

Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership **Annual Report**



2024 - 2025

CONTENTS

- Foreword by Strategic Safeguarding Partners 3
- Message from Independent Scrutineer 5
- Introduction 6
- Independent Scrutiny 7
- MASA 7
- Budget and Financial Contributions 8
- TSCP Governance Structure (2024/25) 9
- Partnership Working 10
- Tameside Local Context 11
- MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE12
- Training and Development12
- Quality Assurance and Audit 14
- Case Review Activity 16
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) 17
- Moving Forward 18



Foreword by Strategic Safeguarding Partners

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

The reporting period has been one of considerable challenge and reflection for Tameside. The partnership has operated under significant pressures, which have directly impacted the effectiveness of our local safeguarding arrangements. Despite these difficulties, we extend our sincere thanks to the safeguarding workforce across all agencies, for their commitment, resilience, and collective efforts to keep children safe.

As strategic leaders, we must be open and honest about the discomfort we face when reporting on the effectiveness of arrangements that we are jointly responsible to deliver. A lack of permanence in key leadership roles within the local authority has unfortunately hampered the partnership's ability to maintain consistency, accountability, and representation. However, we are encouraged by more recent appointments, which mark the beginning of a more stable and consistent leadership structure.

This report serves not only as a summary of activity but also a position statement. It reflects the reality of our current circumstance and the difficult conversations we must continue to encourage, on behalf of our children. We will make time to continually self-assess our efforts and identify areas that require attention. This includes improving governance, to embed learning, compliance with statutory responsibilities for case reviews and strengthening our collective assurance processes.

While we cannot fully evidence the impact of our arrangements, progress is beginning to take shape. A temporary governance structure provided a platform for more consistent planning and assurance activity. We are committed to building on this and ensuring that our strategic priorities are refreshed and align with the needs of children and families in Tameside.

The Ofsted judgement of Inadequate following the ILACS inspection in December 2023 has rightly prompted additional interventions and support. It is essential that we respond with transparency, accountability, and a renewed focus on improvement. The requirement to review and publish revised multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) in December 2024 is a step in our journey.

We recognise the importance of having the right people in the right spaces to cultivate an environment that is both supportive and challenging, underpinned by an unwavering ambition to improve outcomes for children. Our Independent Scrutineer also continues to play a vital role in promoting accountability and driving improvement across the partnership.

We will work collectively to improve our learning and development model and to actively seek the voice and lived experience of young people through our quality assurance framework and case reviews. An updated set of local priorities will inform activity and underpin how we will ensure the effectiveness and impact of local arrangements. Proactive quality assurance, learning and robust multi-agency performance oversight will be the pillars to our future success.

We are optimistic about the journey ahead with permanent leadership, a shared commitment to improve and placing children at the centre of everything we do. Moving forward together we will challenge ourselves to create the conditions for children to be safe, supported, and able to thrive.

Jill Colbert OBE

Strategic Director of Children's Services – Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Chris Foster

Chief Superintendent – Greater Manchester Police

Michelle Walsh

Associate Director of Nursing, Quality and Safeguarding – NHS GM Integrated Care

Message from the Independent Scrutineer

For the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 the Independent Scrutineer would have to concur that the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children in Tameside has been ineffective. There is a well recorded, historical context to this, but ultimately the responsibility for effective multi agency safeguarding arrangements rests equally with the partnership's strategic leadership, i.e. the three Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP), as set out in Working Together 2023.

Due to long standing, poor governance and safeguarding arrangements, pace and progress have been slow, due to the scale of rectifying inherited legacy issues, whilst at the same time, responding to complex needs and competing priorities. This has been within a context of low confidence, morale and mistrust.

Given this very low starting point, the Independent Scrutineer would respectfully challenge the LSPs to question whether current assurance arrangements, delivered through the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Alliance, are sufficient for children and young people in Tameside, who continue to deserve better.

The appointment of a permanent Director of Children's Service and Designated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) in the last quarter of 2024/25 brought experienced and strong leadership to the partnership and with growing workforce stability, the Independent Scrutineer is confident that next year's annual report will show greater progress.

Areas of progress that were made, include setting priorities and strengthening the governance and subgroup structure of the board. Equally, tackling the backlog of Learning Reviews. The absence of any multi-agency dataset has hindered the partnership's oversight of impact and outcomes for children. However, the Independent Scrutineer is optimistic that this will be in place moving forward.

The Independent Scrutineer welcomes the honesty and openness of senior leaders, alongside the tremendous commitment that can be seen across the partnership's workforce.

With the improvements that are beginning to be seen in safeguarding practice, there is a real opportunity for the statutory partners to continue to work together, escalating their equal endeavour to improve the experiences of children and young people in need of support and protection, right now, in Tameside.

Mel John-Ross

Independent Scrutineer for Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership

Introduction

The Annual Report covers the period April 2024 to March 2025 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.

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 2024-25. 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

Independent Scrutiny remains a vital component of TSCP, providing objective oversight, constructive challenge, and assurance on the impact and effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The position of Independent Scrutineer has been updated in line with WT 2023, with a successful appointment made in September 2024.

Towards the end of this reporting period, the role of the Independent Scrutineer has been particularly important in navigating a time of significant change and challenge. With instability in key leadership roles and the impact of an Ofsted judgement of Inadequate for Children's Services, scrutiny has helped maintain a focus on accountability, transparency, and the lived experiences of children and families.

The Independent Scrutineer has worked closely with partners to:

- **Provide critical reflection** on partnership activity, including the effectiveness of governance and decision-making processes.
- **Support the development of a learning culture**, encouraging agencies to reflect on practice and embed improvements.
- **Facilitate honest dialogue** between strategic leaders, helping to identify areas of concern and opportunities for collaboration.
- **Monitor progress** ensuring that safeguarding remains central to all partnership work.

While the partnership has faced limitations in evidencing impact during this period, the Independent Scrutineer has highlighted the importance of building stronger foundations for assurance. This includes improving the consistency of representation, strengthening governance arrangements, and ensuring that scrutiny is informed by robust data and feedback from children, families, and practitioners.

Looking ahead, the Independent Scrutineer will continue to play a key role in supporting the partnership to a position of sustained improvement and impact.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)

TSCP continually reviews the effectiveness of its arrangements. During 2024-2025 we have experienced an unprecedented change to personnel across the partnership that at times affects the ability to implement clear ambition and direction.

We have made some progress with a review and update of our MASA following the updated WT23 guidance. TSCP has recognised the value and importance of having the voice of Education at our Executive Partnership Board and the need for this to become better embedded at strategic partnership meetings.

Budget and Financial Contributions

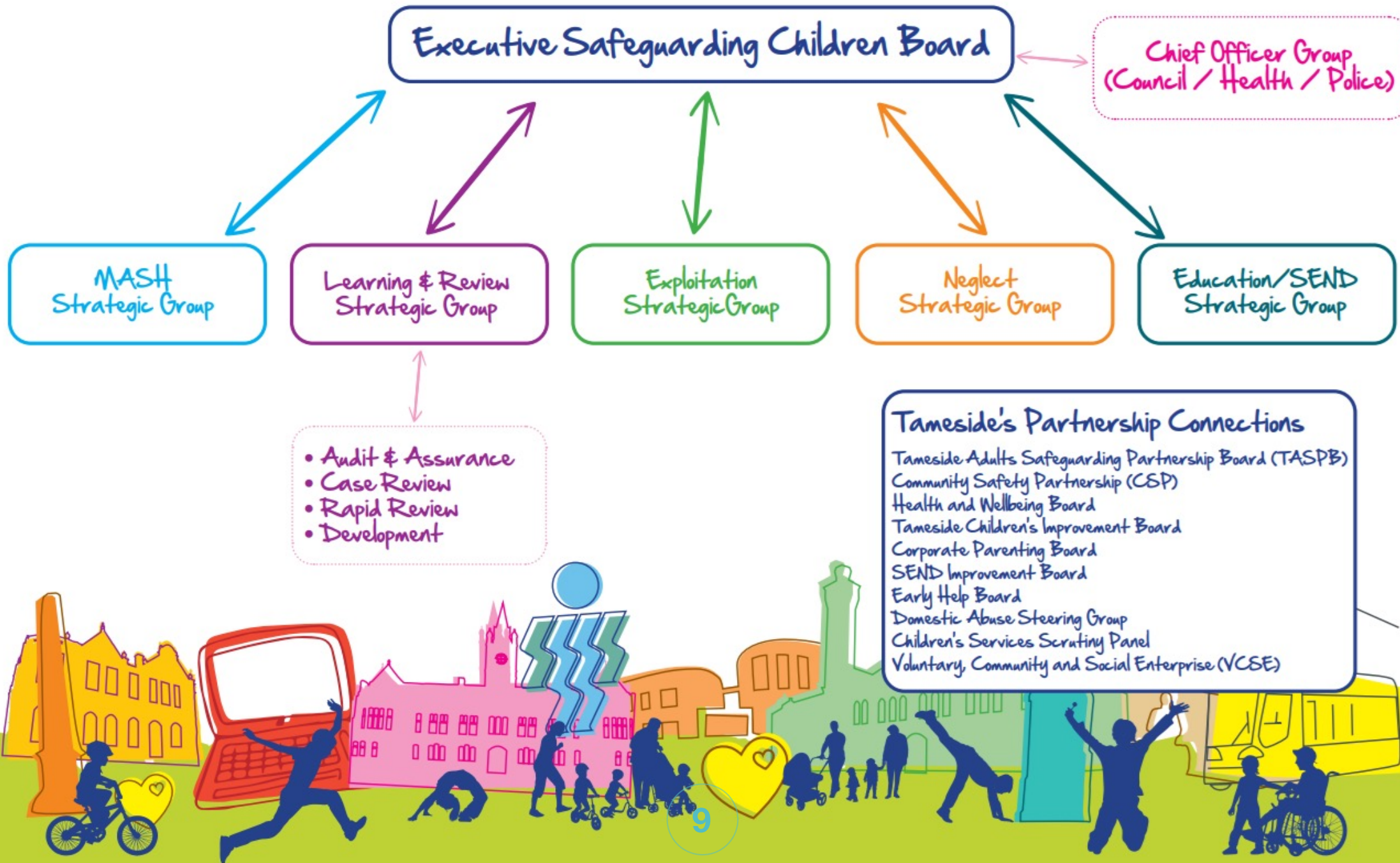
The table below provides a breakdown of TSCP funding contributions for 2024/25.

TSCP Contributions and Annual Budget for 2024/25

Police	ICB	LA	Other	Total Budget	Roles within MASA
£13,200 (4.7%)	£74,357 (26.6%)	£74, 357 (26.6%)	Schools and Acad- emies: £113,000 (40.3%) Other non-statutory partner contribu- tions (including Probation): £5000 (1.8%)	£279, 914	1 x Business manager (FT) 1 x QA Officer (FT) 1 x Training Organiser (FT) Business Support (1.4 FTE)

There is a future need to fully review the TSCP budget and contribution profile. This includes the approach to how budget, contributions, and expenditure are routinely monitored and reported. When compared with other regional partnerships, the most notable discrepancy is the comparable size of the contribution made by schools and academies in Tameside and also the Local Authority contribution rate.

TSCP Governance Structure (May 2024 to March 2025)



Partnership Working

Partnership working is imperative to ensure TSCP is successful in safeguarding and improving outcomes for children, young people and families. Work is required to establish shared priorities across:

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

TSCP priorities were in place up to 2024. Strategic priorities have been reviewed and agreed for the upcoming period for 2025 to 2028 (agreed in April 2025).

Tameside – Local Context

Data as of
March 2025

Number of
children in Tameside
aged 0-17

52901

Number of young
people in Tameside
aged 18 - 24

17181

Percentage
of children
classed as BME

14.4%

Primary pupils eligible
for and claiming free
school meals

Tameside
34.7%
England
24.7%

Secondary pupils
eligible for and claiming
free school meals

Tameside
34.1%
England
25.8%

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

379

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

6.26%

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

3136
Rate* - **602.7**

Number of children
with an Open Early
Help Episode

465
Rate* - **89.4**

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

2926
Rate* - **562.3**



Percentage of
children in low
income families

Tameside
32.56%
England
24.03%

Number of Section
47 Enquiries in the
last 12 months

2225
Rate* - **427.6**

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

462
Rate* - **88.8**

Number of children
who are cared for
by Tameside

652
Rate* - **125**



Unaccompanied
Asylum Seeking
Children

18
% of cared
for children **3%**

Care Leavers who were
Unaccompanied Asylum
Seeking children

9
% of care
leavers (18-24) **2%**

Care Leavers

612

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

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Practice

Training and Development

There has been a concerted effort to ensure that a core training offer was maintained throughout 2024/25.

An updated Learning and Development Framework demonstrates how learning is identified and how this will inform training to support safeguarding practice and systems. The framework will be central to the ongoing assessment of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

TSCP aims to provide a programme of multi-agency safeguarding learning and development opportunities. Through a training offer, practitioners and organisations can access a variety of courses, workshops, virtual materials and webinars. This is primarily for professionals working in a safeguarding role with children and families who live in Tameside.

The aim of training is to bring professionals together to develop skills and knowledge whilst working collaboratively to deliver positive outcomes for children and families. In line with Working Together 2023, multi-agency training is essential to support and understand the local need and services available to children and young people. Within the guidance, one of the roles of TSCP is to deliver effective and quality training and to evaluate its effectiveness to meet local needs.

Effective safeguarding relies on a confident, knowledgeable, and skilled workforce. TSCP is committed to supporting the delivery of high-quality multi-agency training that aims to:

- Equip professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to safeguard children effectively.
- Enhance multi-agency communication and collaboration, promoting a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Provide safe and reflective learning environments where practitioners can explore challenges and share best practice.
- Align with priorities to ensure training is relevant, timely, and impactful.

The training programme is designed to be responsive to local needs, emerging themes and is informed by local, regional and national learning, with a focus on prevention and early intervention. This is an area that is continually being developed, with an aim to build a sustainable training model that draws on local expertise and practice.

In 2024/25, training sessions were offered through a variety of formats, including:

- Face-to-face training
- Online platforms and webinars
- Lunch and Learn sessions

TSCP website has been developed to improve information sharing and the general accessibility of training and learning resources. The Partnership has invested in the Virtual College platform, offering over 40 safeguarding courses covering a wide range of topics to support continuous professional development across all partner agencies.

The website also promotes external training opportunities, including those linked to Greater Manchester Child Sexual Exploitation and Northwest partners. One example of successful engagement was the Introduction to Intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse and Multi-Agency Response event in March 2025, which attracted over 90 professionals.

Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2)

The Partnership began planning the implementation of GCP2, a strength-based assessment tool that helps practitioners evaluate the quality of care a child is receiving and identify potential neglect.

Training rollout began in December 2024 across agencies. The next phase includes:

- Establishing a GCP2 Network Group, replacing a Neglect Champions Subgroup.
- Supporting practitioners and monitoring the completion and impact of GCP2 assessments.
- Developing a new foundation course, Neglect Matters, to further support understanding and response to neglect.

Monthly Newsletter

TSCP introduced a monthly newsletter to improve communication and engagement across the partnership. Each edition includes:

- Updates on key safeguarding priorities
- Links to policy and procedural changes
- Upcoming training opportunities
- Awareness days and campaign highlights

Feedback has been positive, with many professionals finding the newsletters a valuable source of current information and learning opportunities.

Training Topics Delivered

A wide range of safeguarding topics have been covered, including:

Exploitation & Safeguarding

- Child Exploitation
- CRE Toolkit
- FGM
- Forced Marriage
- Honour-Based Violence

Domestic Abuse & Conflict

- Domestic Abuse Risk Response
- Reducing Parental Conflict

Professional Practice

- Safer Recruitment
- Professional Challenge
- Threshold Awareness

Specialist Tools & Frameworks

- Brook Traffic Light System
- CEOP
- Solihull Approach
- My Recovery Tameside

Youth & Adolescents

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Teenagers
- Understanding Exploitation

Quality Assurance and Audit

A Quality Assurance and Performance Framework outlines the approach on both a single and multi-agency basis and brings together a wealth of quantitative and qualitative information on the local arrangements for safeguarding children.

The overarching aim is to enable TSCP to be as effective as possible in understanding the areas of strength and areas for improvement at both an operational and strategic level; to review and understand the impact of the local arrangements for safeguarding children and to identify new risks and emerging threats to respond early to prevent harm.

The partnership is in the process of developing an integrated performance dataset. It is expected that effective monitoring of multi-agency safeguarding data can start to take shape and become more impactful from 2025/26 onwards.

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. This is primarily provided through completion of the yearly self-assessment Section 175 safeguarding audit. Analysis of audit returns enables the partnership to review compliance and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, to gather local data from settings across the borough, and to identify trends, good practice and areas for improvement. The audit is aligned with national guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Compliance with return rates remain high at 96% and a high majority of identified actions have been completed within timescales.

Most settings demonstrated compliance in the following areas:

- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Policies and procedures
- Safeguarding training
- Staff communication
- Handling sensitive data
- Safe recruitment and managing allegations against staff
- Governing body oversight
- Child-on-child abuse

Areas with lower compliance rates include:

- Operation Encompass online training
- Annual pupil survey on bullying within and beyond school
- Regular briefings/communications on e-safety for parents/carers

Section 11 Audit

Places a statutory duty on local agencies to ‘ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions.’ TSCP actively monitor the effectiveness of organisations operating within its geographical boundary via a range of processes, one of which is the Section 11 safeguarding audit.

Tameside’s assessment is based on a revised Greater Manchester template, with four sections.

- A culture of safeguarding within the organisation, including new questions on the implementation of Working Together guidance principles.
- A safe organisation.
- Voice of the Child, parents/Carers and Organisation Learning.
- Transitions (question from a young person from a previous Section 11 Audit).

Areas of good practice include:

- Use of a “Think Family” approach.
- Utilisation of family hubs
- Some evidence of co-production with children

Areas identified as requiring improvement:

- Recruitment procedures, including safer recruitment, managing allegations, and whistleblowing.
- A culture of listening — to children and the wider community
- Organisational learning
- Transitions

Case Review Activity

The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a local level with the safeguarding partners. Safeguarding partners must:

- Identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their opinion, raise issues of importance in relation to their area.
- Commission and oversee the review of those cases if they consider it appropriate.

CSPR procedural guidance outlines the processes for identifying serious child safeguarding cases, making notifications to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, conducting Rapid Reviews, and the commissioning, governance and publication of local CSPRs, where required.

Working Together 2023 sets out the role of safeguarding partners to establish this multi-agency system of learning and reflection locally. Reviews are designed to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. Safeguarding partners have a shared responsibility for ensuring that Rapid reviews and CSPRs lead to effective learning which drives practice change.

There are three key stages in the process of learning from serious incidents:

- Serious incident notification to Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel shared with Ofsted and the DfE.
- Rapid Review which should be completed within 15 working days of notification.
- Consideration of a local CSPR or national review.

Within the local CSPR process, there is the expectation to consider how families and, where appropriate, children, can be involved in and contribute to the review. This helps provide a valuable opportunity for them to share their views and lived experiences. These insights can highlight how services were perceived and how agencies engaged with the family, offering a perspective that may not have been captured in the professional records.

The Learning & Review Strategic Group oversees the partnership approach to how actions are monitored and the expedite learning. 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.

During 2024-2025 the partnership has received and screened three Serious Incident Notification Referrals. On each occasion, statutory safeguarding partners convened and agreed that criteria for Rapid Review was not met. One case progressed to a local learning review which has been completed.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR)

While the partnership has not needed to initiate a CSPR during 2024/25, statutory safeguarding partners have a responsibility to ensure that all associated activity is undertaken within required timescales.

TSCP does have some outstanding CSPRs which have carried forward from previous years. Progress monitoring is undertaken by DSPs and TSCP Board. A comprehensive and forensic review has been undertaken of all outstanding CSPR activity. This is to establish and ensure that suitable and appropriate steps are taken for the reviews to be concluded in a way that is most fitting for our children and families.

The TSCP Chair and Business Manager have met with the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, to update them on outstanding cases and the steps that will be taken in order to rectify and instruct any actions that currently prevent them from being submitted and published. Part of this involves a responsibility of the partnership to ensure that children and families are suitably informed, briefed and supported throughout this process. Some of this work has required a need to seek and commission new independent support and advice to assess and determine the correct course of action.

Voice of Children

TSCP is keen to ensure that there is a culture of listening and responding to the voice of young people across its work. CSPRs seek to include the lived experience of children, and the 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. TSCP Board will work closely with the Independent Scrutineer to ensure this remains a priority for the years ahead and is factored within future activity and reporting.

Moving Forward

There is a collective commitment to stabilise the partnership and build stronger foundations and governance arrangements. The ownership, drive and direction from DSPs will aim to create a platform that is underpinned by a clear set of priorities.

TSCP Strategic Priorities for 2025 to 2028 will be:

- Partnership effectiveness, improvement, stability and maturity, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- MASH – Effectiveness of the Front Door, Multi-Agency response and application of Thresholds
- Neglect and Early Help – harm prevention, identification and response
- Transitions
- Voice and engagement with children and families

Achieving greater permanence within the children's workforce will contribute to an enhanced level of certainty and consistency within the partnership. There is a need to develop and promote 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.

TSCP will develop a comprehensive multi-agency performance dataset, strengthen the multi-agency audit calendar and the training and development programme. This can allow for improvements to be made by ensuring all planned activity is reviewed for its effectiveness and impact by delivering system-wide oversight, challenge and improvement.

Significant consideration and preparation must also be given to future Children's Social Care and NHS Reforms.

