ROTHERHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT 2025-26



1. WELCOME TO THE 2025-26 RSCP ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary

It is once again a great pleasure not only to contribute to the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) Annual Report, but also to serve as the Independent Chair and Scrutineer, a role I assumed in early 2023. The Partnership benefits from excellent engagement from all key partners and a culture of constructive challenge, which continues to drive improvement. The Partnership has strong foundations and continues to grow and improve the services it delivers, striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

The Annual Report for 2025-26 reflects our continued commitment to delivering the best possible outcomes for the children and young people of Rotherham. It highlights both the excellent work being delivered across the partnership and the areas where further improvement is required. During the year, Rotherham Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted and graded as "Outstanding", an exceptional achievement that reflects the hard work, professionalism and commitment of staff across the service.

Since becoming the Independent Chair and Scrutineer, I have continued to be impressed by the strength of engagement across the partnership and the collective determination to safeguard children and provide them with the best possible start in life.

The partnership has seen stability in staffing, which is unusual given the level of change across public sector organisations. Despite the changes being experienced across health organisations, there has been excellent attendance and commitment to the partnership, at all levels, right through to the strategic group.

The annual report will provide the current context in which services are operating, and the challenges that are faced by professionals and children across Rotherham. There is a positive position over recent years with a reduction in key statutory

interventions alongside some emerging areas of pressure. The number of Child Protection Plans and S47 enquiries have also fallen, and then become stable. The number of Children in Care has also reduced markedly since 2022-2023, although the last year saw a small increase, it is still a positive position. In contrast, Elective Home Education (EHE) numbers have increased, rising from approximately 450 to 1,000 children. This upward trend represents a shift in demand and is an area of significant work across the partnership, as well as being a national challenge.

As we move into the next year and refresh our plans for 2026-27, I look forward to continuing to support and challenge the Partnership in delivering positive improvement and ensuring children receive the best possible start in life. Many of the current priorities will remain, and work will strengthen the activities they deliver, such as those related to exploitation and education. We will also continue to embed the work on neglect and move to focus more on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), which is an area of national focus. There are also key work streams that impact the partnership, that will be delivered through the next year, including the Families First Programme (FFP).

Darren Downs, Chair of the CYPS Executive Board

The RSCP in 2025-26: At a Glance

6 Key Achievements in 2025-26



Launch of the Neglect Pathway, offering universal services support in recognising neglect and targeting the right support at the right time.



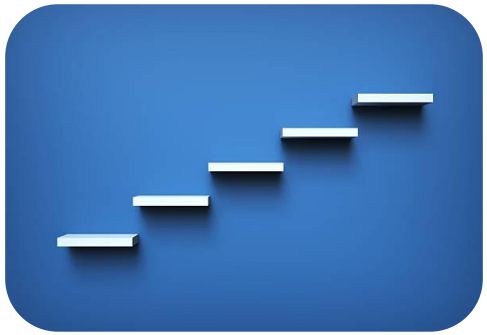
The Harm Outside the Home (HOtH) Pathway commenced, offering collaborative conferencing for children at risk of exploitation.



Safeguarding in Education Vision launched, focusing on preventative and robust measures to keep children safe in schools and alternative provision.



RSCP Neglect Conference held, bringing together over 200 practitioners and managers from across the borough, with a focus on restorative relationships and challenging conversations.



Development of the Partnership Escalation Policy, ensuring that staff are supported through escalation processes and that thematic information is captured and acted upon.



Inaugural Safeguarding Awards held as part of Safeguarding Awareness Week 2025. Ten awards were presented across the adults' and children's sectors, including awards recognising young people.

6 Key challenges and Opportunities in 2026-27



The number of children receiving Elective Home Education continues to rise, with more than 1,000 children recorded as EHE at year-end.



Online harm remains the most prevalent form of exploitation, with school settings managing increased levels of risk and online activity.



The National Panel has published *Protecting Vulnerable Babies Better*, calling for enhanced information sharing and improved recognition of risk.



The Families First Partnership Programme will reshape the delivery of Child Protection, placing greater emphasis on Family Group Decision Making and partnership working.

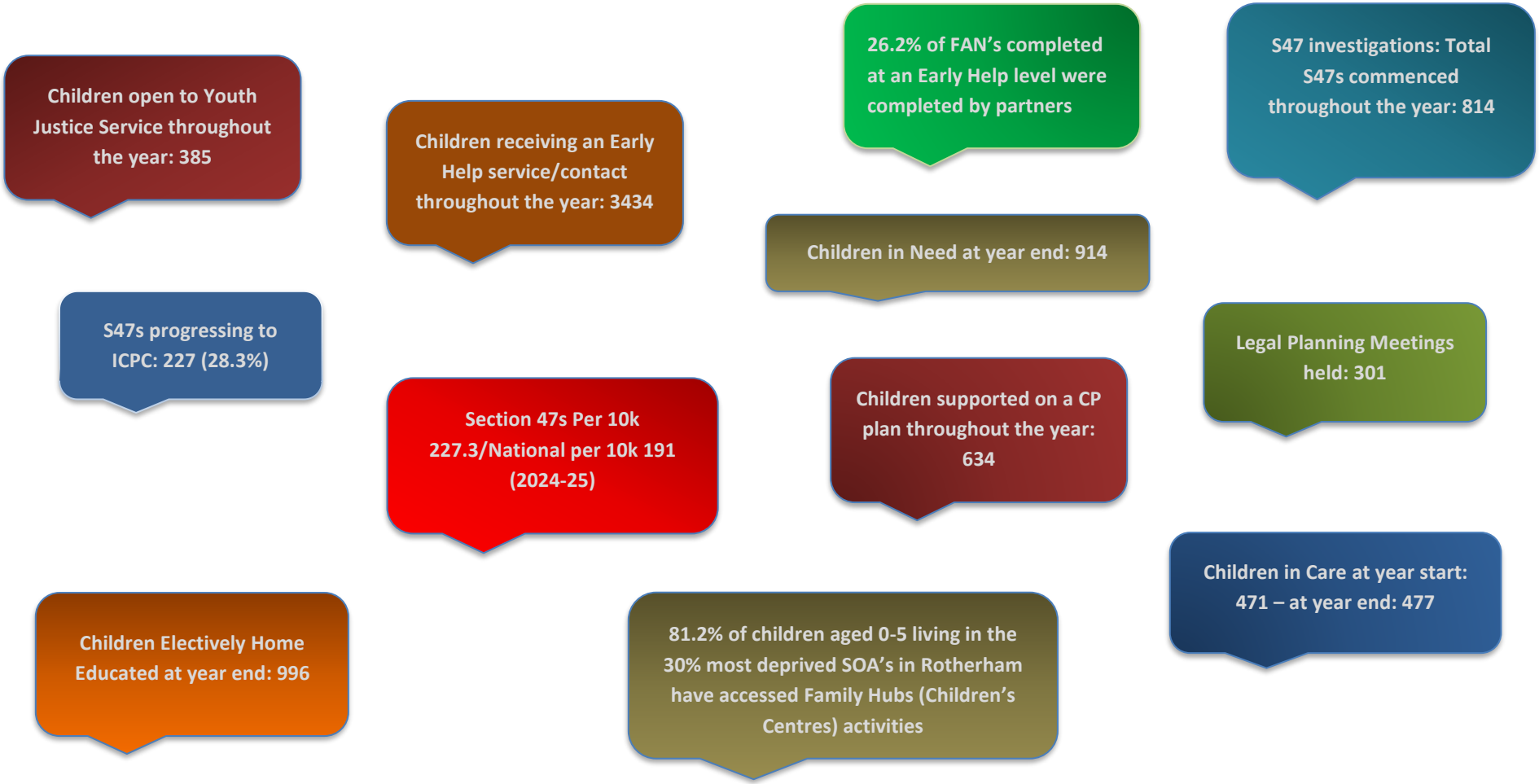


Through the South Yorkshire LSP network, there are opportunities for greater collaboration across the four safeguarding children's partnerships through the sharing of training, policy, guidance and practice experience.



Through Phase Two of the HOtH project, there will be increased activity within community settings, ensuring that business partners are supported in recognising exploitation and helping to reduce risk.

Key Metrics in 2025-26 at a glance:



2. THE LOCAL CONTEXT

An Introduction to Rotherham

Rotherham is a large minster town in South Yorkshire, England, which, together with its surrounding settlements, forms the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham, with a population of 268,354 (ONS, 2022). There are 61,636 0–19-year-old children living in the

Borough (22.9% of the local population – ONS, 2022).

23% of children living in Rotherham are in low-income families (England 19.8% -2023). Our Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement rate is above the national average, 26.6% compared to 24.3% at Primary phase and 27.9% compared to 24.1% at Secondary phase (DfE 2023/24). 22.8% of our school-age population is from an ethnic minority background. (England 38.7%) (DfE 2023/24).

Key Partner Inspection Findings in period

Organisation	Inspection Body & Date	Overall Rating	Key Strengths	Areas for Improvement
[1]Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) ILACS Inspection	Ofsted (2025)	Outstanding	Leadership and management has driven stable, compassionate, and high-quality social work practice.	The quality of pathway plans and health history information provided to care leavers.

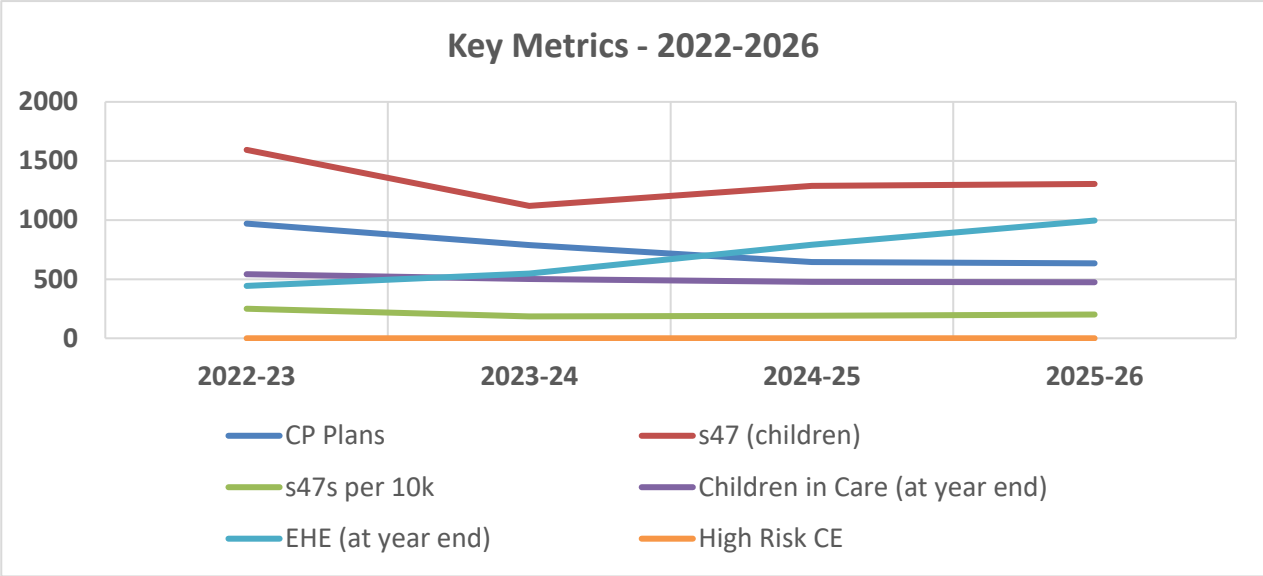
[1] https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50292638

			Assessments were thorough, child-focused and grounded in the experiences and voices of children and families. With no urgent priority actions identified, RMBC benefits from a stable workforce and strong partnerships with health and police sectors, allowing social workers to build meaningful, lasting relationships with local families.	
[2]Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council/South Yorkshire ICB SEND Inspection	Ofsted (2025)	The local area partnership's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children	The SEND partnership achieved the highest Ofsted rating through a "Four Cornerstones" strategy and strong multi-agency collaboration. Early identification and	Leaders across the partnership should continue to reduce the long waits for neurodevelopmental assessment pathways. Leaders should intensify service improvements

[2] https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50261626

		and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.	support are provided to families before formal diagnosis, with children's voices actively shaping services to improve accessibility to mental health and specialist care. The partnership prepares older youth for adulthood through targeted independence training and inclusive career fairs.	for occupational therapy and speech and language therapy at a universal and targeted level.

A Focus on Child Protection Activity



- Analysis of safeguarding activity over the four-year period (2022-23 to 2025-26) demonstrates a generally positive picture, with reductions in key statutory interventions alongside some emerging pressures. The number of Child Protection Plans has reduced consistently from approximately 950 to around 620, while Section 47 enquiries have also fallen significantly before stabilising at just under 1,500. These trends may indicate strengthened early help arrangements, improved threshold application and effective multi-agency working. As a result, both indicators are assessed as Green.

  Action: Continued monitoring and assurance

- In line with the numbers above, the rate of Section 47 enquiries per 10,000 population also shows an initial decrease followed by a stable picture, suggesting that while demand has reduced, it has now levelled off. Similarly, the number of Children in Care reduced significantly between 2022-23 and 2023-24 but has since plateaued, with a slight increase recorded in the most recent year. This trend has occurred alongside a reduction in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). These indicators are therefore rated Amber, reflecting the need for continued monitoring and a sustained focus on demand management, permanence planning and edge-of-care support.

  Action: Business Manager attendance at the PLO Panel has provided assurance regarding robust senior management oversight. Further quality assurance activity exploring themes associated with admissions to care will be undertaken during 2026-27.

- In contrast, Elective Home Education (EHE) numbers have increased steadily across the full reporting period, rising from approximately 450 to 1,000 children. This consistent upward trend, with accelerated growth in recent years, represents a material shift in demand and is assessed as Red, requiring further analysis to understand the underlying drivers and ensure a robust safeguarding and multi-agency response for children where concerns exist

  Action: 6 Monthly reporting into SEDG by the EHE manager to offer assurance of safeguarding grip, specifically of children open to CYPS and where educational concerns exist.

  The RSCP will continue to implement learning from the local review for Child A , including assurance as to increased multi agency information sharing.

3. PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority: Neglect

Introduction from Strategic Chair – Gemma Cross, Head of Quality, Governance and Assurance, The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

Neglect has been a priority for the Partnership for several years, and we are now in the third year of the Delivery Group, which brings the strategy to life. The group has maintained strong partnership working, with representation from across both statutory and third sector organisations. Our ambition is to prevent and reduce the incidence of neglect within Rotherham, ensure that children feel safe, and help all families to thrive within the borough.

The Group is proud to have:

- *Established the use of the evidence-based neglect assessment tool - Graded Care Profile 2. We have increased our training capacity in-house and have a robust training programme for professionals to use the tool in practice. We have embedded the use of the tool within statutory procedures through the Neglect Pathway, with a GCP2 required for all children subject to a Child Protection Plan under the category of neglect.*
- *Established a data dashboard from partners that enables scrutiny of activity linked to neglect, this has enabled us to critically review various areas of practice such as the high prevalence of dental caries in under 5s in our borough. We have been able to work with the dental council to improve awareness of neglect within the context of oral health, and circulated a briefing on actions dentists can take to intervene when factors related to neglect are present.*
- *Developed and launched a screening tool for education and early years partners to use to identify neglect earlier and take remedial action alongside families to address issues before concerns escalate.*
- *This tool will be rolled out to other partners such as in Youth Justice, Probation and Clinic settings in 2026-27.*
- *Held a Conference focused on Neglect, sharing national best practice, family solutions and supporting our pathway launch*

- *Worked with partners in substance misuse and probation services to support a Think Family approach.RDaSH have updated their assessments in adult mental health services to include consideration of others affected by the adult's circumstances, including children.*
- *'Was not brought' processes for health partners have been reviewed and developed, we now have clear policy guidance and an established dataset to understand the incidence of children not being brought to appointments*
- *Launched a public-facing awareness campaign in 2025-26, these leaflets and posters will become more visible throughout the next year in public settings such as supermarkets, GP surgeries, hospitals and family hubs.*

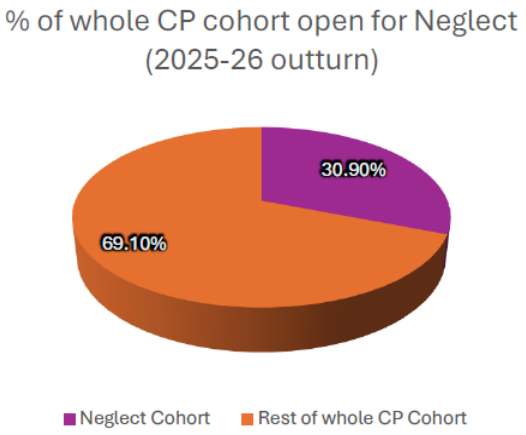


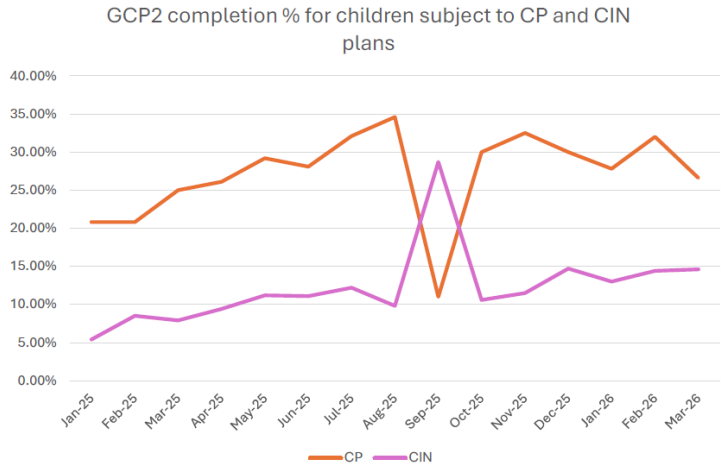


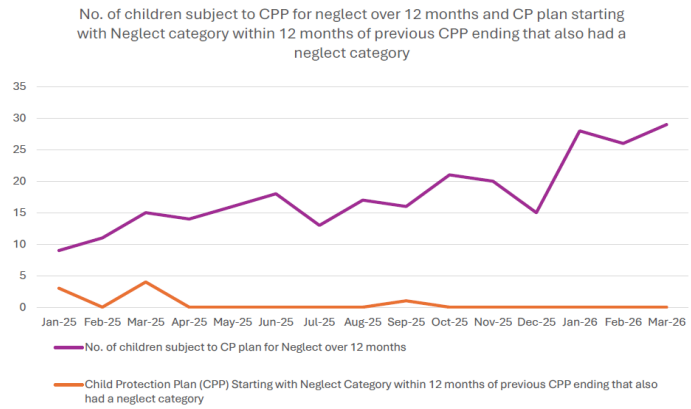


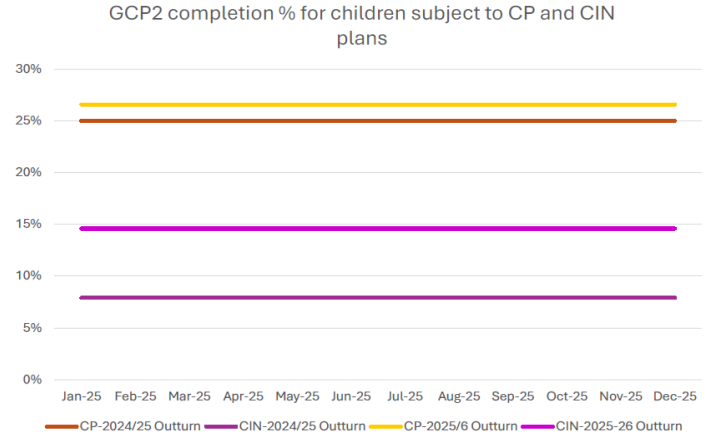


Key Data


% of whole CP cohort open for Neglect (2025-26 outturn)
30.90%
69.10%
Neglect Cohort
Rest of whole CP Cohort


GCP2 completion % for children subject to CP and CIN plans
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Jan-25 Feb-25 Mar-25 Apr-25 May-25 Jun-25 Jul-25 Aug-25 Sep-25 Oct-25 Nov-25 Dec-25 Jan-26 Feb-26 Mar-26
CP
CIN


No. of children subject to CPP for neglect over 12 months and CP plan starting with Neglect category within 12 months of previous CPP ending that also had a neglect category
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Jan-25 Feb-25 Mar-25 Apr-25 May-25 Jun-25 Jul-25 Aug-25 Sep-25 Oct-25 Nov-25 Dec-25 Jan-26 Feb-26 Mar-26
No. of children subject to CP plan for Neglect over 12 months
Child Protection Plan (CPP) Starting with Neglect Category within 12 months of previous CPP ending that also had a neglect category


GCP2 completion % for children subject to CP and CIN plans
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
Jan-25 Feb-25 Mar-25 Apr-25 May-25 Jun-25 Jul-25 Aug-25 Sep-25 Oct-25 Nov-25 Dec-25
CP-2024/25 Outturn
CIN-2024/25 Outturn
CP-2025/6 Outturn
CIN-2025-26 Outturn

Whilst improvement has been seen in 2025-26, there remains a clear need for greater consistency, with only approximately 27% of children subject to a Child Protection Plan having a completed GCP2 assessment. This figure reduces further when only GCP2 assessments completed within the previous six months are considered. Moving forward, there will be increased focus on escalation by Child Protection Chairs and clear messaging back to frontline staff and managers.

Issue → Action → Evidence → Assurance → Impact on Children

Issue

Neglect in Rotherham broadly reflects the national picture, with approximately 30-35% of Child Protection Plans being categorised under neglect. The strategic intent is to equip lead professionals and partners to recognise neglect and to provide targeted support where most needed. The Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) is the Partnership's primary tool for assessing and measuring neglect in Rotherham[i]. Evidence suggests that the consistent use of GCP2 strengthens the objectivity of assessments and supports parents to understand and sustain change.

We have responded by

- Launching the Neglect Pathway in 2025
- Introducing the Neglect Screening Tool (RESHHAPED) and consolidating the GCP2 as the core assessment framework for Neglect in Rotherham
- Seeking to upskill the partnership workforce to encourage shared ownership of neglect through the increased delivery of training in both tools, to a broader range of professionals than previously reached.
- Holding a Partnership Conference in order to engage and galvanise a whole-borough approach.
- Adapting neglect and cumulative harm training for 2026-27 to include holding difficult conversations and motivating change.

Evidence of change

- We have seen an increase in the number of practitioners trained in GCP2, especially amongst education colleagues.
- Education colleagues now attend the delivery and working group and have been involved in case learning over the year
- Increased use of GCP2 by social workers, although there remains significant scope for improvement.
- Increased awareness evidenced through audits and practitioner feedback.

Assurance position

While implementation has been successful, audit findings demonstrate inconsistent completion of GCP2 assessments. The Partnership therefore has **reasonable assurance** that neglect is being identified earlier, but further evidence is required to demonstrate improved outcomes for children.

Impact on children

At present, there is limited evidence demonstrating direct impact on outcomes for children in Rotherham. The neglect groups have laid the groundwork for greater recognition of neglect and pathways have been adopted in the identification and assessment of the impact on individual children. These measures will provide a consistent approach across Rotherham which should support us to identify good practice and to target any relevant remedial activity. Most importantly it is anticipated that this consistency will result in greater turnaround when neglect is seen, which will reduce the long-term impact of neglect on children.

Priorities for 2026-27

As the foundations for addressing Neglect have been established, the RSCP will seek to retire this area as a strategic priority in 2027. This will give capacity for partners to develop new strategic priorities. Oversight of neglect practice will remain important to the Partnership and it may be that the working group will continue, feeding into PPL in the future. However, several areas for development remain in the plan for neglect for 2026-27.

- The development of a clear pathway and supporting guidance for recognising Educational Neglect has been identified as a priority, this is evidenced through audit and oversight activity and takes into account the action plan in respect of Child A (2025)
- The roll out of the RESHHAPED screening Tool will continue – At present this is to schools and early years settings. There are plans to extend to Nursing/clinical settings, alongside colleges. Completion of GCP2 assessments will be incorporated within Section 175 assurance processes.
- Audit activity will support the NeDG in understanding the impact of GCP2 completion on outcomes for children.
- 8 sessions of GCP2 training will be offered
- Continued public awareness campaign
- How do practitioners understand the lived experience behind the presenting concerns?

Priority: Safeguarding in Education

Introduction from Strategic Chair – Niall Devlin, Service Director, Education, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

As Chair of the Safeguarding in Education Delivery Group (SEDG), I am pleased to report strong progress over the past year in developing a more cohesive and effective multi-agency safeguarding partnership. The group has increasingly demonstrated the benefits of joined-up working, with improved information sharing, strong engagement from schools and partners, and a growing confidence in collaborative approaches to safeguarding challenges.

A number of significant achievements have been delivered. The development of the Safeguarding Education Risk Assessment (SERA) represents a major success, providing a practical safeguarding tool that has been designed to integrate seamlessly into existing suspension and exclusion processes. The group has also played an important role in supporting the promotion of the Beyond Boundaries Harmful Sexual Behaviour Tool for schools, reflecting our commitment to ensuring that school partners can deliver safety. Progress has also been made in developing a shared understanding of educational neglect, with partners agreeing a broad

commitment to offering helpful indicators and guidance to support recognition and intervention. In addition, the continued development of safeguarding supervision guidance demonstrates increasing recognition of the importance of staff wellbeing and trauma-informed practice across education settings.

The group continues to benefit from strong attendance and engagement, enabling it to respond to a wide range of strategic and operational safeguarding issues. Our Working Group is chaired by a DSL for a local Multi Academy Trust. Strengths in the wider system enhanced over the year include robust arrangements for identifying and tracking children who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and those not accessing full-time education, ensuring vulnerable children are identified and followed up appropriately. Regular oversight of these areas is a core function of the delivery group.

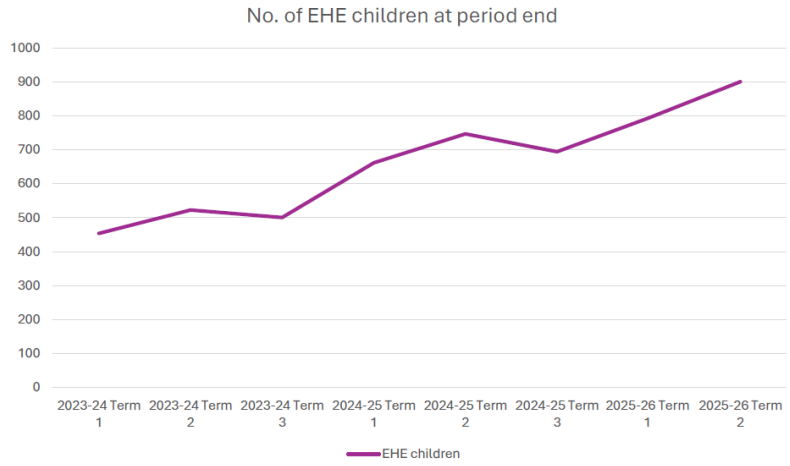
Despite this positive progress, a recurring theme throughout the year has been the distinction between children being visible within data systems and being truly seen, understood and heard. While information is available across a range of agencies, further work is required to bring this together to create a comprehensive understanding of children's experiences, risks and vulnerabilities, particularly where multiple factors intersect.

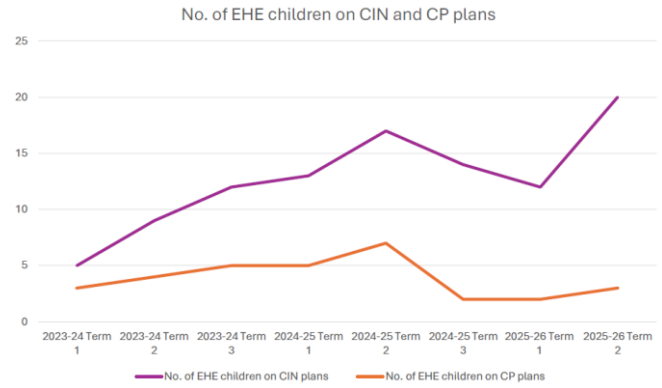
Performance data demonstrates that the system is effective at identifying and tracking vulnerable children; however, our challenge is to move beyond visibility and use available information more effectively to develop meaningful insight and action. Particular attention is needed to ensure cumulative vulnerabilities are recognised and to improve our understanding of children who may not engage with education systems through traditional routes.

Looking ahead, the group supports the proposal to broaden its contribution to the wider Children Out of Sight agenda. Members are keen to retain the group's strong operational focus while expanding its remit through targeted task-and-finish groups to explore specific themes in greater depth. Central to this future development is a shared commitment to moving children from being simply visible, to being seen, heard and understood, ensuring that their experiences and voices shape both practice and system design. This provides a clear and ambitious direction for the group's ongoing work.

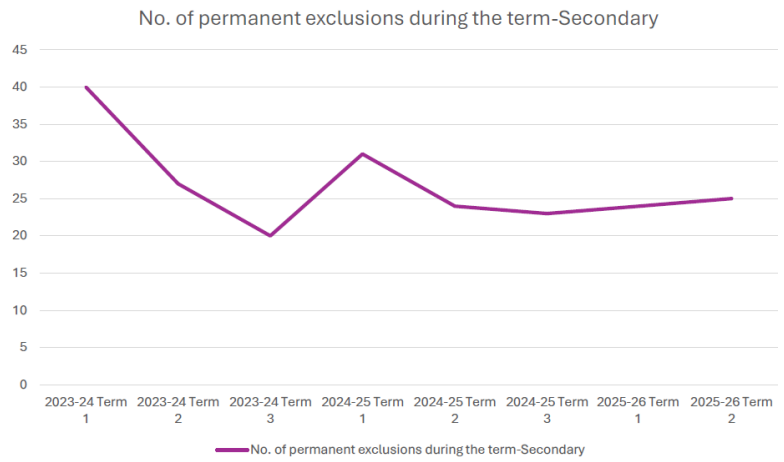
Key Data

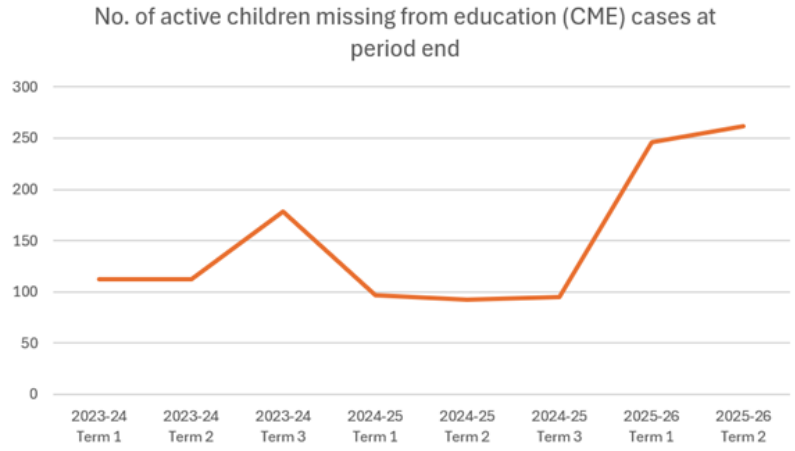
As can be seen from the data below, there has been a steady increase in the numbers of children missing education and those electively home educated (EHE). This mirrors the national picture with 126,000 children in EHE on census in autumn 2025 rising from 111,700 the previous year, and from 92,000 in 2023/24[ii]. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has thematic analysis 'Safeguarding Children in Elective Home Education'[iii] has guided the work of the SEDG throughout 2025-26 in focusing attention of those children less visible to services. The report notes that professionals can miss opportunities to assess children's welfare when there is limited contact with agencies, increasing the risk that significant harm remains unseen for long periods. It calls for stronger multi-agency information sharing, professional curiosity, and oversight of children who are electively home educated, particularly where there are existing safeguarding concerns. The SEDG has facilitated greater collaboration in the governance of children known to be EHE and where there are potential concerns for their education. As graph (G) demonstrates, we have seen a rise in the numbers of children EHE being open to children's services, suggesting a likely combination of the risks to children EHE being considered and referred when necessary, and that those children receiving intervention have an increased likelihood of being EHE. The SEDG therefore remains heavily committed to oversight of this area of practice.

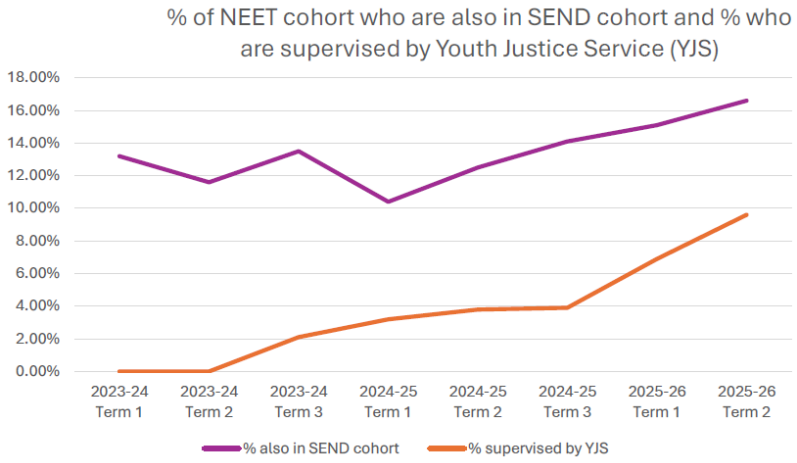




(G)


No. of permanent exclusions during the term-Secondary
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
2023-24 Term 1
2023-24 Term 2
2023-24 Term 3
2024-25 Term 1
2024-25 Term 2
2024-25 Term 3
2025-26 Term 1
2025-26 Term 2
No. of permanent exclusions during the term-Secondary


No. of active children missing from education (CME) cases at period end
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
2023-24 Term 1
2023-24 Term 2
2023-24 Term 3
2024-25 Term 1
2024-25 Term 2
2024-25 Term 3
2025-26 Term 1
2025-26 Term 2


% of NEET cohort who are also in SEND cohort and % who are supervised by Youth Justice Service (YJS)
18.00%
16.00%
14.00%
12.00%
10.00%
8.00%
6.00%
4.00%
2.00%
0.00%
2023-24 Term 1
2023-24 Term 2
2023-24 Term 3
2024-25 Term 1
2024-25 Term 2
2024-25 Term 3
2025-26 Term 1
2025-26 Term 2
% also in SEND cohort
% supervised by YJS

A rise in NEET figures is an emerging concern as traditionally these have been lower in Rotherham than the national average, alongside the rise in children missing education in September 2025 the RSCP has completed audit activity to explore the role of safeguarding professionals in this space.

The increase in CME figures at the start of the academic year reflects improvements in practice, monitoring and reporting rather than a rise in children becoming missing from education. As schools reopened, referrals increased significantly, driven by higher levels of pupil movement, strengthened tracking arrangements introduced through the refreshed CME policy, and enhanced identification of vulnerable cohorts, including children within unsuitable EHE arrangements. The rise is consistent with trends reported by regional partners and demonstrates the effectiveness of more robust processes in identifying, tracking and safeguarding children.

Issue → Action → Evidence → Assurance → Impact on Children

Issue

As demonstrated by the data and our audit activity, the SEDG has become increasingly concerned for those children not seen in school for a variety of reasons. There are several areas of cross cutting concern from mental health to neglect and child sexual abuse. There is also a balance to be struck between ensuring safety for those most vulnerable, whilst respecting the rights of families to seek their own solutions to educational issues and concerns.

Action

In addressing these issues, the SEDG has overseen

- The creation of a new Safeguarding in Education Risk Assessment (SERA) to be launched Autumn term 2026, this assessment is for school staff to complete when a suspension or exclusion is likely. It is intended to provide a preventative lens on issues such as increased risk of exploitation, domestic abuse and neglect for those children no longer in school.
- The group has also increased oversight of the Education Governance Group, with twice yearly assurance reports into the SEDG.
- A new Educational Neglect Policy is due for launch in 2026-27, this will support practitioners to respond to issues that may not appear to be a safeguarding concern but will have a significantly detrimental impact on the child if not addressed.
- The learning from Operation Lemur Alpha (in respect of the Hesley Group investigations [3]) has been reviewed and will be directly supported through training and information from the review authors.

Evidence

- Audit activity and review findings have demonstrated that children 'not seen' can have abuse effectively hidden from professionals, the activity planned is intended to increase the reach of oversight by partners in protecting children. The increased grip of those children at Governance Group has resulted in increased multi agency information sharing and protective action where needed. We have seen an increase in children open to Social Care (alongside increasing numbers of children home educated).

Assurance of Impact on Children

- As demonstrated, partners now have greater visibility of vulnerable children, whilst much of the activity is due for launch in 2026-27, the impact of this strategic priority in just over 2 years appears positive with more evidence and data to support this view coming on stream next year.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-with-disabilities-in-residential-settings

- In responding to increased numbers of children exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour in schools (based on anecdotal feedback from SYP), the RSCP has introduced the 'Beyond Referrals' toolkit [4] so that school staff are supported in addressing and mitigating risk in school settings. This sits alongside protective measures in relation to Domestic Abuse (Operation Encompass) and Neglect (RESHHAPED screening tool), offering DSLs tailored guidance in identifying and planning against risk.

Priorities for 2026-27

The value of this group has been clearly demonstrated during the year, as partners have been able to create guidance and support to over 140 school and education settings in the borough. As stated, the group has also delivered in focusing upon those children not seen in a school setting and this remains a heavy focus in 2026-27, with numbers increasing. New guidance in relation to information sharing is likely to impact positively on partners' ability to ensure that children are safe and this group will develop core guidance with alongside this. Key deliverables for 2026-27 are

- Improved visibility of children's voice into the SEDG process
- Enhanced processes to share information regarding vulnerable children
- A key focus on the transition of vulnerable young people into adulthood, to include adult services at a strategic level
- Training and support to education partners in respect of online harms following the launch of the Online Safety Act and increased expectations around filtering, monitoring and online safety governance by schools.
- Learning to be implemented in relation to Operation Lemur Alpha, alongside strategic planning to ensure that children placed specialist provision are safeguarded. This will also take into account children with SEND
- Alongside the launch of Families First Partnership Programme changes, the SEDG will oversee the impact of renewed continuum of need guidance and a partnership model which supports intervention at the earliest opportunity

[4] Beyond Referrals Toolkit | Contextual Safeguarding

Priority: Child Exploitation

Introduction from Strategic Chair – Anna Sedgewick, Superintendent - Rotherham Command, South Yorkshire Police

Our journey as a partnership has been well publicised and rightly scrutinised. We recognise that this scrutiny reflects the seriousness of child exploitation and the expectation that we must deliver better outcomes for children, young people, and their communities. Over recent years, the partnership has made significant improvements through stronger collaboration, greater accountability, and a shared commitment to safeguarding. We have made important progress, but there is no room for complacency. Child exploitation remains a serious and evolving threat, and we must continue our journey of improvement with determination and urgency.
We know that many of our communities experience significant deprivation and disadvantage, which can increase vulnerability to exploitation. We have therefore reviewed and refreshed our work plan, simplifying our objectives and actions and adopting a clear focus on impact. This strategy prioritises prevention, the effective identification of children and young people at risk, and the timely protection and support of those who need our help.
By working together, listening to the voices of children and young people, and keeping safeguarding at the centre of everything we do, we will continue to strengthen our response and create safer communities for all children and young people.

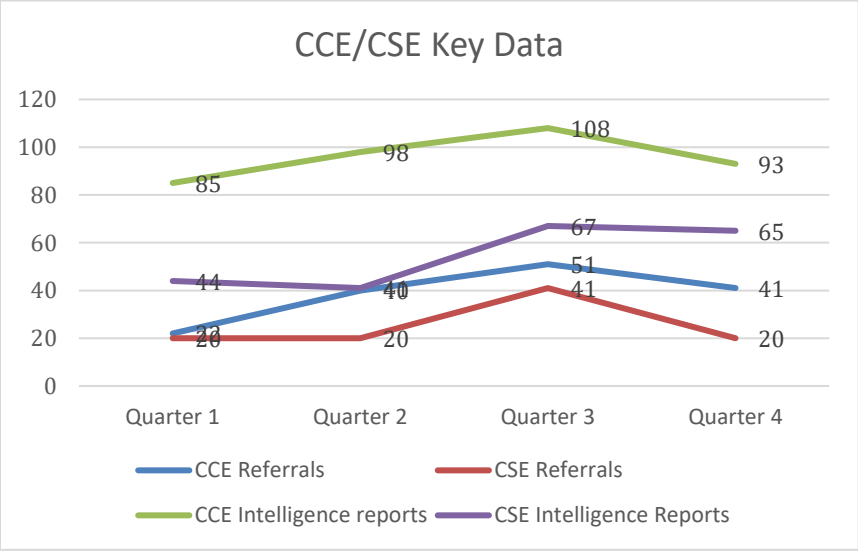
The Group is proud to have:

- *Launched the Harm Outside the Home (HOtH) pathway phase one, this enables the provision of child protection conference style meetings for individual young people. The meetings engage key partners across the statutory and community sectors in keeping children safe and disrupting exploitation. Parents and young people are full partners in the meeting and contribute directly to the safety planning*
- *Established a clear and relevant data set, with plans to extend the information to include disruption activity and offender profiles in 2026-27*
- *Taken part in Operation Duxford, targeting information at takeaways, taxis, pubs and licensed shops*
- *Completed the learning review of Child B with actions arising largely met*

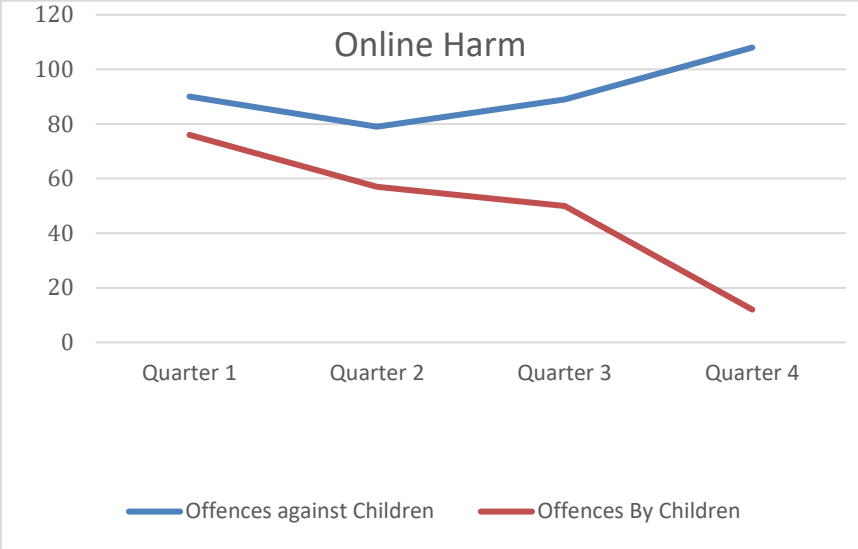
- *Streamlined the CE workplan, focusing on prevention activity and pursuit of offenders, with greater confidence achieved around preparation and protection*

In planning for 2026/27 the data below reveals a partnership that is increasingly effective at identifying child exploitation and vulnerability. However, the complexity of need, persistence of medium and high-risk cases, continued levels of missing episodes and increasing online harm indicate that exploitation remains a significant safeguarding challenge within Rotherham. The partnership's focus for 2026/27 should therefore move beyond identification alone and towards earlier intervention, targeted disruption, reduction of repeat vulnerability, and improved outcomes for children experiencing exploitation.

Key data



As can be seen, the majority of activity in relation to exploitation is criminal in nature with a total of 154 referrals in year, compared to 101 CSE referrals. Over the course of the year the launch of the Harm Outside the Home (HOtH) Pathway has supported multi agency planning for those young people considered at risk of significant harm through exploitation. This intervention enables plans to be multi agency and multi faceted in nature, addressing not only individual issues but also wider contextual risk. The spike in CSE referrals in Q3 was generated through targeted activity by SYP for Operation Saros Charlie.



We can see that online offences against children have risen over the course of 2025-26. Online/phone offences remain the most prevalent reason for contacting police regarding exploitation.

In respect of online offences against children, 55% of victims were female, 41% were male and 4% were unrecorded. The majority of these offences were –

- Harassment - 41%
- Sexual Activity with a Child Under 16 years - 11%, Sexual Activity with a Child Under 13 years – 7%
- Other Misc. Sexual Offences - 7%
- Malicious Communications - 6%

For those offences by children, 54% of suspects were male and 39% were female with the remaining 7% classed as unrecorded. 48% of suspects were recorded as 'Acquaintance/Other Known Relationship', 24% were a stranger and 10% were the ex-partner of a Heterosexual Relationship. The Majority of offences recorded were Harassment 48%, and Obscene Publications 19%.

Issue → Action → Evidence → Assurance → Impact on Children

Issue

The Child Exploitation safeguarding space continues to offer challenge across the partnership, bringing non- traditional partners into focus in addressing extra familial harm and risk. In addition to this the ever-changing nature of online harm adds complexity to

investigations and risks to children in a variety of circumstances. The challenge facing services is no longer simply identification. Increasingly, the challenge is sustaining intensive intervention and reducing risk over time. Relationship building remains key in working directly with children and in generating a truly collaborative multi agency response.

Action

Guided by research into contextual safeguarding we have created and launched the Harm Outside the Home (HOtH) pathway. Part one of this will focus on activity in relation to specific children at risk of exploitation to ensure that they receive a targeted and tailored plan via a 'child protection conference' approach. Further work will explore the community aspect of HOtH with partners delivering a preventative impact through existing intelligence and disruption activity.

We have also learned a great deal from the review into Child B, the plans from this confidential report have contributed to our understanding of contextual risk and engagement with families. This action plan from this review remains live and directly impacts on our delivery.

Evidence

The HOtH Exploitation conferences launched late in this reporting period. At the time of writing approximately 12 young people have been through this process. Feedback from parents and young people is positive, with their contributions informing the meeting.

Assurance of Impact on Children

The Rotherham Multi Agency EVOLVE team has worked with 119 young people during 2025-26, with 127 young people having involvement ending in the same period. Risk assessment activity remains robust with 279 assessments (young people often having more than 1 assessment) completed. As can be seen from the table below, criminal exploitation is the most prevalent category, with children at risk of both CSE and CCE being seen at most risk.

Risk Assessment Type by Outcome	Low	Medium	High	No Level Recorded	% at high risk	TOTAL
Not completed	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*		***2***
CCE	*31*	*79*	*13*	1	10.4	***124***
CSE	*31*	*42*	*4*	1	5.1	***78***
CSE and CCE	*7*	*38*	*13*	0	22.4	***58***
No Risk Identified	*15*	*2*	*0*	0		***17***
TOTALS	**84**	**161**	**30**	**4**	**10.7**	**279**

CEDG Priorities for 2026-27

In 2026/27 the CEDG will

1. Actively seek to reduce repeat missing episodes

For the coming year the CEDG will focus on:

- Children in Care
- Repeat missing cohorts.
- 15–17-year-olds.
- Placement stability and contextual safeguarding responses.

This will help us to plan activity to reduce the likelihood of CE and to support transition planning into adulthood.

2. Strengthen disruption activity

We will develop a partnership disruption framework that measures:

- Perpetrator disruption.
- Location disruption.
- County Lines disruption.
- Online exploitation disruption.

This will help us to understand how our activity contributes to reducing exploitation and improving outcomes for children.

3. Respond to growing online harm

We will implement:

- An enhanced online safety package for all children in Rotherham through school-based education programmes and information for children educated at home
- We will enhance our communication offer to support greater parent and carer awareness
- We will work alongside our colleagues in the SEDG to deliver specific work on online harassment, grooming and coercion

This will support increased awareness as online risks develop

4. Improve outcomes from investigations

The CEDG will review:

- Longstanding investigations through police data and scrutiny in the group.
- Barriers to prosecution, ensuring that young people help us to understand what additional support is required.
- Victim engagement processes, through appreciative inquiry, learning from when convictions have been successful.
- Investigation oversight arrangements, to ensure that partners are up to date with plans and changes as far as possible.

This will enable the partnership to grip the complexities of long-term criminal investigation, so that we can ensure positive collaboration with victims, their families and as professionals

5. Focus on high-risk and dual-exploitation cohorts

The CEDG will gain a greater understanding of how those at greatest risk are protected, targeting partner activity towards:

- Children experiencing both CSE and CCE.
- Children in Care.
- Older adolescents.
- Children repeatedly presenting through missing, exploitation and criminality indicators.
- How do we ensure young people influence their own safety planning?

This will provide assurance that our processes are sufficiently robust and that we are actively minimising risk through shared activity and involvement of young people.

6. Deliver greater evidence of disruption activities

Disruption is at the centre of our strategic plan to protect the children in Rotherham, in 2026/27 we will work to understand

- The use of Police powers and resources to target specific individuals and create a common theme of disruption and pursuit in Rotherham. We will develop clear expectations in relation to the pursuit of criminals and the use of intelligence.
- We will also continue to develop links with private sectors partners in licensed and unlicensed premises, community settings, taxis and building sites. This will contribute to increased information sharing and earlier identification of risk through training activity and an accessible online presence.

- We will ensure that the communication between CETG, MACE and CEDG is enhanced, with a clear line of sight to the CEDG and Executive. This will assist us to demonstrate how thematic information informs the group's objectives and that OCG activity can be tracked and disrupted with an increased lens on safeguarding.

This activity will hold partners to greater account in respect of understanding the criminal networks in Rotherham and how this impacts on our young people, through this grip and analysis we will reiterate our aim to make Rotherham a challenging environment for potential exploiters across the safeguarding space.

Priority: Practice, Performance and Learning (PPL)

Introduction from Strategic Chair – Chris MacDonald, Head of Safeguarding, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

In 2025-26, the Practice Standards Group refined its focus to concentrate on learning activity and the review of policy and procedure. Alongside this, a refreshed RSCP website has improved user experience to better reach practitioners and the public. We have strengthened our oversight through thematic reports from the LADO, which inform training and wider safeguarding activity.

The Audit Working Group held five multi-agency audits with a breadth of representation from partner agencies and a carefully tailored focus on areas of need and/or critical national learning. This has allowed Training Subgroup to respond dynamically to areas where practitioners need more support and guidance. We have seen expansion in our training offer in readiness for 2026-27 with increased capacity to deliver Graded Care Profile Training and an update of Neglect and Professional Curiosity training, with an enhanced focus on establishing collaboration with families and motivating change. We have extensive plans in place for conference activity in 2026 alongside preparations for the launch of a Child Sexual Abuse Strategy and Pathway.

We have developed a revised Resolving Professional Differences protocol to encourage informal resolution but provide a framework when practitioners are unable to find consensus about what is best for a child, or where there may be an unaddressed risk to a child. A healthy safeguarding system involves respectful challenge, and the protocol now involves facilitation by RSCP in the later stages of the protocol and tracking of themes to inform system change. In addition to this we have also established clear guidelines for

managing the Rapid Review Process and potential case reviews. A significant strength in the delivery of PPL is the partner activity and commitment to our various subgroups. There is a huge amount of partner goodwill and peer support across the partnership and this is demonstrated in the achievements outlined above and evidenced in this report.

With the inception of the Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP) changes due for April 2027, PPL will track and support partnership activity in relation to communication with partners, the development of a new continuum of need and supporting guidance, and the promotion and development of family group decision making (FGDM).

Key Activity

The PPL delivery group oversees all learning, training and quality assurance activity through three working groups:

- Audit Working Group
- Training and Development Group
- Practice Standards Group

The delivery group also oversees case review activity and is responsible for the Rapid Review and notification process.

Case Reviews

The RSCP received 5 referrals for CSPRs between April 2025 and March 2026, these referrals were subject to Head of Service and DSP oversight; none progressed to Rapid Review or national notification

Action plans from two previous learning reviews undertaken prior to this reporting period, continued to inform our safeguarding practice.

Child A action plan– linked to NeDG and SEDG

Child B Learning and planning – linked to CEDG

Audits

Four thematic audits have been completed in the year 2025-26.

Quarter 1- (May 2025) - Intrafamilial Sexual Abuse

Quarter 2- (October 2025) - The Multi-agency Response In Child Protection Medicals

Quarter 3- (November 2025) - Parental Substance Misuse and the Impact on Children

Quarter 4 - (January 2026) - Domestic Abuse

In addition, a targeted audit and review of the Child Sexual Abuse Risk Assessment Panel was completed, with feedback provided directly to CYPS.

Findings

Key Learning Themes:

Learning for practice was identified in the following areas and has informed the learning and development action plan for 2026-27.

- Effective consideration of family history, previous incidents, patterns of risk and family networks will strengthen professional curiosity and improve risk analysis and better inform analysis of risk.
- Improving cross-border information sharing processes in all agencies, to effect timely protection of children and families from risk and harm.
- Senior leaders in all agencies should drive improvement in attendance on the training and routine completion of GCP2 to assess risk and understand the impact on children of neglect and cumulative harm.
- Exploring the implications for children when adults display challenging behaviour or do not engage with the support being offered should involve professionals adopting a 'trust but verify' or a 'respectful uncertainty' approach to the family's situation and concerns.
- Professionals need greater and stronger persistence with reluctant parents, especially around substance misuse.

- Continued evidence of consistent recording of children's voice and impact of diversity, intersectionality and unique characteristics.

Actions for 2026-27:

- Partners to promote and facilitate professionals/practitioner attendance on RSCP training and embed the routine completion of GCP2 assessments and screening tool, with an enhanced offer for 2026/27.
- We will launch and promote the Harm Outside the Home Pathway and review impact in December 2026.
- New partnership Neglect/Cumulative Harm and Professional Curiosity training will be delivered through 2026 to specifically support challenging conversations, respectful challenge and the understanding of long-term harm
- Bespoke Child Sexual Abuse training to be commissioned and delivered in 2026-27
- Planned audit activity in respect of the involvement of males in assessments, specifically where domestic abuse is a concern
- Develop joint protocols between police and social care, promoting active use of plans by all professionals, and enhancing training for cultural competence and identification of abuse.

Audit Activity planned for 2026 – 2027:

Quarter 1 Missing-CIC

Quarter 2 Pre-Birth Practice

Quarter 3 Working with Men

Quarter 4 Education and Exclusion /CSA

Training and Learning

The RSCP has continued to provide a core offer of training for colleagues in 2025-26. To date, 773 staff have attended courses as detailed in the table below:

Course	Sessions	Staff attended
Child Exploitation and Harm Outside the Home	**4**	**56**
Professional Curiosity	**2**	**30**
Cumulative Harm and Child Neglect	**3**	**66**
The Role of Designated Safeguarding Leads and Rotherham Processes (Early Help and Children's Social Care)	**4**	**42** (4th session booked for 17/6)
Education Safeguarding Forum	**3**	**172**
LADO and Allegations Management	**3**	**72**
Graded Care Profile 2	**6**	**63**
Multiagency Level 3 Safeguarding Training and Designated Safeguarding Lead	**7**	**167**
Family Assessment of Need (FAN)	**3**	**53**
Safeguarding Against Spiritual and Ritual Abuse Specialist	**1**	**52**
Totals	**36**	**773**

In addition to this, approximately 4,400 people have successfully completed RSCP e-learning modules on Virtual College.

In November 2025, the RSCP held Safeguarding Awareness Week in conjunction with Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board (RSAB). Following the launch day, we held our Neglect conference which was attended by 224 colleagues and senior leaders. This was well received and impactful with colleagues, especially the section presented by Richard Devine on 'A Relational Approach to Neglect:

Building Trust for Change'. At the end of the conference, colleagues were asked to make pledges on what they would do in the future to tackle neglect. Some of these pledges included:

- To use radical candour in practice – be caring but have direct conversations in a supportive manner.
- Expect the same opportunities for children in deprived areas as for children in wealthier areas.
- Talking about and reflecting more about poverty versus neglect.
- Using the RESHHAPED tool in practice and embedding collaborative practice.
- When requesting information to build on FANs from partners, ensure they are sharing strengths, not just negative worries.
- Relationships, collaboration, professional curiosity and challenging directly – but care, relate, empathise.
- See neglect as an 'iceberg' model – address what the causes are.

From learner feedback, the key impacts of all training provided were:

- Increased practitioner confidence
- Better multi-agency working
- Stronger safeguarding awareness
- Improved support for children and families

Issue → Action → Evidence → Assurance → Impact on Children

Issue

The PPL delivery group offers helpful grip and oversight of safeguarding activity in Rotherham and on a regional and national scale. One example is the National Panel review *Protecting Vulnerable Babies Better*. This report has highlighted how professional curiosity remains central to understanding the broader context of risk for the newborn/unborn baby. It challenges our understanding of trauma for parents and how concealment can greatly increase risk.

Evidence

In response to the report findings, PPL undertook benchmarking activity. The review identified a number of strengths, including established pre-birth safeguarding procedures, effective multi-agency domestic abuse pathways, strong information sharing through MARAC and MAPPA, and positive partnership working across age groups.

Assurance

The exercise also highlighted key areas for development, including strengthening support for parents following child removal, improving trauma-informed and Think Family approaches across services, enhancing engagement with fathers and male carers, improving responses to families who move between local authority areas, and strengthening understanding of children as direct victims of domestic abuse. Priority actions have been incorporated into partnership improvement planning to further strengthen safeguarding arrangements and improve outcomes for vulnerable babies and their families.

Impact on Children

A refresh of the pre-birth protocol will be overseen by PPL in 2026/27. This will support greater collaboration and information sharing, including enhanced information sharing with probation and mental health services.

4. SAFEGUARDING SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS AND GOVERNANCE

Overall Safeguarding Assurance

During 2025-26, the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership has continued to demonstrate that safeguarding arrangements are effective and supported by strong multi-agency leadership, engagement and accountability. External inspection outcomes, stable partnership governance arrangements, and evidence from audits, reviews and performance activity provide assurance that partners are working together effectively to identify risk, protect children and drive improvement across the safeguarding system.

The Partnership has made significant progress in strengthening its strategic response to some of the most prevalent safeguarding issues affecting children in Rotherham. During the year, new pathways have been established in relation to Neglect and Harm Outside the Home, safeguarding arrangements within education have been strengthened, and partners have increased their collective focus on learning, quality assurance and professional challenge. Evidence from audit activity, practitioner feedback, inspection findings and scrutiny arrangements suggests that the workforce is increasingly confident in recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns.

The Partnership has **strong assurance** in the following areas:

- Strategic leadership and governance arrangements
- Multi-agency engagement and attendance across partnership structures
- Learning, audit and review processes which are increasingly influencing service development
- Progress in the development of safeguarding pathways and practice guidance
- Partners' ability to identify children experiencing risk and vulnerability

The Partnership has **reasonable assurance, with further improvement required**, in:

- The consistent implementation and impact of the Graded Care Profile 2 assessment and intervention tools

- Demonstrating the impact of strategic activity on outcomes for children through refined data analysis
- Ensuring that learning from audits, reviews and training is consistently embedded across all agencies
- Understanding and responding to cumulative vulnerability, particularly where multiple risks intersect

The Partnership has identified the following **areas of emerging concern and strategic focus**:

- The continued increase in the number of children who are Electively Home Educated
- Children who are less visible to universal services, including those missing education, NEET, privately fostered or educated outside mainstream settings
- The growing prevalence of online harm, harassment, exploitation and technology-enabled abuse
- The need to strengthen the voice, influence, scrutiny and lived experience of children and families within strategic planning and assurance activity
- Emerging national learning in relation to vulnerable babies, family help and the safety of children in residential care settings
- The dedicated priority of intrafamilial child sexual abuse

A key theme emerging throughout the year has been the distinction between children being visible to services and being genuinely seen, heard and understood. Across all areas of partnership activity, we have found evidence that systems are increasingly effective at identifying vulnerable children. However, the Partnership recognises that further work is required to ensure that information held across agencies is translated into a shared understanding of children's lived experiences, risks and protective factors. This principle has underpinned the Partnership's priorities for 2026-27.

RSCP Executive Group: Strategic Leadership, Oversight and Partnership Assurance

The RSCP Executive Group provides strategic leadership for safeguarding children across Rotherham, bringing together senior representatives from the Local Authority, Police, Health and the Independent Scrutineer to drive partnership priorities, oversee performance and ensure collective accountability. The Executive Group acts as the main decision-making and assurance forum for

the Partnership, maintaining oversight of safeguarding activity, reviewing emerging risks and identifying opportunities for system-wide improvement.

During 2025/26, the Executive Group has played a significant role in influencing safeguarding practice and policy across the partnership. The Group has overseen the work of the Child Exploitation, Neglect, Safeguarding in Education, and Performance, Practice and Learning Delivery Groups, receiving performance updates, providing strategic challenge and commissioning further activity where improvements were required. Executive meetings are held bi-monthly and have been fully attended by all DSPs in 2025-26. The meetings have provided enhanced oversight of Delivery Group activity via the chairs' updates which are provided in advance, with a specific focus on a priority at each meeting. This process has also supported the influence of the Executive in addressing any areas for resolution or escalation.

The Executive Group has also provided leadership in relation to emerging safeguarding priorities. During the reporting period, it reviewed findings from a multi-agency audit on intrafamilial child sexual abuse and commissioned the development of a dedicated partnership strategy and task-and-finish group to improve awareness, practice and outcomes for children affected by child sexual abuse. This demonstrates the Group's ability to identify gaps, respond to learning and establish new strategic priorities to address areas of risk.

A key function of the Executive Group is ensuring that learning from safeguarding reviews, audits and frontline practice translates into measurable improvement. The Group has maintained oversight of local child safeguarding practice reviews, monitored implementation of action plans, scrutinised thematic findings from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service, and challenged partners to improve information sharing, attendance at child protection processes and compliance with safeguarding expectations. The Executive Group has further demonstrated its strategic influence through oversight of the national Families First Partnership Programme, ensuring Rotherham is well positioned to respond to national reforms while maintaining a focus on local needs. It has also maintained oversight of partnership performance through the development of dashboards, scorecards and exception reporting, strengthening the partnership's ability to identify trends, monitor impact and target improvement activity.

Overall, the Executive Group provides an effective forum for senior leaders to work collectively to safeguard children, offering strategic direction, scrutiny, challenge and assurance across the multi-agency safeguarding system. Its work supports continuous improvement, drives accountability and ensures that safeguarding remains a shared responsibility across all partner agencies in Rotherham.

Independent Scrutiny

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership has an Independent Chair and Scrutineer who performs two key roles that are essential to the effective operation of the Partnership that are essential to its operation. The chair and scrutineer coordinate the activity across the partnership on behalf of both the DSPs and LSPs. The key roles that the chair and scrutineer ensure are delivered are:

- The functions required under the MASA and WT26 are complied with by all the relevant agencies and partners.
- The relevant organisations are delivering to the expectations of the partnership and are actively contributing.
- The governance is functioning, and there is a culture of accountability, through high support and high challenge.
- The approach to safeguarding is collaborative and expands beyond the partnership to other statutory boards such as the RSAB and SRP.
- That local learning and learning from National reviews and work are embedded into core practice.
- The wider partnership and other relevant stakeholders are contributing to safeguarding across Rotherham
- The audit schedule is effective, including the management of Section 11 and Section 175 audits.
- There is an effective scorecard that provides reassurance to the communities and professionals alike.

The Chair and Scrutineer also undertakes direct scrutiny with organisations and professionals to provide reassurance over the findings of audits, such as school visits and mock inspections. This helps validate that services are delivering as expected and that positive impact is being achieved within local communities.

The key guiding principles of scrutiny that the partnership adheres to are that the role will:

- Provide constructive “critical friend” challenges to all areas of activity
- Ensure the voice and concerns of children and young people are addressed
- Drive an improvement in public services across the partnership
- Be aware of the local, regional and national pressures and best practice

During the last year, the chair and scrutineer has:

- Reviewed performance information and continued to enhance the scorecard across the partnership
- Developed a programme of scrutiny and audit activity to provide assurance to professionals, children and young people
- Delivered wider partnership events focused on themes of “Child Sexual Abuse” and learning from local and national reviews
- Worked with other scrutineers across the region, providing assistance, learning and identification of best practice
- Assisted with the development and launch of a number of new strategies
- Obtained reassurance from other areas for the executive, such as CDOP, LADO and the Rotherham Together Partnership
- Developed on a sub-regional level an agreed funding model for the next three years, including inflationary increases to allow effective partnership resourcing

During the next year, and through 2026 to 2027, the chair and scrutineer will:

- Review, develop and engage in the audits scheduled against the priorities
- Continue to embed and enhance the scorecard
- Enhance the voice of the children in the executive and work of the partnership, by further developing young scrutineers and their visibility
- Continue to deliver wider partnership themed events, and coordinate 4 conferences/events a year
- Continue to build relationships with relevant stakeholders and the voluntary community
- Work with partners to implement the Families First Programme

- Consider with sub-regional scrutineers more collaborative work
- Work with other statutory boards and collaborate on cross-cutting themes.

Financial Overview

The 2025/26 budget position for the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) remains strong and well controlled, with total expenditure forecast at £278.6k, marginally below the approved budget of £280.0k, representing an underspend of approximately £1.4k. Staffing vacancies in the previous year resulted in an underspend of approximately £33k, which was carried forward into 2025-26.

Core budget pressures have been effectively managed throughout the year, with staffing costs remaining broadly in line with budget despite the impact of national pay awards and associated employment costs. The Partnership continues to maintain a stable workforce structure, ensuring that resources remain focused on delivering statutory safeguarding responsibilities and supporting the Partnership's strategic priorities.

Whilst overall expenditure has remained within budget, investment in training and development activity exceeded budget by £11.1k, reflecting the Partnership's commitment to strengthening safeguarding practice across the workforce. Significant expenditure was directed towards multi-agency safeguarding training, the Neglect Conference, safeguarding awareness initiatives, specialist training programmes, and associated venue and event costs. These additional investments were offset by savings elsewhere within the budget, including underspends in areas including Independent Chair costs. No local practice reviews were commissioned during the year, resulting in a full-year underspend against that provision.

Partnership income has been received as planned from RMBC, NHS South Yorkshire ICB, the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, and Probation Services, with total income of £277.2k, as detailed in the table below.

	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Variance
Totals for Expenditure	**280,032**	**278,618**	**278,618**	**-1,414**
RMBC Contribution	-115,352	-115,352	-115,352	0
Rotherham ICB Contribution	-115,352	-115,352	-115,352	0
SYPCC Contribution	-44,475	-44,475	-44,475	0
Probation Service	-2,049	-2,049	-2,049	0
Total for Income	**-277,228**	**-277,228**	**-277,228**	**0**
Total (Core funding Shortfall)	**2,804**	**1,390**	**1,390**	**-1,414**
c/f from 2024/25	-2,804	-36,413	-36,413	-33,609
Grand Total	**0**	**-35,023**	**-35,023**	**-35,023**

The underspend in 2025-26 has been subject to the scrutiny and oversight of the Executive. Additional training support alongside the launch of the Sexual Abuse Strategy, the Families First initiative and the Training needs linked to operation Lemur Alpha will utilise these additional funds alongside the continued guidance of the DSP members.

The Voice of Children & Families

The impending changes to service delivery through the FFPP have generated significant investment in collaborating and seeking feedback from children and families for 2026-27. Consequently, plans to engage young people in the scrutiny of the Partnership have been reviewed with this activity planned for 2026-27. The RSCP is committed to ensuring that young people have meaningful

opportunities to influence oversight and scrutiny arrangements of partnership safeguarding arrangements, and these plans will deliver against this aim with the engagement of the following groups.

- Presentation of this Annual Report to Young Inspectors
- Consultation through FFPP regarding threshold/continuum of need and Family Group Decision Making
- Child Sexual Abuse Strategy Consultation
- Exploring the development of a Child Safeguarding Reference and Scrutiny Group, through existing consultation arrangements
- Continued utilisation of the RMBC Young People's Lifestyle Survey to inform planning in respect of broader safety concerns for young people.

Partnership Priorities For 2026-27

Following a year of significant progress in strengthening safeguarding arrangements, the RSCP will focus on continuing to deliver against the three current strategic priorities alongside the development of the following critical and emerging themes.

- Children Out of Sight - Improving our understanding, oversight and safeguarding response for children who are less visible to universal services, including those electively home educated, missing education, NEET or placed in alternative provision
- Exploitation and Harm Outside the Home - Continuing to develop our multi-agency response to child exploitation, reducing repeat vulnerability, strengthening disruption activity and addressing the growing threat posed by online harms
- Vulnerable Babies and Family Help - Supporting the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme, promoting earlier intervention, strengthening family-led decision-making and improving outcomes for babies and infants
- Child Sexual Abuse - Developing a partnership-wide strategy and pathway to improve identification, intervention and support for children affected by both intrafamilial and extra-familial sexual abuse

Across all priorities, the Partnership will strengthen the voice of children and families, improve multi-agency information sharing, and demonstrate measurable impact through performance, audit and learning activity.

Conclusion

The annual report shows that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership has made significant progress and improved the services delivered to children and young people across the borough. It is focused on the main priority areas of neglect, child exploitation, and safeguarding in education, and continues to improve the services delivered. While there is always more work to do, significant progress has been made and is clearly evidenced within the annual report.

As we move into 2026-27, priorities have been reviewed across all partners and professionals, and whilst the majority will remain in place, an additional strategic priority of Child Sexual Abuse will be introduced. This will replace neglect as a strategic priority, with neglect moving into a monitoring and assurance phase with all the relevant data and practice being followed by the practice, performance and learning group, to ensure that the improvements achieved are sustained and fully embedded within practice.

In conclusion, the annual report evidences the good work delivered throughout the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership, the positive impact being achieved for children and young people and the difference that has been made to communities. The commitment of all statutory partners across the partnership is exceptional; they continue to work together to ensure all statutory requirements are met and that continuous improvements are made to the services delivered.

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[i] NSPCC 2022 How the GCP2 assessment tool for neglect supports families and practitioners to achieve change | NSPCC Learning

[ii] Release home - Elective home education - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK

[iii] Safeguarding children in Elective Home Education | Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel