strengthen the role of independent scrutiny moving forwards. Statutory partners will also seek to identify safeguarding functions that can be best delivered on a wider footprint (cluster, GM or NW) and ensure there is strategic oversight of national reforms, such as Families First that will have most significant implications for safeguarding practice.

Aggregated Scrutiny

Independent Scrutiny

Independent scrutiny remains a key component of Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership's arrangements, providing objective challenge, support and assurance to ensure that safeguarding partners work effectively together and that arrangements continue to improve in line with the expectations set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. Independent scrutiny is designed to strengthen accountability, promote transparency, and support a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the partnership.

During 2025/26, the Independent Scrutineer undertook a Safeguarding Effectiveness Review using the Multi-Agency Children's Safeguarding (MACS) framework. This involved consideration of partnership documentation, observation of governance structures, scrutiny of performance and assurance activity, and engagement with safeguarding leaders and frontline practitioners from across the partnership. The review sought to assess not only whether the partnership is fulfilling its statutory

duties, but also the extent to which partnership activity is making a difference to safeguarding practice and outcomes for children.

What the Scrutiny found:

- The review identified a number of strengths across the partnership, including:
- Strong commitment from safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to collaborative working.
- Effective multi-agency engagement within governance and subgroup structures.
- A positive learning culture, characterised by openness, reflection and a willingness to engage with challenge.
- Robust arrangements for identifying and responding to learning from Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- Significant progress in developing thematic oversight through the introduction of learning trackers and improved monitoring of review recommendations.
- Clear evidence of alignment between partnership priorities and emerging local and national safeguarding issues.
- A shared ambition amongst partners to improve outcomes for children and families and to strengthen evidencing of impact.

The scrutiny also recognised the wider progress made across the safeguarding system during a period of considerable change, including national reforms, local improvement activity and organisational changes affecting key partners. The commitment of agencies to maintaining focus on safeguarding throughout these changes was viewed as a significant strength.

Areas For Development

As with any maturing safeguarding partnership, the review identified areas where further development would strengthen arrangements. These included:

- Increasing the partnership's ability to demonstrate the impact of safeguarding activity through stronger use of performance information and outcomes-focused reporting.
- Further strengthening the voice and lived experience of children, young people and families within assurance, scrutiny and strategic decision-making processes.
- Streamlining governance arrangements to ensure partnership resources remain focused on a smaller number of strategic priorities with measurable outcomes.
- Enhancing the consistency of multi-agency data and performance information to support challenge, assurance and learning.
- Developing a more systematic approach to evidencing how learning from reviews translates into changes in practice and improved outcomes.

Impact of Independent Scrutiny

The independent scrutiny process has provided valuable challenge and assurance to safeguarding partners and has informed the partnership's development plans for 2026/27. Findings have directly influenced discussions regarding governance redesign, partnership priorities, performance and assurance arrangements, and the need for a stronger focus on impact measurement.

Importantly, the scrutiny recognised that Bury is on a positive improvement journey. While there is more to do, the partnership demonstrated increasing maturity, stronger cross-agency ownership of safeguarding responsibilities and a clear understanding of where further improvement is required. The review concluded that partners are realistic about current challenges and are committed to using scrutiny, learning and evidence to continue strengthening safeguarding arrangements.

Looking Ahead

During 2026/27, independent scrutiny will continue to focus on understanding the difference that partnership activity makes to children and families. Particular attention will be given to the impact of safeguarding reforms, the effectiveness of partnership governance, the quality of multi-agency performance information, and the extent to which the voices of children, young people and practitioners shape strategic priorities and service improvement.

The partnership welcomes independent challenge and sees scrutiny not solely as a mechanism for assurance, but as a critical enabler of learning, improvement and better outcomes for children and young people across Bury.

Auditing

The Scrutiny, Performance and Assurance subgroup have completed a multi-agency audit between Children's Social Care and the ICB looking at the application of the Greater Manchester Bruising In Non-Mobile Infants protocol. This activity involved looking at referrals into the MASSH and mapping the journey and extent to which the protocol was applied.

There additionally are multi-agency audits led by Children's Social Care focusing on single agency audits, such as Children's Social Care looking into Safer Sleeping messaging and triangulation of GP invites to ICPC conferences are fed through for wider partnership discussion within Scrutiny, Performance and Assurance meetings.

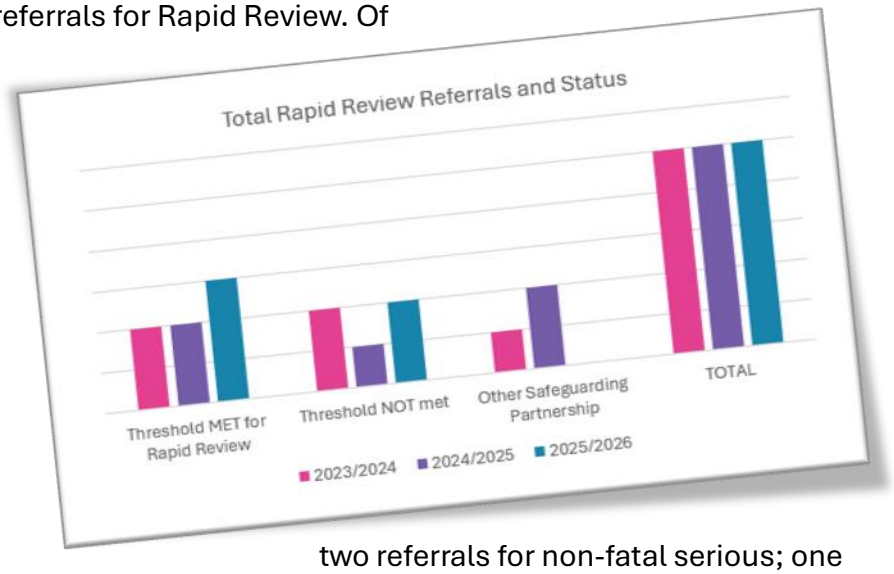
The Independent Scrutineer completed a piece on Safeguarding Effectiveness using the MACS framework looking at the activity of 2025 to 2026, involving interviews with partners and the views of practitioners to provide steer and guidance around partnership activity.

Audit activity has allowed us to test the system, providing assurance alongside room for improvement within key areas relating to reviews and the priorities.

There is a future plan to expand the scrutiny provided to statutory reviews. This work is set to explore the impact and embedding of actions arising from reviews, with the Scrutiny, Performance and Assurance acting as a critical friend.

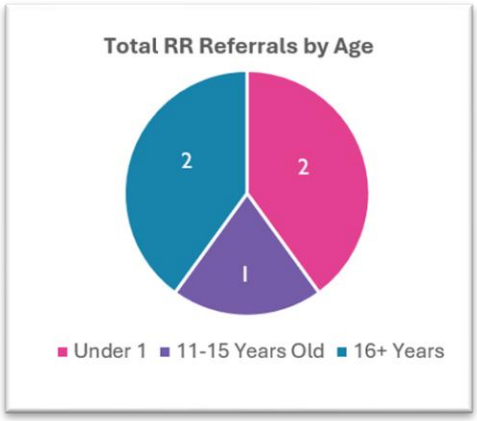
Learning from Review

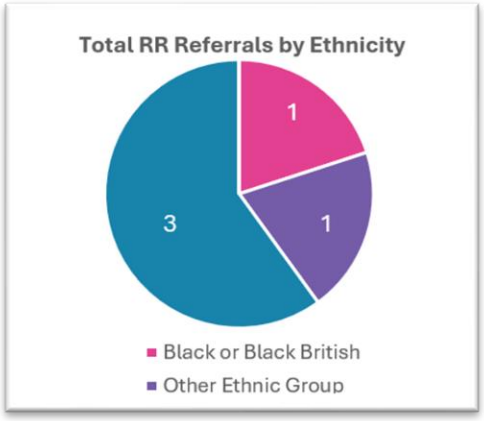
During 2025/2026 there have been five referrals for Rapid Review. Of these, three met thresholds, with one proceeding to a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review. This is very similar to the trends in previous years. The National Panel have noted a reduction in Serious Incident Notifications; however, the referrals received are in keeping with previous years.



Referral Demographics

Of those that met threshold, there were two referrals for non-fatal serious; one due to child sexual abuse and the other physical abuse. In terms of fatal incidences of serious harm, one was referred in due to a medical cause.





Identified Areas of Development

Themes identified in all three reviews

- Information sharing and communication across agencies.
- The need for effective professional challenge, escalation, and oversight where concerns persist.

Themes identified in two reviews

- Think Family practice: Strengthening holistic, multi-agency risk assessment and planning, including consideration of historical risk factors and the needs of all children within the household.
- Recognition of the impact of culture, ethnicity, and faith on engagement with services and safeguarding practice.
- Better identification and consideration of unseen caregivers and the influence of a dominant parental narrative.

- Strengthening approaches to engagement, including recognising and responding to disguised compliance.

Review-specific learning

- Ensuring safeguarding decisions and risk management are not influenced by the application of criminal standards of proof.
- Improving professional awareness of abusive head trauma and maximising opportunities to deliver and reinforce ICON messaging.
- Strengthening access to, and engagement with, perinatal mental health services.
- Enhancing the quality and timeliness of pre-birth assessments.
- Improving transition planning for young people aged 16 and over, including consideration of the Mental Capacity Act and best-interest decision-making.
- Strengthening coordination of support for children and families with complex needs, including clarity regarding lead professional responsibilities.
- Increasing the effective use of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) where neglect is a concern.

Below is a diagram illustrating the most found thematics, including those in 2025/2026 since 2021, as is illustrated, the common thematics found in the above have resonated with those historically found across the partnership.



In 2025/2026 the Bury Safeguarding Partnership concluded two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) from 2024. The thematics were consistent with the patterns above. A thematic tracker has been developed which enables BSP to oversee all the actions, learning and future planned activities. Some examples of the actions taken include:

There is ongoing work to strengthen the quality assurance of reviews and ensure robust and achievable action planning in relation to the learning outcomes from each review. Furthermore, we are looking to develop and implement a Multi-Agency Reflective Learning process to ensure that where Rapid Review criteria are not met, yet there is learning to be gained, that this has a forum for consideration. Planned future activity also involves triangulating thematics with Safeguarding Adult Reviews, and Domestic Homicide Reviews to enhance the Think Family approach. We are on a journey with regards to measuring impact, and in the new financial year there are development days and workstreams planned to enhance our work regarding impact and assurance.

Safer Sleeping

BSCP produced and launched a of video for safer sleeping week 2025. A safer sleeping survey was cascaded to practitioners across the multi-agency partnership to understand knowledge and confidence in using the safer sleeping toolkit. Safer sleeping messaging was also considered within audit activity.

Mental Health

BSCP 2025/2026 training calendar included Perinatal and Parent Mental Health training, Trauma Responsiveness to Hidden Harm and Dad Matters training. A Mental Health section for Children has also been included on our website, alongside updates for parents/carers.

Resolving Professional Differences and Escalation

BSCP have revised our policy. The policy is accessible via GM Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual, alongside a flow chart to be considered. A focus group with frontline practitioners was also held, in order to promote awareness and explore barriers to completion, providing support and solutions.

Representation of Education Sector

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the partnership has ensured strong representation and meaningful input from the education sector at both operational and strategic levels. At a strategic level, the Director of Education & Skills is a full member of the Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) and provides leadership oversight, challenge, and accountability across the partnership. The Director also chairs the Education Subgroup, strengthening the link between operational delivery and strategic decision-making.

At an operational level, the Education Safeguarding Forum acts as the primary mechanism for engagement with education, early years, and skills settings. The forum supports and strengthens safeguarding practice across the sector while providing a clear route for escalation of risks and issues into the BSCP. Its core activities include identifying emerging safeguarding concerns, promoting compliance with statutory guidance, sharing learning from inspections, audits, and child safeguarding practice reviews, and facilitating effective communication between education providers and safeguarding partners. The forum also contributes to partnership priorities through a defined work plan and supports safeguarding quality assurance through analysis of performance data, including Section 175 audits.

These activities have strengthened communication between education settings and the wider partnership, improved awareness and consistency in safeguarding practice, and ensured that local intelligence from schools and providers informs partnership priorities and decision-making. The

increased visibility and engagement of education representatives at both strategic and operational levels have supported a more joined-up and responsive safeguarding system.

Evidence of impact includes improved engagement and attendance from education providers at forum meetings, stronger completion and analysis of Section 175 audits, and clearer escalation of safeguarding concerns into partnership structures. Feedback from education settings indicates increased confidence in understanding statutory expectations and applying safeguarding guidance in practice. In addition, learning from inspections and reviews is now more consistently shared and embedded across the sector, contributing to continuous improvement in safeguarding outcomes for children and young people.

Use of Data and Information Sharing

The Scrutiny, Performance and Assurance subgroup have considered data, mainly focused on Children's Social Care with contributions from partners as part of the North West Regional Improvement Plan Pilot on a quarterly basis. Furthermore, data has been shared to gain insight into practice, such as cross-validation of GP records with Children's Social Care data. This has supported in spotting trends and providing assurance around learning from reviews.

Specific data related to the Complex Safeguarding subgroup has been regularly shared monitoring data such as missing from home episodes and data relating to the Complex Safeguarding Team caseload, monitoring the trends and ensuring compliance with best practice standards, for example the timeframes of return to home interviews.

Further work is in progress to develop Bury's own multi-agency dataset and create a performance dashboard. This is hoped to lead to an improved identification of risk and enhanced quality assurance, alongside provide better understanding around our priority topics through monitoring data and insights.

Updates

A Partnership Development Day is planned for June 2026 to strengthen the effectiveness, focus and impact of safeguarding arrangements across the partnership. The event will bring partners together to shape a more streamlined governance structure, moving away from an over-reliance on subgroups and towards a clearer outcomes-focused approach. This will include the development of a strategic "engine room" to drive delivery of the partnership's key priorities.

The day will provide an opportunity to align activity around core themes, including safeguarding reform, harms within and beyond the home, and ensuring that learning from local and national case reviews is translated into meaningful improvements in frontline practice. Partners will also review and strengthen multi-agency performance, audit and data arrangements, clarify shared roles and responsibilities, and improve connections with education and other strategic partnerships.

A renewed approach to communication and engagement will also be considered to ensure priorities, progress and impact are clearly articulated. Overall, the session will focus on bringing collective effort behind a smaller number of shared priorities, enabling partners to deliver measurable improvements in outcomes for children, young people and families.

The Partnership's published safeguarding arrangements are set to be reviewed and updated to ensure full alignment with the requirements set out in Working Together 2026, reflecting any agreed changes to governance structures, priorities and ways of working.

Strategic Priorities for 2025-2026

Public Sector Reforms

We submitted our Delivery Plan to the Department for Education (DfE) in two stages, with the first submission in June 2025 and the second in December 2025. The plan set out our baseline position, our shared vision for what success would look like in Bury, and an assessment of our key strengths and areas for development. It also outlined our planned activity for 2025–26, including partner workshops to establish Bury's local approach (July 2025), engagement with wider partners to consider the transition from current arrangements to the reformed model (Autumn 2025), engagement with families (Autumn 2025), and the commencement of workforce development, system design and associated HR processes (November 2025).

Good progress has been made across a number of these areas, although some activities have proved more challenging to deliver than anticipated. For example, we successfully engaged partners through three workshop sessions which mapped a range of potential journeys for children and families through the reformed system. This provided valuable insight into how the reforms are likely to affect the roles, responsibilities and interactions of teams across the partnership. These discussions, combined with the regular analysis of local data on case volumes across teams and localities, have helped to inform both workforce planning and system design activity.

However, engaging the full partnership in detailed planning has been more difficult. A range of factors have contributed to this, including the disruption arising from NHS organisational restructuring and the additional complexity associated with partners operating across the Greater Manchester footprint who are seeking a more standardised approach. These challenges have been a consistent feature throughout the programme and have impacted the pace at which some aspects of planning could be progressed

Voice of Children and Families

With the support of Participation People through the North-West Regional Improvement Plan Pilot, the Partnership gained insight through a survey around participation and voice distributed across agencies. This revealed that there is local participation activity but a variety in approaches to this with invitation for system-wide guidance and accountability and support with the impact. Furthermore, a MASA Scorecard and four-phase roadmap was received due to engagement with Participation People, considering the progress to be made within this domain. Work continues as we work together to strengthen the various approaches, to improve our ability to understand, and respond to the voice of children and families.

We shared in information on Voice in our NWADCS Self-evaluation, which highlighted our commitment to Bury's Promise to our children and young people ensure they are not only listened to but are actively influencing the decisions, services and support that affect their lives. Through the Children's Rights Service, children have access to independent, confidential and child-led advocacy,

enabling them to understand their rights, have their views heard and participate meaningfully in decisions about their futures. The extension of advocacy to children attending Initial Child Protection Conferences has strengthened children's influence at critical points in their safeguarding journey, while non-instructed advocacy ensures that younger children and those with additional needs are equally represented. As a result, more children are supported to have their voices heard and their experiences reflected in planning and decision-making. The voice of the child is a visible and influential feature of strategic and operational decision-making across the organisation. Children and young people contribute directly to the Corporate Parenting Operational Board and Corporate Parenting Board, ensuring that lived experience informs service development, priorities and scrutiny. Their involvement in staff engagement activities, workforce development and recruitment processes strengthens organisational understanding of what matters most to children and young people. Through participation in interview panels and the delivery of bespoke training based on their experiences, young people are influencing the quality of the workforce and helping practitioners and partners better understand the impact of their practice on children's lives. We have developed a range of accessible and creative mechanisms to capture the voices of children and young people, including advocacy, digital feedback tools and participation activities. These approaches enable a broader range of children to share their experiences, particularly those who may not routinely engage in formal meetings or consultation processes. This is strengthening our understanding of children's lived experiences and ensuring that service development and individual decision-making are increasingly informed by the views of those who use our services.

Our Changemakers group is a particular strength, providing a dedicated and inclusive participation forum for children and young people with SEND. Through this forum, children and young people are influencing decisions and shaping service development in ways that reflect their experiences and priorities. As a result, children and young people with SEND increasingly report that they feel listened to and that their views are making a difference. This is helping to create services that are more responsive, accessible and aligned to the needs of those who use them.

Children and young people are also playing a direct role in holding services to account through our co-produced Kitemark Quality Assurance Framework, developed with children and young people, informed by the Lundy Model the framework assesses services against standards that matter most to them, including the quality of relationships, communication, participation and the extent to which they feel involved in decisions about their lives. Accreditation of Complex Safeguarding (Silver) and Next Chapter (Bronze) demonstrates services' commitment to these standards. This approach is increasing accountability to children and young people, strengthening practice and ensuring that services are both shaped and evaluated through the lens of lived experience.

The impact of participation is also evident within Family Group Decision Making. National accreditation by the Family Rights Group in May 2026 recognised the quality of family-led practice and the extent to which children's views inform planning. Children are supported to contribute meaningfully to family decision-making, while families are empowered to develop their own solutions. This is resulting in stronger family engagement and more sustainable plans that better reflect children's needs, wishes and lived experiences. The impact of this work is reflected in external feedback. During the June 2025 ILACS inspection, Ofsted identified the voice of the child as a particular strength, noting that "The judiciary and CAFCASS are positive about the quality of social

work in Bury, with the voice of children a particular strength. This was evidenced throughout the inspection." Ofsted also recognised that "the voice of children has been used effectively and powerfully to energise various discussions with leaders to make changes." This provides strong independent assurance that children and young people in Bury are not only being heard, but are actively influencing practice, service development and strategic decision-making, leading to better experiences and outcomes.

Domestic Abuse

A short-term task and finish was established for Domestic Abuse. This had the core concern of scoping the support available to children as victims in their own right of Domestic Abuse. This came from statutory reviews and was undertaken to support the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The culmination of this group was a multi-agency paper – sharing both what support is known and available, alongside assurance from agencies around their knowledge and sharing practice within their expertise. This paper culminated in a list of recommendations to be taken forward by commissioners and the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

The outcome of this work showed the complexity of commissioning arrangements that has led to an inequity of provision. This complex commissioning of multiple small providers led to poor resilience with staff absences for example and has impacted on waiting lists. Furthermore, there was little outcome monitoring on the outcomes for children. This report has been shared with the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board for consideration to ensure these findings are factored into future commissioning arrangements.

Neglect

The initial task and finish group has now evolved into a formal subgroup to look beyond Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) implementation. GCP2 training has been repeated across the Partnership with 463 members of staff now trained. A quarterly GCP2 training calendar remains in place. The subgroup has worked incredibly hard to develop a dedicated log in area for GCP2 licensed users for swift, easy access to GCP2 materials and training resources. The subgroup delivered x2 GCP2 awareness sessions for increased knowledge of GCP2, what this means for our children and young people and how they can contribute. The subgroup has also updated information relating to Neglect on the Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Strengthening Practitioner Confidence and Awareness of Neglect

Evaluation of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) training programme demonstrates a positive impact on practitioner confidence in recognising, identifying and evidencing neglect. Analysis of pre- and post-course questionnaires showed increased confidence levels across all key areas, highlighting the effectiveness of the training in strengthening practitioners' knowledge and skills.

In addition, a survey was undertaken to assess awareness of the current Neglect Strategy. Responses from 51 practitioners indicated a strong level of engagement, with:

- 73% aware of the Neglect Strategy;
- 59% knowing where to access the strategy; and
- 47% actively considering the strategy when discussing neglect concerns with partner agencies.

These findings provide a solid foundation for continued development, demonstrating that the majority of practitioners are aware of the strategic framework and are beginning to embed it within multi-agency discussions and practice. Ongoing awareness-raising and communication activity will support further integration of the strategy across the partnership.

A total of 147 Graded Care Profile 2 assessments have been completed during the reporting period. It is important to note that the workforce continue to attend GCP2 training sessions, and therefore it is envisioned that this number will increase as more practitioners are trained. This demonstrates greater awareness in ability to identify and respond to neglect.

The subgroup plans to review and relaunch the Neglect Strategy, supported by a temperature check to assess the effectiveness of the revised approach. Efforts will also focus on improving data collation and analysis to strengthen oversight and inform decision-making. In addition, the subgroup will raise practitioner awareness of neglect through the promotion and use of resources available from The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Learning Hub, helping to embed learning and improve practice across the partnership.

Complex Safeguarding

The Complex Safeguarding Subgroup has continued to provide strategic oversight of the Complex Safeguarding Team, alongside monitoring key data and performance information relating to children at risk of exploitation, those considered high risk, and children reported Missing from Home. During this reporting period, changes in personnel and subgroup leadership impacted the pace of progress against the workplan, resulting in some delay in delivering planned activity. However, leadership capacity has now been strengthened through the appointment of a Head of Service within the Adolescence Service, providing greater strategic direction and oversight of this agenda.

A development day scheduled for June will provide an important opportunity to review priorities, strengthen governance arrangements, and refresh the subgroup's workplan to ensure a clear focus on improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

Looking ahead, the subgroup will build on this strengthened leadership capacity to drive forward partnership activity, enhance multi-agency responses to complex safeguarding concerns, and improve the use of data and intelligence to identify emerging risks and trends. There will also be a continued focus on embedding a transitional safeguarding approach, ensuring that young people receive effective support as they move into adulthood. Together, these developments will support earlier intervention, stronger partnership working, and improved outcomes for children and young people at risk of harm.

CSA

A Child Sexual Abuse task and finish was set up as a time-bound group. The scope of the task and finish group agreed by members was to focus on child sexual abuse within the family environment in line with the findings of the national child safeguarding practice review panel report 'I wanted them all to notice' that was published in 2024, the 2025-26 JTAI theme and learning from local CSPRs.

A workplan was developed to reflect priority actions as per scope of the T&F alongside the centre of expertise guidance 'developing your strategic response' (to child sexual abuse). The following priorities were identified and work undertaken:

- To understand the scale and nature of child sexual abuse in Bury
    - Data relating the Child Social Care received and considered against the Centre of Expertise dashboard.
    - Limited data considered from the SARC
- To identify the key components of an effective multi-agency response to the prevention, identification and response to child sexual abuse.
    - Webinars and learning resources from the Centre of Expertise promoted and shared alongside a bespoke Bury 7mb.
- Ensure there is the right level of leadership and accountability within the system to seek assurance and measure impact.
- Demonstrate JTAI CSAFE inspection readiness by completing the True to US NW self-assessment and MASA evaluation against Annex A criteria.
    - This was partially undertaken with partners providing assurance for their settings and RAG rating the system based on this.

Following the development day, the strategic priorities for 2026-2027 are being reviewed.

Strengthening Multi-Agency Collaboration

Effective safeguarding relies on strong and purposeful collaboration between statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. No single organisation can fully understand or respond to the complex needs and risks faced by children and families in isolation. Throughout 2025/26, partners across Bury have continued to demonstrate a shared commitment to working together to protect children, promote their welfare, and improve outcomes through coordinated and timely responses. Multi-agency collaboration has been strengthened through established governance arrangements, joint training, multi-agency audits, shared learning from reviews, and collaborative task and finish groups focused on key priorities such as neglect, domestic abuse and child sexual abuse. Co-location within services such as the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) continues to support effective information sharing, professional challenge, and timely decision-making, helping practitioners to build trusted relationships and develop a shared understanding of risk.

The partnership recognises that collaboration takes place within an increasingly complex landscape. During the reporting period, significant national reforms, changes within NHS structures, and differing operating models across Greater Manchester presented challenges to maintaining consistency and pace across the safeguarding system. However, partners have remained committed to working collectively through these changes, demonstrating resilience and a willingness to find solutions to shared challenges. Independent scrutiny and partner feedback have highlighted a strong culture of openness, constructive challenge and partnership ownership across Bury.

While considerable progress has been made, the partnership acknowledges that it is on a journey. Further work is required to strengthen the consistency of multi-agency performance information, enhance the sharing and analysis of data across agencies, and better demonstrate the impact of

collaborative activity on outcomes for children and families. These areas will remain a key focus for 2026/27 as the partnership continues to mature, ensuring that multi-agency working remains effective, responsive and centred on the lived experiences of children and young people.

Workforce Development

Between April 2025 and March 2026, the Learning and Development subgroup coordinated a comprehensive programme of training to support the development of Bury's multi-agency safeguarding workforce. Training courses were offered based on learning from reviews and priorities. Various courses were delivered multiple times throughout the year to support wider participation and reinforce key safeguarding messages. Key highlights:

- 44 training sessions were delivered
- 26 different subject areas
- Reaching approximately 803 delegates
- 208 delegates provided feedback post training event, which was largely positive

Feedback from Delegates

"Very powerful, honest and truly inspiring"

"Brilliant, thank you so much for such a wonderful and powerful training event!"

"This event was fantastic! It worked well within the breakout rooms meeting with colleagues from different agencies and bringing our knowledge and learning together."

"Really enjoyed the training, very useful and really helpful to have a trainer with such vast knowledge and experience of the subject matter."

"The best training I have been on in my career. I think every service and every staff member at every level should have the opportunity to attend."

"A great training, done professionally and sensitively."

The learning and development subgroup have launched a longer-term impact and evaluation of training to measure impact. This very short tool is shared with delegates 3-6 months after attendance on a BSP training course. In the reporting period, 79 responses were received.

The impact form asks:

- Do you have any examples of how you have implemented the training in your practice?
- Do you have any examples of how the training has impacted on outcomes for children, young people or adults with care and support needs?
- Were there any tools/information that you were made aware of that changed the way you work?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Below are examples of feedback received from the impact form:

Do you have any examples of how you have implemented the training in your practice?	• I used the information and knowledge to support the updating of our policies regarding Safeguarding." • "I have been using the dad matters website and have sign posted our care experienced young dads, or soon to become dads. Also passed on information to colleagues and other professionals that support our care experienced young people." • "I have continued to ask difficult questions in a way that young people know I care, and that I am available to talk about things that are affecting them."
Do you have any examples of how the training has impacted on outcomes for children, young people or adults with care and support needs?	• Ensuring correct thresholds are applied within a timely manner." • "More trauma informed care planning." • "I have used the training to support staff members of the team when considering capacity."
Were there any tools/information that you were made aware of that changed the way you work?	• Everything the trainer said has changed the way I work." • "I found the handouts and documents provided very useful in helping me to review my policies and practices." • "Using the framework to consider what can be done at a classroom level first (universal and targeted support) before escalating concerns e.g. implementing structured routines, pre-teaching strategies, or emotional regulation support before considering external referrals."

Training Impact

Analysis of post-training evaluations completed immediately following learning events demonstrated a number of consistent themes across the Safeguarding Partnership's training programme. Of the responses analysed, the most frequently reported learning related to professional curiosity and trauma-informed practice, with around one-third of delegates specifically referencing the importance of asking "why", understanding the reasons behind behaviours, and considering the impact of trauma on children, young people, adults and families. Approximately one quarter of respondents highlighted the importance of relationship-based practice and ensuring the voice of the child is heard, reflecting a strong commitment to child-centred approaches. Around 30% of participants identified multi-agency working, networking and information sharing as key learning outcomes, while approximately one in five reported increased confidence in understanding safeguarding procedures, thresholds, escalation processes, referral pathways and managing allegations. Across specialist training sessions, participants also reported increased knowledge of substance use, exploitation, safeguarding adults, neglect and mental capacity. While this feedback reflects delegates' immediate learning and intended changes to practice rather than measured impact on outcomes, the findings suggest the programme is successfully increasing practitioners' knowledge, confidence and awareness of effective safeguarding practice across the partnership.

Three-month follow-up evaluations demonstrated that learning from safeguarding training was being translated into practice across the children's workforce. Practitioners reported increased confidence in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns, applying the Continuum of Need, understanding thresholds for intervention and making more effective referrals. Participants described greater use of professional curiosity, ensuring the voice of the child remained central to assessments and interventions, and adopting increasingly trauma-informed approaches when working with children, young people and families. Examples of practice change included improved recognition of child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation, enhanced safeguarding risk assessment,

more effective information sharing and multi-agency collaboration, and increased confidence in managing allegations and safeguarding concerns. Training had also influenced organisational practice, with attendees reporting updates to safeguarding and low-level concerns policies, improvements to recruitment and vetting processes, the development of workforce training, and the sharing of learning through supervision, safeguarding networks and partnership meetings. Whilst some respondents had not yet encountered opportunities to apply the learning directly, the majority were able to identify specific changes to their practice, suggesting that the training programme is supporting a more confident, child-centred and skilled safeguarding workforce across Bury.

The most frequently reported areas of impact were:

- Increased professional curiosity and confidence in safeguarding decision-making.
- Greater focus on the voice, lived experience and outcomes of children and young people.
- Improved understanding and application of safeguarding thresholds, the Continuum of Need and referral pathways.
- Enhanced multi-agency working, information sharing and appropriate escalation of concerns.
- Increased use of trauma-informed, relationship-based and child-centred approaches in practice.
- Improved recognition and response to exploitation, extra-familial harm and other safeguarding risks.

Transitional Safeguarding

Work began in this period on our approach to transitional safeguarding, through engagement with the GM Complex Safeguarding Alliance. As part of this work, a workshop featuring 30+ multi-agency partners was completed and the idea for a pilot to embed children's services into the Integrated Neighbourhood Team for one local area was began. As part of this work, upskilling both children and adults' staff on corresponding areas of practice is additionally planned.

Future Planning

Looking ahead, the Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership remains committed to continuous improvement and ensuring that safeguarding arrangements evolve to meet both local need and national expectations. A key focus for the coming year will be supporting the implementation of the Families First for Children reforms, ensuring that partners collectively understand and respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by these significant changes. As part of the Families First Programme, a workshop has been arranged to look to revise the continuum of need and threshold document. The Partnership will continue to work closely with agencies across Bury and Greater Manchester to develop new ways of working, strengthen multi-agency practice, and ensure that children and families experience more seamless and effective support.

To support this next phase of development, a Partnership Development Day has been scheduled for June 2026. This will provide an important opportunity for safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to take stock of the Partnership's current position, reflect on learning from the previous year, and collectively agree priorities and strategic direction for 2026/27. The event will focus on ensuring that governance arrangements remain fit for purpose, that partnership resources are aligned to the areas of greatest need and risk, and that activity is increasingly focused on delivering measurable improvements for children and young people.

Building on learning from scrutiny, reviews, audits and inspection activity, the Partnership intends to strengthen its approach to quality assurance, performance analysis and impact measurement. Particular attention will be given to developing a more robust multi-agency performance framework, improving the use of data to identify emerging risks and trends, and better evidencing the difference that partnership activity makes to the lives of children and families. Workforce development will remain a priority, with the continued delivery of learning opportunities informed by local and national learning, alongside greater evaluation of how training translates into practice and improved outcomes.

The Partnership will also maintain a proactive focus on emerging and evolving safeguarding issues. This includes strengthening responses to online harms and digital exploitation, improving understanding and responses to child and adolescent mental health needs, and progressing work relating to transitional safeguarding to ensure vulnerable young people are effectively supported as they move into adulthood. Alongside existing priorities relating to neglect, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and complex safeguarding, these areas will help shape the Partnership's work programme over the coming year. Through this approach, the Partnership aims to build on the progress made to date, continue its improvement journey, and ensure safeguarding arrangements remain responsive, effective and centred on the lived experiences of children, young people and families across Bury.

Financial Breakdown and Value for Money

Funding Contributions

The Bury Safeguarding Partnership operates through a single, integrated budget that supports both Children's and Adults safeguarding arrangements. This joint approach enables a coordinated and efficient use of resources across the system.

The total partner contributions for the reporting period were £397,796, broken down as follows:

- Bury Local Authority: £325,000
- Integrated Care Board (ICB) NHS Bury: £44,080
- Greater Manchester Police: £27,802
- Probation Service: £914

While this funding model demonstrates a collective commitment to safeguarding across Bury, the current distribution of contributions is heavily weighted towards the Local Authority, which provides over 80% of the partnership's core funding. As demand, statutory responsibilities, and financial

pressures continue to increase, there is a need to review the existing funding arrangements to ensure a more equitable and sustainable model. A revised approach would better reflect the shared statutory responsibilities of safeguarding partners and support the long-term sustainability of safeguarding arrangements across both Children's and Adults services in Bury.

Expenditure

Total expenditure for the 2025/26 financial year was £440,460. This reflects delivery costs associated with the Safeguarding Partnership's core functions, including:

- Coordination and governance of safeguarding activity
- Delivery of multi-agency safeguarding priorities
- Workforce development and training
- Support for statutory reviews and learning processes
- Business Unit staffing and operational costs

Use of Reserves

To address the gap between income and expenditure, £42,664 was drawn from reserves held in a third party holding. This use of reserves has been formally agreed to fund a fixed-term post within the Business Unit until 2027.

This investment is intended to:

- Maintain operational capacity during a period of organisational change
- Support delivery of key strategic priorities
- Ensure continuity in safeguarding coordination

Changes to Funding Arrangements

There have been no significant changes to the funding contributions from individual partners compared to the previous year. Contributions remain broadly consistent, reflecting stability in partner commitment.

However:

- The planned use of reserves represents a temporary adjustment to support service delivery
- The Business Unit restructure currently underway is a key development, aimed at improving long-term financial sustainability and ensuring that available resources are used efficiently

In addition, regional and national work continues, including across Greater Manchester, to develop a more equitable and sustainable funding model for safeguarding partnerships. This reflects wider recognition of pressures on current funding arrangements.

Value for Money and Impact

The Bury Safeguarding Partnership continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering value for money through:

- Integrated budgeting, reducing duplication and enabling a more strategic use of resources across Children's and Adults safeguarding.

- Collaborative multi-agency working, maximising the impact of partner contributions
- Targeted investment, such as funding additional capacity within the Business Unit to maintain effectiveness.
- Ongoing organisational review, ensuring structures and staffing align with priorities and available resources.
- The use of reserves to fund a fixed-term post represents a proportionate and planned investment, enabling the Partnership to sustain critical functions while longer-term financial solutions are developed.

The ongoing restructure of the Business Unit is expected to:

- Improve efficiency and clarity of roles
- Strengthen delivery against safeguarding priorities
- Enhance financial resilience in future years

Overall, the Partnership is satisfied that the funding received has been used effectively, proportionately, and in line with statutory responsibilities, ensuring that safeguarding arrangements remain robust despite financial pressures.

Conclusion

The Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership has continued to fulfil its statutory responsibilities through effective multi-agency working, robust governance and a strong commitment to learning and improvement. During 2025/26, the Partnership has strengthened its response to key safeguarding priorities including neglect, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and complex safeguarding, whilst continuing to build workforce knowledge, improve learning from reviews and respond to local and national developments.

The year has been characterised by positive progress across the safeguarding system, reflected in inspection outcomes, strengthened partnership arrangements and a growing focus on understanding the impact of our work. Through collaborative working, partners have demonstrated a shared commitment to keeping children safe and ensuring that learning translates into improved practice.

While there is much to celebrate, we recognise that Bury remains on a journey. We are ambitious about further strengthening our use of data, evidencing impact, hearing the voices of children and families, and ensuring learning is consistently embedded across the partnership. Independent scrutiny, audits and reviews have helped us identify where further development is needed and have provided clear direction for future improvement.

As we move into 2026/27, the Partnership will continue to build on these foundations, with a particular focus on implementing the Families First for Children reforms, strengthening quality assurance and performance arrangements, responding to emerging safeguarding risks, and ensuring that all partners remain focused on improving outcomes for children and young people. By continuing to work together, challenge ourselves and learn from practice, we remain committed to ensuring that every child in Bury is safe, supported and able to thrive.