

Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership **Annual Report**



2023 - 2024

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Foreword by Strategic Safeguarding Partners

We are pleased to share the Annual Report on behalf of Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP).

Firstly, we must recognise that 2023/24 has continued to be a very challenging time for Tameside with regard to the overall effectiveness of Children's Services and the impact this has on outcomes for young people and families in the borough. Tameside Children's Services received an Ofsted judgement of Inadequate, following a full ILACS inspection undertaken in December 2023. This resulted in a range of additional interventions for the local authority that included the appointment of a DfE Commissioner to assess the Council's capacity and capability to improve, due to persistent inadequacy of services.

It is also important to acknowledge that during the reporting period there have been recurrent changes to the workforce and those tasked with responsibility and input to partnership business. This has introduced a lack of consistency and subsequently it has been difficult to maintain the level of high challenge and accountability required from all partners. We continue to monitor, address and mitigate the impact that significant changes in personnel across agencies has on the partnership going forward.

In light of such challenges we can report that the local improvement journey remains a collective priority for the partnership. TSCP has demonstrated its ability to respond and to be creative in providing leadership through this difficult time. Our ability to safeguard children and support vulnerable families continued and we are in the process of reviewing our strategic priorities beyond 2024.

Guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, places a requirement on the partnership to identify and strengthen governance and leadership arrangements and to improve general engagement with education. We will review, enhance and publish our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA), by December 2024.

At a local level there is an identified need to improve methods that implement and review learning across partners. We will embed a learning and improvement culture that promotes accountability across agencies. The role of our Independent Scrutineer is vital in achieving this by providing robust challenge and support.

The reporting process provides a valuable opportunity to look forward. Through sound governance and oversight arrangements, the partnership will seek necessary assurances and measure improvements in local safeguarding practice and systems. There is a need to establish greater clarity in the partnership's role across all agencies and this will be supported through renewed frameworks, namely:

- Quality Assurance and Performance Framework
- Learning and Development Framework

We must remain multi-agency focused and deliver a child first approach. We will work collectively to improve our learning and development model to inform a comprehensive training offer and to actively seek the voice and lived experience of young people through our quality assurance framework and case reviews.

We remain grateful to all our partners and dedicated front-line staff for their support and commitment to safeguarding children. An updated set of local priorities will inform activity and underpin how we will ensure the effectiveness of local arrangements. Proactive quality assurance, learning and robust multi-agency performance oversight will be the pillars to our future success.

Director of Children's Services

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Chief Superintendent

Greater Manchester Police

Associate Director of Nursing, Quality and Safeguarding

NHS GM Integrated Care

Introduction

The Annual Report covers the period April 2023 to March 2024 and provides the opportunity to share and reflect on activity, outcomes and the effectiveness of local arrangements. It is important to consider the system-wide approach to how agencies work together, with a focus on best practice and where learning for improvement is identified.

The vision for TSCP is to;

“Build a common approach to safeguarding children that understands and takes account of their voice and lived experience resulting in a professional response, which is trauma informed and tackles the underlying causes of risks to their safety and continued wellbeing.”

This vision is underpinned by the strategic aims and priorities identified throughout the strategic plan for 2021-2024. It supports the principle that safeguarding is everyone’s business and reinforces the need for collective efforts in order to support children and young people in Tameside to achieve their full potential.

Statutory safeguarding partners have an equal and joint duty to ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place in relation to a local authority area in England. The Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) named the partners as: (a) the local authority (b) an integrated care board for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area.

Full consideration has been given to reflect and review existing arrangements in order to align partnership activity to requirements set within [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) (WT23).

The Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP) as set out in WT23, are the Chief Executive of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council; Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police; and Chief Executive of NHS Greater Manchester. They are accountable for the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP) are responsible for the implementation of arrangements and are the Director of Children’s Services; Chief Superintendent of Greater Manchester Police; and the Chief Nurse NHS GM (delegated to the Associate Director of Quality and Safeguarding).

Statutory safeguarding partners have continued to discharge their duties throughout 2023-24. There are appropriate safeguarding governance systems in place for discharging duties and functions in line with the following key legislation:

- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989 and 2004,
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2023.

It is important to ensure the partnership creates an inclusive environment and a governance structure that reaches far beyond the statutory partners and seeks the views and experiences of children, as well as expanding membership to a range of services and agencies, including Education, Probation Service, Health provision and the voluntary, community and faith sectors. TSCP acts as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging partners to agree ways to coordinate effective safeguarding services and implement local and national learning.

Independent Scrutiny

Towards the end of the reporting period local arrangements for the partnership’s Independent Scrutineer were under review. The position has been updated in line with WT 2023, with a successful new appointment in September 2024. It is with regret that influence and evidence of input from an Independent Scrutineer is not able to be reported for 2023/24. Going forward the role will now focus on reviewing areas of particular focus, as directed by the DSP’s. The role will provide high challenge and seek necessary assurances on the effectiveness and impact of multi-agency arrangements and working in the borough on their behalf.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangemnets (MASA)

TSCP continually review the effectiveness of its arrangements. During 2023-2024 we have experienced an unprecedented change to personnel across the partnership that has at times affected our ability to implement a clear vision and arrangements that are fully understood by practitioners.

We have made some progress with reviewing and updating our MASA following the updated WT23 guidance, TSCP is currently reviewing how the partnership can be strengthened, utilising the facilitated support offered by the DfE to ensure further compliance and implementation guidance which will be published by December 2024.

TSCP has recognised the value and importance of having the voice of Education at our Executive Partnership Board and in operational and strategic partnership meetings. We established our Education Strategic Group during this year and will continue to review ways to engage and include Early Years and the Education sector in the MASA. The Designated Safeguarding Leads Network has been strengthened to promote and disseminate learning and development to all schools.

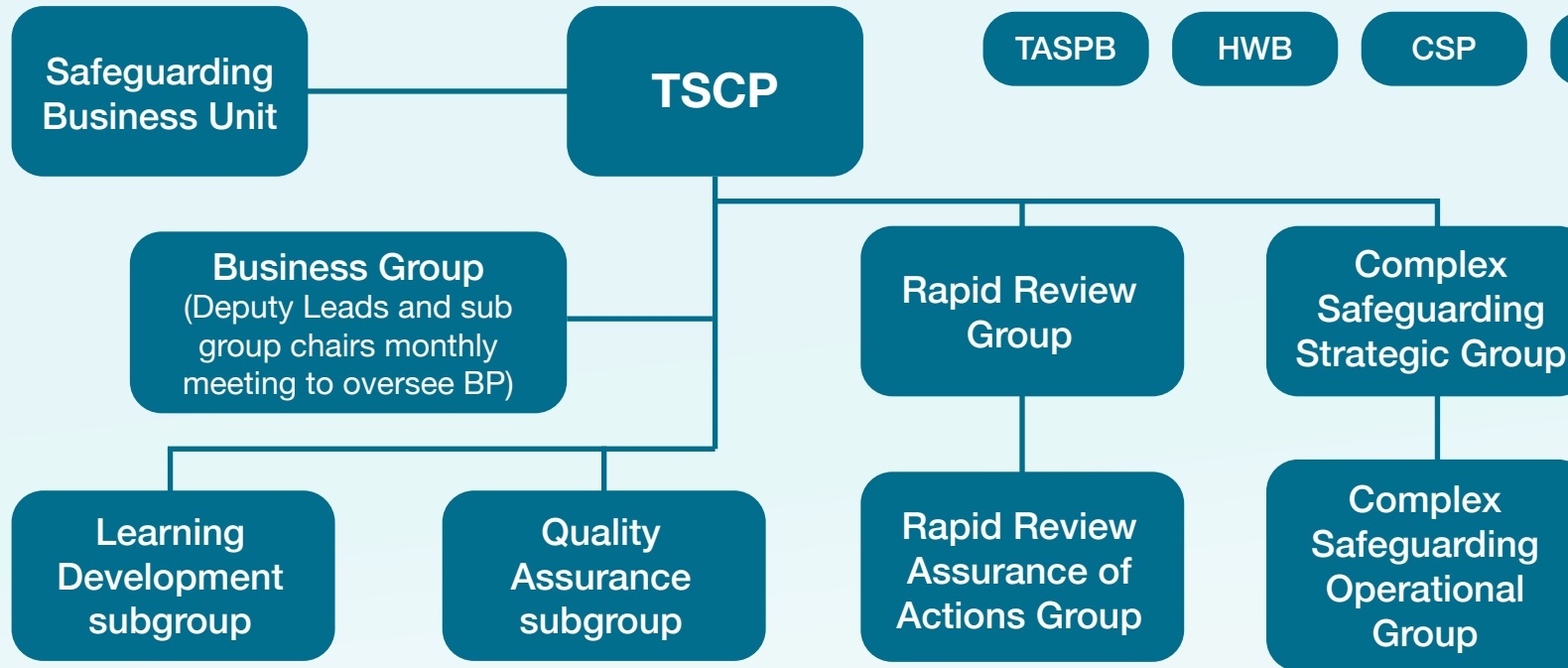
Financial Contributions

The table below provides a breakdown of TSCP funding contributions for 2023/24.

Agency	Contribution 2023/24
Local Authority	£46,050
NHS Greater Manchester ICB	£74,357
Greater Manchester Police	£13,200
Other (Non-statutory partners)	£4,951
School and Academies	£107,945
Total Contributions	£246,503

TSCP Governance Structure 2023/24

Strategic Safeguarding Boards and Partnerships – Expectations that partners will take responsibility for reporting activity to the Partnership



TASPB

HWB

CSP

DAB

CPB

YB

KEY

TSCP	Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership
TASPB	Tameside Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board
HWB	Health & Wellbeing Board
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DAB	Domestic Abuse Board
CPB	Corporate Parenting Board
YB	Youth Board
BP	Business Plan

Work streams

The concept of the work streams is to involve the wider workforce in the development of the TSCP BP via various forums and may not necessarily be meetings. Quarterly updates will be presented to the Workforce subgroup

Communication

Policy and Procedures

Training

Neglect

Early Help

These are areas of work that have an identified 'TSCP Champion' who is a representative at the workforce development subgroup and are supported by TSCP Safeguarding Business Unit to complete the actions in response to the Business Plan

Partnership Priorities

These agreed priorities were set out in the TSCP Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

Trio of Risk & Vulnerability

- At both local & national level. The toxic trio effects parental/carer ability to care of their children. TSCP completed case reviews during 2017-20 in which the toxic trio have featured heavily; Domestic Abuse (50%), Parental mental health (60%) and Parental substance misuse (60%). Reducing these risk factors within the population, therefore, is a partnership priority, alongside mitigating risk to children whose lived experience is affected by these risk factors .

Transitions

- Ensuring safeguarding is prioritised in any context of transition

Complex & Contextual Safeguarding

- TSCP will have the strategic oversight of the contribution of Partners, individually and collectively, to safeguard and protect children at risk from all forms of exploitation. TSCP strive for a Partnership approach to improve wellbeing, safety and outcomes for adolescents

Trauma Informed Professional Practice

- Local reviews have informed TSCP response to identify this as priority. Across Tameside there are pockets of good practice where ACES and trauma informed practice build resilience and can improve outcomes for the individuals, families and communities.
- TSCP will embrace this work to inform and contribute to the development of this area of work, to provide a workforce that is trauma informed and able to apply an ACE lens to ensure their practice is informed by trauma

Early Help Offer & Thresholds

- This remains a continuation of the work that TSCP have been involved in to date. TSCP are committed to gain assurance that there are clear pathways so that thresholds are understood and consistently applied
- that there is effective multi-agency working in responding to early identified needs

Partnership Working

Partnership working is imperative to ensure TSCP is successful in safeguarding and improving outcomes for children, young people and families. Shared Priorities are acknowledged collectively across:-

- Tameside Adults Safeguarding Partnership Board
- Tameside Community Safety Partnership
- Tameside Health and Wellbeing Board

The Boards have mapped their shared priorities and identified the lead partnership responsible for delivery. This work informs the TSCP Business Plan and contributes to TMBC Corporate Plan, and the Police and Crime Plan.

Tameside – Local Context

Data as of
February 2024



Number of
children in Tameside
aged 0-17

51193

Number of young
people in Tameside
aged 18 - 24

16403

Percentage
of children
classed as BME

20.5%

Primary pupils eligible
for and claiming free
school meals

Tameside
32%
England
24%

Secondary pupils
eligible for and claiming
free school meals

Tameside
32%
England
22.7%

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

348

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

6.12%

Number of domestic
abuse notifications to
Children's Social Care
in the last 12 months

3300
Rate* - **639**



Number of children
with an Open Early
Help Episode

581
Rate* - **113.6**

Number of children
and care leavers with
an Open Child in
Need Referral

2102
Rate* - **407**



Percentage of
children in low
income families

Tameside
28.5%
England
20%

Number of Section
47 Enquiries in the
last 12 months

1835
Rate* - **283**

Number of people
who are the
subject of a Child
Protection Plan

404
Rate* - **78**

Number of children
who are cared for
by Tameside

647
Rate* - **125**



Unaccompanied
Asylum Seeking
Children

17
% of cared
for children **3%**

Care Leavers who were
Unaccompanied Asylum
Seeking children

23
% of care
leavers (18-24) **3%**

Care Leavers

487

*Rate per 10,000 0-17 population is given where appropriate

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Practice

Training and Development

Despite significant vacancies within the Business Unit there has been a concerted effort to ensure that a core training offer was maintained throughout 2023/24. A local training strategy was updated and ongoing support was available to maintain and support a training pool of multi-agency professionals and practitioners to deliver a local offer. The delivery of partnership training takes place in either a virtual setting or face to face. Overall, 105 training sessions have been completed between Jan 2023-Feb 2024.

The partnership is acutely aware of a need to better support and facilitate a comprehensive multi-agency training programme that is informed by agreed priorities and local learning. This also needs to include systemic and thematic issues identified at a local, regional and national level. Steps will be taken to adopt a proactive and preventative approach to safeguarding training, to improve accessibility and addressing any existing gaps in learning and compliance across all agencies.

There is also an identified need to introduce a consistent plan and approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of all learning activity undertaken by the partnership.

List of training delivered during 2023/24

- Brook Traffic Light System
- Building Trusted relationships
- CEOP (Think you know)
- Child Exploitation
- Child Exploitation (out of the shadows)
- Child Protection Refresher
- CRE screening toolkit
- CRE Tool Kit Training Level 3-4 Practitioners
- Domestic Abuse Understanding Risk and Response
- Domestic Abuse, Stalking & harassment
- Drug & Alcohol awareness session
- FGM/Forced marriage & Honour based violence
- Foundation Course
- Introduction to Harm Reduction
- Introduction to My Recovery Tameside.
- MA Child Protection refresher
- Parental mental health
- Prevent and Counter Terrorism Awareness
- Professional challenge
- Reducing Parental Conflict Level 3
- Risky Business role of managers
- Safeguarding practice updates
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Teenagers-Working with Adolescents
- Safer recruitment
- Signs of Safety
- Solihull Approach Training
- The Power of Language
- Thresholds
- Transitions
- Understanding exploitation
- Virtual Mental Health Early Help - Kooth & Qwell Awareness
- Working Together

Quality Assurance and Audit

The Quality Assurance and Performance Management Subgroup is responsible for seeking assurance from agencies and partnership groups that they are delivering good services which safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The remit includes multiagency audit and assurance findings, oversight and analysis of partnership outcomes and performance dataset

The following activity has received strategic oversight and input from the subgroup.

Section 175 (Education Audit)

Schools and colleges have a statutory duty under the Education Act (2002) to provide assurance to the TSCP about arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, primarily provided through completion of the yearly self-assessed Section 175 safeguarding audit. Analysis of audit returns enable the partnership to review compliance and the effectiveness of schools' safeguarding arrangements, to gather local data from settings across the borough, and to identify trends and areas for improvement. The audit is aligned with national guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The return rate remains high at 96%. During the self-assessment process 180 actions were identified by the education providers. Identified improvement areas include schools conducting an annual survey on bullying and schools regularly briefing to parents on e-safety; a process for identifying mental health problems; and schools following statutory guidance on responding to sexual violence and sexual harassment. Significant assurances were also sought across a number of areas, with compliance ranging from 90 to 95% across settings.

Section 11 Audit

The audit was conducted in two parts those in a policy and procedures section (amended from the Greater Manchester template) and a workforce questionnaire. The self-assessment reflected some concerns within organisations and across the TSCP.

Overall, there was concern of the quality of services based on external inspections (Ofsted, CQC etc). Those organisations below a good standard, provided action plans for their agencies for 2023-24.

Assurance themes included:

- Understanding of information sharing
- Whistleblowing procedures
- Locating organisations safeguarding policies
- Confidence in challenging other agencies & carrying out safeguarding duties
- Knowledge on how to make a safeguarding referral and for the workforce on having a difficult conversation with an adult.

Numerous areas of improvement were noted across several organisations including:

- Safe recruitment procedures,
- Childrens safeguarding training
- Voice of the child
- Transition process
- Providing time for staff to reflect on practice
- Learning from CYP safeguarding reviews being received across the workforce.

In addition, there were concerns around understanding different practice models and strategies across organisations, such as the Early Help Offer, Threshold Document, Signs of Safety, Greater Manchester Procedures, I-thrive, Escalation Policy and Voice of the Child Strategy. For example, most of Children Social Care respondents had good knowledge of Signs of Safety but not of I-thrive (mental health practice model). The Health sector did have good knowledge of I-thrive but not of Signs of Safety.

Although most staff knew of the TSCP. There was a lack of awareness of the arrangements and not engaging with the website.

TSCP, via the Quality Assurance subgroup has coordinated two multi-agency audits in 2023-24, they include:

Neglect – Findings similar to that of Ofsted and a thematic review. In response a Neglect Strategic Group has been established to drive forward improvements and will continue to be a priority for TSCP in 2024-25. Work to date has included a revision of the Neglect Strategy, implementation of Graded Care Profile 2 and working in collaboration with the NSPCC to ensure a robust plan is in place to ensure its success. Neglect champions have been identified across the partnership and launch of a Neglect Champion and Practitioner Workshop in April 2024.

Transitions – The case audits have been completed and plans are in place to finalise the audit in 2024/25. A further opportunity has been identified to hold a joint conference with Tameside Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board and the Community Safety Partnership.

The aim of the audit is to identify strengths and weaknesses in the local safeguarding systems. The audit was designed in line with NICE guidelines and with a focus on the support from agencies to children and young people prior to transition; transition planning; support during and after transition; understanding the lived experience and the overall impact of the transitions process.

Complex safeguarding peer review – This multi-agency audit was completed in 2023. This was carried out using the Greater Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub peer review methodology. The Complex Safeguarding subgroup had responsibility for strategic planning for exploitation and oversight of the operational subgroup in delivering recommendations. The group has overseen the review and update of the multi-agency protocol and assessment tools. Progress has been made to strengthen transition of children and strong links have been developed with the Adult Safeguarding Board and Adult Social Care.

Multi Agency Dip Sample Audit on Contacts at Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHASH)

During the reporting period changes were made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 'Front Door', to include Early Help. A Steering Group was established to oversee the effectiveness of and adherence to the EHASH operating principles. A multi-agency audit was conducted to ensure robust safeguarding decision making at the point of request/contact; early identification of need to prevent escalation into statutory services; and appropriate signposting to early help and targeted services. Findings gave moderate to high assurance on decision making, with 18 out of 20 dip samples showing the correct threshold was applied at the front door and those closed down were considered appropriate.

Assurance Exercises

Self-Harm Pathway - This was a re-run of the self-harm pathway conducted the previous year. Overall, we didn't get assurance on the workforce having knowledge of the self-harm pathway. Furthermore, two-thirds of people reported that they don't have access to resources around self-harm. However, most participants were confident on where to go to find out information on self-harm.

Professional Curiosity - A questionnaire was developed to assess professional curiosity within the workforce. Overall assurance was given of the workforce having some professional curiosity. However, the findings are limited due to a lack of a representative sample.

Assessments: There were often delays in using neglect screening tools or not used at all. Examples where neglect assessments tools were used appear to help progress the case. In addition, three out of the six children displayed sexual harmful behaviour, but no evidence of assessment activity (despite Tameside being signed up to use the Brook Traffic Light Tool). Furthermore, half the children's case files were deemed to have a poor recording of the lived experience of the children.

Making an impact upon the child: Some children experience drift and delay during safeguarding processes. A number of reasons were identified: delays due to staffing capacity or change in practitioners; lack of direct work with children such as life story work; actions aren't clear enough to progress; a focus on resolving parental issues and lots of recording of information that made handovers difficult. In addition, there were some wider issues regarding housing for children who experience neglect.

Performance Data

Data has been affected by the transition between Children's Services case management systems and partnership resourcing, which will be resolved in the coming year, enabling us to finalise our partnership performance scorecard and meet our ambition for a multiagency dashboard. There are plans in place to review the data dashboard in line with the TSCP priorities and to include wider partnership data. For the coming year, the audit plan will be responsive to the analysis of data, with a workplan that includes wider data analysis from across the partnership.

Learning from Practice Reviews (Rapid Reviews and CSPP)

The case review sub-group, comprising of the statutory partners as well as Education, Probation, Youth Offending and representatives from other agencies on a case-by-case basis, has delegated responsibility to oversee learning from reviews and reports to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on learning and progress made in line with Working Together 2023.

Following a Rapid Review (RR) or Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR), action plans are developed and monitored through single-agency and multi-agency plans and processes. A separate Learning and Development subgroup is responsible for workforce training and development and producing resources for the partnership.

During 2023-2024 four rapid reviews took place, with two progressing to LCSPR. One review considered the recognition and response to sexual abuse following a disclosure from a child. The review identified good practice at the time of the disclosure, prompt referrals were made to appropriate services. The review sought learning in respect of:

- Working with children and young people to support earlier disclosure of child abuse.
- Understanding the impact of witnessing abuse over a long period of time
- Recording the lived experiences of children
- Assessment and understanding of males in households

A review was undertaken following the death of a child at home although there were no concerns highlighted in relation to effectiveness of safeguarding or partnership working that could have prevented the death. The child and family had previously been open to services at Child In Need and Child Protection under the category of Neglect. The review considered several similarities between this case and previous and recent RR notifications:

- Recognition and response to neglect when we see a decline once cases are back at universal level
- Parental capacity
- Children with disabilities where there are safeguarding issues

Two reviews were undertaken identifying similar practice issues in relation to neglect and a thematic review was commissioned. Reflecting on the themes which were raised the thematic review identified the following key lines of enquiry:

- Multi agency Leadership to enable effective working in safeguarding.
- Multi agency recognition and response to neglect
- The Children's Perspectives on daily lived experiences
- Males in the household

Learning for the partnership

- Adult focused assessments and plans
- Assessment of men in children's lives
- Recognition and response to neglect
- Shared accountability for neglect policy, procedures and multi-agency practice, multi-agency response and threshold documents

7-minute briefings are communicated along with links to full reports of practice reviews. Practitioner learning events and resources are provided to support engagement with front line practitioners.

As a partnership we recognise we need to do more to ensure that learning is reaching the front-line and to understanding how learning is embedded. The reporting period has been challenging due to the impact of workforce changes across the partnership and within the business unit. We now have a full complement of staff to ensure we improve learning and outcomes as part of a work plan for 2024/25 and beyond. A Learning and Development Framework has been agreed and the training offer is under review and will be pivotal in the success of our new MASA.

Voice of the Child

TSCP is keen to ensure that there is a culture of listening and responding to the voice of young people across its work. The partnership has a Voice of the Child Strategy and strong links to the Youth Council and local participation offer. Safeguarding practice reviews always seek to include children's lived experience and impact of services and interventions. There is recognition that further work needs to take place to address the voice of children and young people who have experience of the safeguarding system through Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection and Cared for Children. The Executive will work closely with the Independent Scrutineer to ensure this remains as a priority for the years ahead and is factored within future activity and reporting.

Moving Forward

A review of partnership priorities for 2024/25 and beyond will be undertaken. Work of the strategic groups will align to the agreed priorities and this can allow for all activity to seek the required levels of assurance. The partnership also needs to develop a comprehensive multi-agency performance dataset, informing key lines of enquiry and methods specific to quality assurance, learning and review activity.

The TSCP Business Unit can start to make inroads regarding the partnerships ability to deliver a comprehensive multi-agency training programme, informed by priorities, quality assurance, multi-agency audits and recommendations from reviews. This can allow for improvements to be made by ensuring all planned activity can be reviewed for its effectiveness and impact in delivering system-wide oversight, challenge and improvement.

A new governance structure was agreed in June 2024. With a requirement to improve how learning is captured and reviewed. The strategic groups are chaired by representatives of the statutory partners, with all group chairs added to membership of the Executive Safeguarding Children Board. The Executive Board meets on a quarterly basis and reporting of activity from strategic groups is discussed. This allows for direction and actions at an executive level to feed into work of each group.

There is a need to ensure the partnership has a renewed online presence and resource, with plans in place to develop and launch a standalone TSCP website. This will further enhance the online interface with the public and practitioners.

There is a collective commitment to stabilise the partnership and build stronger foundations and governance arrangements. A significant amount of improvement activity is required in the partnership space. The ownership, drive and direction needed from the DSPs will create a platform that is underpinned by a clear set of priorities. This will be supported and complimented by our new Independent Scrutineer.

We must increase the emphasis on developing and promoting effective challenge amongst partners, to seek necessary assurances of each other and to ensure the impact of learning is evident in improving outcomes for children and families in Tameside.

Achieving greater permanence within the children's workforce will contribute to an enhanced level of certainty and consistency within the partnership. The partnership will review and publish multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA), in line with the implementation of WT23.

TSCP Governance Structure (Agreed June 2024)



Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP)

