

North Lanarkshire Partnership

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



**the
promise**



getting
it right
for every child
in North Lanarkshire

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Preface



Des Murray, Chair
North Lanarkshire
Chief Officer Group
Public Protection

Welcome to the North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee (CPC) Annual Report covering the period 1st August 2024 - 31st July 2025 and reviewing the Business Plan which covered the period 1st August 2023 – 31st July 2025. The report reflects our achievements and developments during the year 2024-25 and how we have met the priorities set out in our business plan.

As Chair of the Public Protection Chief Officers' Group, I would like to thank my fellow chief officers in health and police services for their support in taking forward this challenging and complex agenda. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our current Independent Chair and Child Protection Committee members for their commitment to adapting, sustaining and improving our partnership's work to protect children through what continues to be a challenging period.

We are confident that our approach to protecting children is rightly seen within the context of children's services, and the wider public protection agenda. Our commitment to supporting families at an early stage and supporting children and young people's mental health provides a strong foundation for how well we protect children at risk of harm. We recognise the importance of integrating our approaches to cross-cutting harms such as domestic abuse, substance and alcohol misuse and preventing suicide.

Our business plan over the past two years has focussed on improvements resulting from the inspection report published in October 2023 which also highlighted the strength of our partnership in North Lanarkshire in leading with a clear vision on improving outcomes for children and young people, and the dedication of our collective workforce in building effective and trusting relationships with children and their families and carers. We remain committed to working with our partner agencies, including adult services, to review and renew our business plan in order to mitigate the challenges and risks experienced within our communities.

On behalf of the Chief Officers for Public Protection, I endorse this, my eighth CPC annual report and business plan.

Foreword



Judith Tait,
Independent Chair,

North Lanarkshire
Child Protection
Committee

I am pleased to present North Lanarkshire's Child Protection Committee annual report, that details the committee's achievements in helping to ensure children and young people's lives are safer as a result of the collective work of our partners. It presents local management information to provide a context to the work undertaken, and some national data trends where relevant for comparison. The report covers the period 1 August 2024- 31 July 2025 and reviews the priorities of our business plan that has been in place since 2023. Further work will be done to review and renew the priorities for our business plan over the coming months.

Developments to strengthen child-focused and trauma-informed practice are highlighted through our partnership's approach to implementing Signs of Safety and Healing, embedding Safe and Together and the progression of Contextual Safeguarding, with the two-year implementation period for Signs of Safety and Healing nearing completion. Our improvement work within the cross-cutting public protection agenda has continued, with a particular focus on improvement in a whole-life span approach to chronologies.

Our approach to learning reviews has also developed, with the commitment to build internal capacity and strengthen our learning culture. It includes expansion of a sector-leading approach to staff wellbeing, focusing on improving the experience of everyone involved in reviews resulting in improved reflection and learning. This development work has taken place across the span of public protection and there is also interest nationally from other committee

areas keen to adopt a similar approach. Levels of demand for learning reviews remains high, and additional resourcing has been agreed to ensure this priority need can be met.

The national context for child protection continues to be an incredibly busy one, with changes to policy and legislation that place demands on our collective workforce. Key emerging priorities include the development of a robust approach to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation, with the creation of the National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group. There has also been national discussion around the proposal of mandatory reporting of sexual abuse, and the CSAE Strategic Group has been tasked with considering next steps to develop options in Scotland. Locally, our strong partnership will continue to be vital to ensure we continue to ensure we keep our children, young people and their families safe at home and in their communities.

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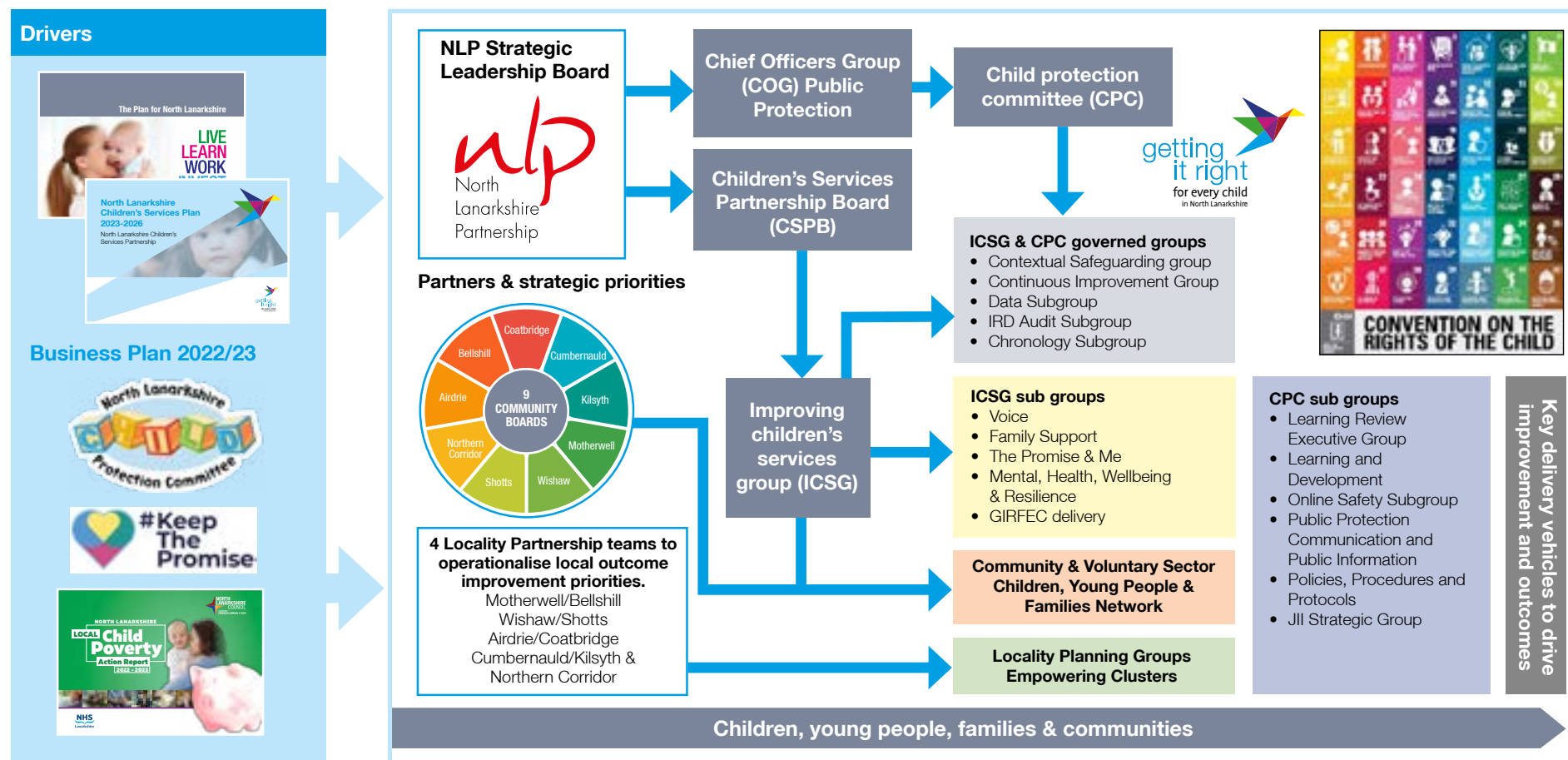


Structure and governance

The child protection committee sits within the wider context of public protection and children's services planning in North Lanarkshire. The Public Protection Chief Officers Group (PPCOG) the CPC and the Children's Services Partnership Board (CSPB) provide robust collaborative governance and strong strategic direction to protecting children and young people from harm, addressing the needs of families and adults and improving outcomes and life chances. These arrangements provide coherent governance for protecting children across the continuum of need through a high level of partnership commitment, trusting relationships and shared priorities.

The CPC provides scrutiny and assurance to the PPCOG and both have clear and well understood links to the wider community planning partnership. The CPC meets on an eight-weekly cycle alternating between face to face and virtual meetings. We benefit from consistent attendance and engagement from senior representatives across all core agencies.

Context of Children's Services



The Child Protection Committee and North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership Board (NLCSPB) provide the strategic leadership for all children's services and have a responsibility for driving improvements. The link to the Community Planning Partnership is through the Children's Services Partnership Board and through cross representation at Chief Officer level. The Child Protection Committee works closely alongside the North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership Board. Several members of the CPC attend NLCSPB meetings, and this helps promote our shared work together.

Over this reporting year the CPC, the APC and chief officers' group have been considering how to further strengthen our approach to the cross-cutting public protection and wider-harms agenda. This aligns with the Care Inspectorate's interest in developing a public protection approach to scrutiny and the formation of the National Public Protection Leadership Group. Our CPC and APC coordinators work closely with MAPPAs and domestic abuse coordinators as part of the public protection team. They report into the lead officers' group that meets in advance of PFCOG and provides a forum to consider thematic learning and business across the public protection domains. There is also biannual reporting on suicide prevention and drug-related deaths.

The CPC and APC coordinators work closely to align the approaches to pan-lifespan risks and practice issues including neglect and self-neglect, and chronologies.

In addition, the COG and CPC seek to work, where relevant, with partners on a pan-Lanarkshire basis. There are pan-Lanarkshire sub-committees that support the work of the CPC and APC, for example in the oversight of IRD policy, procedure and activity, and the JII team and more recently with the development of Bairns' Hoose.

Our committee is well-represented in national professional forums and networks, ensuring we share learning from our own achievements as well as seeking to learn from practice elsewhere.



Our Vision for Child Protection

Scotland has an ambition to be the best place in the world to grow up so that children are loved, safe and respected and realise their full potential.

In North Lanarkshire, our wider children's services vision is to support all children and young people to achieve their potential, ensuring they are loved, nurtured, and empowered to thrive in all aspects of their lives, upholding every child and young person's rights as stated in the UNCRC. This vision is echoed by the Child Protection Committee vision that:

"All children and young people in North Lanarkshire have the right to be cared for and protected from abuse and harm in a safe environment in which their rights are respected"

To achieve our aim, we have representatives from all sectors involved in the protection of children and we work collaboratively with our colleagues to achieve our nine high level outcomes. These reflect our vision and values and the core functions of a Child Protection Committee and are outlined in our Business Plan.



High Level Outcomes

01	Learning from range of sources, including research, local quality assurance activity, practice experience, performance information, and significant case reviews informs priority setting policy and practice developments.
02	Evidence informed changes to policy and practice are introduced, monitored and evaluated, and improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
03	Evidence informed, up to date procedures, protocols and guidance are available in relation to core child protection business and related priority issues, these are implemented effectively and impact on practice and outcomes.
04	The North Lanarkshire workforce is competent and confident in their individual, managerial and collective roles to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect or exploitation.
05	Relevant, up to date public information is available in a range of accessible and engaging formats to individuals and communities across North Lanarkshire.
06	The views of children and families are taken into account in relation to issues that affect them directly and in policy and practice development.
07	Collaboration and co-operation between the Child Protection Committee and other national and local multi-agency partnerships is effective.
08	National strategy and policy developments inform Child Protection Committee activity.
09	Local leadership of child protection is effective in driving improvements in child protection practice and in improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect or exploitation.



Protecting Children in North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire is Scotland's fourth-largest local authority area. Although North Lanarkshire has one of the strongest and fastest growing economies in Scotland according to the Office for National Statistics, we still have significantly high levels of child poverty. All bar two of North Lanarkshire's political wards are above the Scottish average (21.7%) and in one ward, one third of children are living in poverty. Of the 437 data zones in North Lanarkshire, in 217 data zones more than 20% of the children are living in relative low-income families.

Education outcomes for looked after children have improved. However, there are still large gaps compared with the position for all children in North Lanarkshire. In 2017, 96.2% of all pupils in North Lanarkshire achieved 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 3 or above, but this rate dropped to 78% for pupils who are looked after.



The Plan for North Lanarkshire has provided a partnership vision to achieve growth and prosperity for all with an estimated population of 341,400.

The 0-17 age population breaks down as follows:

Young People	2021 population
Age	Persons
0 – 4	17,192
5 – 11	27,707
12 – 15	16,707
16 – 17	8,145
All Ages 0-17	69,751

Child protection activity across North Lanarkshire takes place within a national context which includes the child protection national guidance, GIRFEC, The Promise and UNCRC. Our local approach strives to ensure that the protection of children involves early intervention, so that families receive support when it is needed in line with the Promise and our work in relation to whole family support. To strengthen this further we have now begun our journey to implement the Signs of Safety and Healing approach; a core risk assessment framework bringing the family and child into the centre of decision making and safety planning. The signs of safety approach will strengthen the voice of children and their families and support our use of chronologies and natural support networks.



Our Priorities

Following our joint inspection of services for children at risk of harm undertaken by the Care Inspectorate in 2023, we re-shaped our approach to fit with the key findings for improvement and identified three over-arching priorities for the committee and its sub-groups.

Priority 1

The Strengthen Voice within the delivery of CPC functions. This includes how we demonstrate impact and the difference we are making to the lives of children, young people and families.

Priority 2

Strengthen joint operational practice with a focus on the quality of assessment and planning for individual children and young people. This includes striving to ensure that assessments and plans are informed by an accurate understanding of the significant events and trauma in a child's life.

Priority 3

Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements in practice and process and strategic planning.



Quality improvement and self-evaluation

Our approach to continuous improvement recognises the need to see this work across the spectrum of services for children. The continuous improvement sub-group therefore spans activity across the CPC and children's services planning arrangements and reports to both partnerships.

The CPC leads continuous improvement through a programme of self-evaluation and quality assurance. This includes data collection and analysis, audit activity, quarterly and annual review of the minimum data set, learning from reviews locally and nationally and learning from local and national scrutiny and inspection activity. Taken together this activity is our performance framework and informs the child protection business plan. Through our self-evaluation activity we had found many areas of strength, and these were also highlighted through inspection and areas for improvement, again these align with the findings from our recent inspection.

Signs of Safety and Healing

The Child Protection Committee has continued to support the implementation of Signs of Safety and Healing which is a significant development that will help us realise our ambitions for transformational change. The implementation programme, which will run until 2026 began in Dec 2023. Year one of the implementation programme focused on core training. Lead professionals (social workers) and partners who are involved in the assessment and planning for children and their families took part in five-day training. Bespoke awareness and training sessions were also delivered to partners, including NHS Lanarkshire and education. A leadership engagement event was held for senior managers across the CS Partnership.

Assessment and planning paperwork has been reviewed on a single agency basis, aligning to Signs of Safety and Healing and there have been opportunities for managers and practitioners who attended the training, to use the paperwork, putting the learning into practice when assessing the needs of children and how best to keep them safe and improve their wellbeing while in the care of their family and their family network. The implementation programme will run until 2026 and year two will focus on embedding the model in practice.

There will be ongoing evaluation of the impact on children, families, managers and practitioners. A multi-agency oversight group has been agreed, it will meet monthly from May 2025 onwards and if needed will continue beyond December 2025, when the two-year implementation programme ends. There is a working group to review all single and multi-agency paperwork, including Getting it right for every child, child protection and care experience. Further working groups will be arranged and include a review of policies, procedures and guidance, single and multi-agency, to ensure alignment to Signs of Safety and Healing. Regular reporting will continue to the Child Protection Committee and the Children's Services Partnership Board.



Child Protection Committee Functions

The functions of Child Protection Committees across Scotland were updated in 2018/19 and are now published in 'Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities (2019)'. The core functions are grouped as follows:

Public Information, Engagement and Participation

The way we engage with the public, children, young people and families.

We aim to:

- Raise awareness about child at risk of harm
- Provide information to the public about what to do if you are worried about a child who may be at risk of harm.

Continuous Improvement

The Committee has an overview of the quality of the work being carried out to protect children and uses data, self-evaluation and scrutiny to identify any trends, patterns and practice that impact on keeping children safe.

Strategic Planning and Connections

Links to the work across the wider children's services. We work closely with all partners and strategic groups.



Sub-committees

Our CPC drives improvements that link to our vision, taking account of local priorities identified through evaluative activity. The CPC works in collaboration with the Adult Support Protection Committee, VAWG and pan-Lanarkshire work to achieve its key priorities. Multi-agency sub-committees facilitate the delivery of the CPC's core functions. In fulfilling our functions and delivering on our priorities the Child Protection Committee is supported by 11 sub-committees.

Child Protection and Sub Committee Structures



Highlights of the sub-committees during this reporting period have been:

- Multi-agency implementation of the Signs of Safety approach began in December 2023 and will continue until December 2025.
- The development of a chronology working group that sits across child and adult services has been established as a direct result of our self-evaluation and external scrutiny findings.
- Safe and Together has continued to be embedded within the partnership and this includes ongoing small scale audit activity.
- Contextual safeguarding has continued to evolve within the partnership, and we are now at the stage of refining our data collection and re-evaluating our young person's safeguarding panel.
- We have developed a central point where all live policies and procedures can be accessed in the form of page tiger and this is being further developed into a wider public protection resource.
- Continued to develop our continuous audit calendar for the partnership and ensure learning identified translates into improvement actions through clear linkage between subgroup activity.
- Strengthened our data report to ensure that themes are identified and feed into further self-evaluation activity or improvement actions.
- Continued our strong working relationship with adult services and specifically with adult support and protection to consider implementation of transitional safeguarding. This development is a direct result of learning across adult and children's services from contextual safeguarding and learning review activity.
- Strengthened the use of operational learning forums, to consider topics such as improvement actions from learning review activity and use of the assessment of care toolkit.
- Refreshed and updated our multi-agency training calendar to ensure we are providing high quality and appropriate training for the multi-agency workforce.

- Launched our public protection website as a resource for professionals as well as the general public to access information on the wellbeing and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Produced new learning review resources in the form of guidance for team members, managers and practitioners taking part in learning review activity.
- Trialed a "test for change" approach to supporting wellbeing throughout our learning review work, with support from NLC psychological services.



Achievements aligned to our CPC Priorities/Business Plan

Our Priorities

Priority 1

Strengthen Voice within the delivery of CPC functions.

Priority 2

Strengthen joint operational practice with a focus on the quality of assessment and planning for individual children and young people.

Priority 3

Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements in practice and process and strategic planning.



Priority outcome 1			
Strengthen Voice within the delivery of CPC functions.			
What are we working to achieve?	What will success look like?	How will we measure the difference we make to the lives of CYP?	Who will lead this?
<p>Improvement 1.1:</p> <p>Implement of Signs of Safety Approach across children's services; placing parents, children and those naturally connected with the child at the centre of assessment, decision making and planning.</p>	<p>We will further strengthen relationship-based and collaborative practice with CYP and their families.</p> <p>The Voice of children, young people and families will be clearly evidenced in assessments and plans.</p> <p>Assessments and plans will be consistently informed by the child's history and experiences.</p>	<p>Self-evaluation activity and case file audits will assess and evaluate practice change as part of the implementation plan.</p> <p>We will seek and report feedback from CYP and families about their experiences.</p>	<p>CPC / ICSG/CSPB supported by the signs of safety coordinator and signs of safety oversight group.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>We continue to embed the Signs of Safety and Healing approach across our work with children and families in North Lanarkshire.</p> <p>Signs of Safety is a well-established, strengths-based model of social work practice that has been used internationally for over 25 years. Originally developed for child protection, it has since evolved to support early help and care-experienced children. The model aims to build partnerships between professionals and families to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. In North Lanarkshire, we are adopting this model as our core assessment and planning Framework.</p> <p>As Signs of Safety is being embedded in practice there is an agreement that policy and procedure changes may be required, as such there will be a review of Signs of Safety practice to ensure, best practice and that NLC's policies and procedures are aligned to Signs of Safety. A systematic review of current policy documents will be required. A review of NLC's multi agency guidance / procedures is underway to ensure that current procedures are aligned to Signs of Safety. It is anticipated that this task will be completed by late October 2025. A baseline evaluation was completed as part of the implementation process, with a further evaluation to review the impact on practice will be carried out in Spring / Summer 2026.</p>		

<p>Improvement 1.2: Strengthen the Voice of CYP through independent advocacy.</p>	<p>More children and young involved in child protection processes will benefit from independent advocacy support. Our workforce will encourage and support the role of independent advocacy.</p>	<p>Case file audits will evidence an increase in the use of advocacy. Advocacy provider will report increased referrals. Advocacy provider will evaluate the impact of their engagement in partnership with CYP and families.</p>	<p>Who Cares Scotland</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Over the last two years of the CPC business plan the number of times that children were supported in child protection planning meetings has been low, with only forty two meetings where advocacy support was provided. Advocacy has been used at a higher level within core groups, which is positive, however further increase in advocacy support will also be targeted here. It has been acknowledged that advocacy support remains an outstanding improvement action with the aim of increasing the level of advocacy at key decision-making child protection meetings. The overall decreasing levels of child protection activity over the year may also have impacted on the uptake of advocacy within child protection processes, however an increase in percentage support rate would evidence positive change.</p> <p>A new feedback framework is now in place to understand the impact of advocacy on those receiving the service. The internal process is two-pronged as feedback is captured during the provision of advocacy and at the completion of the advocacy task. Prominence is given to capturing feedback directly from the child or young person receiving advocacy and the young person chooses one of several ways in which to engage with this.</p> <p>Feedback received was overwhelmingly positive with people agreeing that they could access advocacy that put them first, helped them understand their rights and take part in meetings and challenge things. They also agreed that their voice and choices had been heard.</p> <p>Increasing the level of advocacy available for children involved in child protection procedures remains an outstanding improvement action, given the current low level of children referred for advocacy who are involved in these processes.</p>		

<p>Improvement 1.3: Achieve greater impact and reach of tools to facilitate young peoples' participation</p>	<p>More young people will routinely use MOMO. Young peoples' views and involvement is clearly evidenced in assessments, plans and reviews.</p>	<p>Consultation with YP about preferred ways of participating. Young people receive feedback on the impact of their participation. Annual Voice report (to be discussed at CSPB).</p>	<p>Policy and Procedure sub committee Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety work is being used to better promote Young People's Participation, some examples include through words and pictures and the Three Houses model. The Three Houses is a simple, yet powerful tool used in child protection and social work to help children express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a structured and safe way. The tool consists of three metaphorical "houses" that a child is invited to fill in: house of Worries, house of Good Things and the House of dreams. Children can draw, write, or use symbols to express themselves in each house, depending on their age and ability. • In developing a Contextual Safeguarding response, peer mentors in the Social Work service, alongside youth workers and Community Learning and Development colleagues have created a resource for delivery to young people in schools and groups which promotes a dialogue about risk within their communities and involves them in discussion about how they can be supported through the contextual safeguarding approach. This has started to be delivered within youth groups. • As part of the contextual safeguarding in schools pilot the participating schools are involving young people in identifying spaces and contexts where they feel safe or not safe (within and outside of school) to support planning for a contextual response at early stage. • Following a primary age child being discussed at the Safeguarding Plan, their school has led the development of a transition training plan in collaboration with Social Work and the ADP to enable conversations with Primary school age pupils to discuss harms they might face out with the home. <p>CLD Youth Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education and Families Service is taking a relationship-based youth work approach, rather than a behavioural approach, to young people referred for Early and Effective Intervention (The Compass Project). In taking an overview of referrals, the CLD Youth Work service has identified young people or groups at risk of harm in the community and have developed, with the peer mentors, interventions and group work to tackle contextual issues before they escalate. In 2024, Compass Project worked with over 400 young people in groups. In addition, CLD youth work are undertaking place-based outreach work in targeted areas. 		

<p>Improvement 1.4: Strengthen public awareness of child protection</p>	<p>The public understands their responsibility in helping to keep children and young people safe. The public is confident about how to respond to concerns and understand what actions services will take.</p>	<p>Deploy effective comms approaches and engage with stakeholder groups to increase the understanding of the public and communities to carry out their responsibilities to help keep children safe Monitor website viewing data.</p>	<p>Public Protection Comms sub committee</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our public protection communications and engagement subgroup has focussed on refreshing and gathering a fuller understanding of “what works” in meaningful communication across today’s digital landscape. A workshop with North Lanarkshire council’s corporate communications team has resulted in increased understanding around focussing communications work across digital platforms that should provide the highest engagement levels with children, young people and adults throughout North Lanarkshire. This is work that will continue to be developed as we seek to develop targeted and robust communications across the calendar year. • Our links with Motherwell Football club have been strengthened and we have renewed our contract with the football club. This has ensured that prominent child protection messages are displayed around Fir Park, as well as information on how to report concerns. Motherwell FC have also promoted important child protection messages through their social media and digital channels. We have ensured that these messages can be copied across to council digital channels to multiply the impact across multiple platforms. • On-going work will continue to increase the targeting of appropriate media campaigns through the football club, including renewal of prominent signage on display at the club. 		

Priority outcome 2			
Strengthen joint operational practice with a focus on the quality of assessment and planning for individual children and young people. UNCRC, Article 3 best interest of the child and Article 5 parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities.			
What are we working to achieve?	What will success look like?	How will we measure the difference we make to the lives of CYP?	Who will lead this?
Improvement 2.1: Strengthen the quality and consistency of assessments and plans.	Increase the proportion of assessments and plans that are of a very good standard in identify risks and needs are identified early.	Case file audits will evidence quality assessments and plans.	Continuous Improvement Group Workforce Learning & Development
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A baseline audit was carried out as part of the implementation of Signs of Safety and Healing. A report from the data showed the majority of the assessments and plans audited were evaluated as good or very good. This audit focused on the social work led professional assessment and plan and was carried out by the Signs of Safety and Healing Cohort Delivery Group, social work managers. • Audit activity is central to our approach to continuous improvement. There is regular auditing of the quality of IRD paperwork, this is carried out by a working group and reports are submitted to the CPC. An audit of the impact of our contextual safeguarding approach was carried out in 2025, with improvement actions to be carried forward through the contextual safeguarding steering group. Audits still to be undertaken in 2025-26 include Safe and Together (November 2025) and Care experienced at home records in March 2026. Established quality indicator frameworks are adapted for audits which are carried out on a partnership basis. Audit of case records focusses on the quality of assessment and planning, this improvement has been highlighted through our own self-evaluation as well as by our joint inspection of children's services. • There is a range of guidance which supports good assessment and planning. In collaboration with the Policies and Procedures sub-group, the CIG will consider how this supportive guidance is being used across the partnership, its accessibility and any evaluative information from managers and practitioners of how it has supported assessment and planning for children, the impact/'so what question'. • We will also be evaluating the impact on our assessment and planning of the implementation of Signs of Safety and Healing. We want to see sustained improvement in the consistency and quality of our assessment and plans. This is across the partnership and will include evidence of how children and their parents are engaged and their voices considered in the assessment and planning process. We will also take account of how partnership agencies feed into the lead professional plans, how information is shared and how worries are articulated and risk assessed as a partnership. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a Signs of Safety and Healing approach has been incorporated into our 5-day Child Protection course “Getting it right in Child Protection”, with a specific input provided to social workers on child protection risk assessment and planning using this approach. Two new E Modules have been produced providing a briefing on the Care and Justice Act and the National Referral Mechanism. These have now been signed off by the group and will be made available to the workforce on the return of our subcommittee chair. It was also agreed that the IRISS understanding age document would be useful as an eLearning input for staff to access to enhance their understanding of the application of child protection guidance or adult support and protection legislation for those aged 16 and 17. <p>Future Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how to further strengthen evaluation processes to assess the quality and consistency of assessment and planning. Ensure the information is shared across the partnership to inform and maintain quality and consistency in assessments and plans. In collaboration with the Policies and Procedures sub-group, evaluate the availability and impact of guidance which underpins assessment and planning. 		
<p>Improvement 2.2: Strengthen the quality and consistent use of chronologies to ensure these are used routinely as part of an assessment.</p>	<p>Increase the quality of chronologies and the proportion inform assessments routinely.</p>	<p>Case file audits will evidence the quality and consistent use of chronologies.</p>	<p>Continuous Improvement Group Workforce Learning & Development Chronologies Lifespan short life working group</p>
	<p>Develop lifespan chronology short life working group in partnership with adult services to improve the use of chronologies across the lifespan.</p>	<p>An evaluation of the lifespan chronology group. Case file audits</p>	
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A short life working group has been pulled together which encompasses both adults and children to develop chronology practice across the lifespan. North Lanarkshire are working with IRISS to pilot their Chronology Leadership and Self Evaluation Tool across adult and child protection partnerships. The short life working group is using the tool to map out our current understanding of chronology practice, identify manageable changes and improvement actions. A theory of change for this work was structured using a logic model considering where we are currently with this work, what resources, activities and participants are required and identifying the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes to work towards. A key aspect that has been identified is the need for practitioners to see how the use of chronologies can assist them in their work to ensure that changes in practice are sustainable. The chronologies tool consists of seven sections assisting partners to reflect on current use of chronologies across the multi-agency workforce for both children and adults; and also to inspire conversations around what good chronology practice should look like. The group is working through the tool section by section, exploring with their own teams how the use of chronologies can enhance assessment, and how best to support sustainable change. The group has invited representation from children and adults social work, health, education, housing and police as well as adult and child protection committees. The group will continue to meet monthly to discuss progress as they work through the tool. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An initial baseline audit of the presence of chronologies in social work, health and education child protection case files has been completed along with consultations with frontline staff around this work. It is anticipated that the initial work using the tool should be completed by the end of 2025, after which the group will plan next steps in consolidating changes in practice that have been identified. IRISS will continue to support this work as a critical friend moving forward. 		
<p>Improvement 2.3: Our learning and development opportunities enhance operational practice</p>	<p>Our workforce is well -equipped and confident to provide effective support to families to help keep children safe.</p>	<p>Staff surveys will evidence that staff feel confident in recognising and responding to risk and need. Case file auditing will evidence that all work is underpinned by our approaches.</p>	<p>Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup Workforce Learning & Development</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Contextual Safeguarding:</p> <p>Schools Pilot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback highlighted challenges in responding to extra-familial harm in and outside school. 3 high schools partnered with University of Durham to explore early intervention using GIRFEC and Empowering Cluster Model. Priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearer school policies for interagency response and integration of child protection, inclusion, and anti-bullying policies (Contextual Safeguarding). Move from incident-driven to proactive understanding of safe/unsafe spaces. Strengthen cluster wellbeing meetings and partnerships. Next steps: Local pilots in development; meeting with University of Durham scheduled for 24 March. <p>Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing concern: exploitation of young people for criminal activity (e.g., theft of high-value alcohol). Requires cross-boundary coordination; young people drawn to Glasgow city centre. Data: 19% of under-18 crime suspects in Glasgow city centre (May 2025–Feb 2025) were from North Lanarkshire. 17 of 31 young people discussed in 2024 identified as CCE victims. Consequences: frequent conflict with law, exclusion orders, curfews to further criminalisation. Operation Dynos: Police-led initiative targeting organised theft networks; 4 dedicated officers funded. Social work strategies: group work, outreach, diversionary activities, trips away; 3 young people in secure care last year. Barnardo’s & VRU pilot: safe space in city centre, retailer engagement, training, links to NL services. Pan-local authority/police group forming to share trends and agree actions; governance terms drafted. 		

Training

- Contextual Safeguarding integrated into 5-day child protection training + online module (544 completions; ~800 views).
- Quarterly multi-agency training; positive feedback.
- NHSL developing health-specific training with NES and Scottish Government support.
- CLD Youth Work staff trained; probationary police officers received awareness training.
- Panel members trained on CSE and CCE.
- Next steps: bespoke social work training aligning Contextual Safeguarding with Signs of Safety.
- Pan-Lanarkshire guidance finalised; practitioners' briefings organised.
- Multi-agency training enhancements:
 - Care assessment toolkit refresh.
 - Child protection training for fire & rescue.
 - Child protection awareness in adult protection training.
 - Joint training for CAMHS staff on child/adult protection and VAWG.
- Enhanced child protection training refreshed for direct assessment workforce.
- Briefings on learning reviews and age in protection scheduled (Feb–Mar 2026).
- Joint Public Protection training calendar for 2026 in progress.
- September 2025 multi-agency training review underway.
- Online safety working group forming.
- E-modules refreshed; new modules on NRM, Care & Justice Act, age in protection

Priority outcome 3			
Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements in practice and process and strategic planning. UNCRC Article 18, parental responsibilities, and state assistance			
What are we working to achieve?	What will success look like?	How will we measure the difference we make to the lives of CYP?	Who will lead this?
Improvement 3.1: Child protection activity data will drive forward service and practice improvements	Improved data analysis and interrogation will ensure children are receiving timely support and interventions. Services will have an accurate understanding of performance trends.	This will be evidenced in the delivery of services and feedback from children and families.	CIG sub committee IRD review group
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quarterly national minimum dataset has been incorporated into a new report format which provides CPC and COG with visual charts and narrative around trends that can be seen in the data. A six monthly multi-agency data group has been set up to consider the trends observed over the previous two quarters and to consider what data may be available to provide context to trends that are seen in our child protection data. The group add multi-agency analysis to the data report and consider what other work may be helpful to drill down and understand what is observed. An example of this is a mini audit of re-registration data from the first half of 2025 that was undertaken at the request of the CPC when it was observed that NLC’s re-registration data was consistently higher than the national benchmark. On-going work is required to ensure data trends and analysis feed into and inform the work of the other subgroups such as planning our quality assurance work moving forward, informing actions required from the continuous improvement group, training required for the multi-agency to support practice improvement, additional policy and procedure guidance that may be helpful, and communications work that may also improve child protection and ultimately outcomes for children and families within North Lanarkshire. Further work is also on-going to explore the formation of a multi-agency data dashboard which would assist with links between datasets across north Lanarkshire. This is a complex piece of work with numerous barriers to overcome; however it would provide an invaluable resource to support our understanding of data trends across the multi-agency partnership moving forward. <p>Future Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work is required to ensure data trends and analysis feed into and inform the work of the sub-groups. Further exploration and scoping of how we establish a partnership dashboard for children’s services. 		

<p>Improvement 3.2: Continue to implement contextual safeguarding to protect children and young people from significant harm outside the home</p>	<p>We will know that young people referred to the Young People’s Safeguarding Panel (YPSP) are safer in their communities</p>	<p>Framework for gathering outcomes from review at the YPSP Qualitative data from young people about their experiences of support and services Contextual Safeguarding is aligned with programme of audit activity (Improvement 4 below)</p>	<p>Contextual Safeguarding Steering Group Workforce Learning & Development</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work of the Contextual Safeguarding steering group has been guided by a Theory of Change which sets out the desired outcomes of implementation and an annual plan aligned to the GPC’s priority outcomes. <p>Young People’s Safeguarding Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since January 2024, the panel has discussed 31 young people (17 boys and 14 girls). 16 of these young people were identified as neuro divergent and 21 were care experienced. The panel has highlighted the benefits of the National Referral Mechanism; 8 of these young people now have Conclusive Grounds established, 3 are awaiting outcomes. This is assisting SCRA and the courts to understand the context of offending behaviour. A qualitative evaluation of the Safeguarding panel has been undertaken and improvement actions will be integrated into the renewed implementation and improvement plan. To date there has been a focus on learning through qualitative data and case studies. A further step is for steering group to agree proxy measures to support the monitoring of progress of implementation. <p>Locations of Concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The steering group has used data on locations of concern to identify need for context assessments as a basis for planning interventions. These assessments, led by CLD Youth Work and undertaken collaboratively with social work, community safety and police in areas of Cumbernauld and Airdrie, are looking at peer groups, environment and guardianship capacity. This is informing the approach of CLD Youth Work in preventative work and assist Local Planning Teams in agreeing approaches. 		

<p>Improvement 3.3: Further enhance the use of qualitative data to show the impact of our service provision.</p>	<p>Children and parents/carers views will be included in planning.</p>	<p>Scrutiny and audit work will evidence the views of children and families are gathered, analysed and used to inform service developments.</p>	<p>Contextual Safeguarding Steering Group Workforce Learning & Development</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This continues to be an improvement area. For some years we have adopted the process of triangulation in our audit activity, this includes meeting with children and their families, selecting a number of records and members of the auditing group meeting with children and parents. There is evidence of improvement however this is limited and for the upcoming audits improvement will be a focus for the auditing groups. • There has been the collation of qualitative data in areas that include the impact of Whole Family Support, early help and prevention by the commissioned Barnardo’s service Families, Here and Now (FHAN), the development of Bairns Hoose, children, young people and parents have been involved in supporting the scoping of a Lanarkshire Bairns Hoose, the thematic review of through care and after care services and the review of corporate parenting services which included input from adoptive parents. • We are looking at how we can routinely gather the views of children and their parents who are involved in child protection processes. How we gather, collate and consider the qualitative data is a priority action for the CIG. <p>Future Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a framework for routinely gathering and collating qualitative data which informs the impact of developments and practice A priority in collaboration with the voice group will be gathering and collation of qualitative data for children and families involved in child protection. 		

<p>Improvement 3.4: Implement the Quality Improvement and Performance Framework to quality assure the impact of our service provision to children and families.</p>	<p>The QI&P Framework will inform a schedule of audit activity to ensure children and families are receiving quality services.</p> <p>Findings from local and national learning reviews will inform continuous improvement activity.</p>	<p>The analysis of data and performance activity will support improvement planning.</p>	<p>CIG sub committee</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The calendar of activity which is part of the framework has been a useful recording tool to provide detail of continuous improvement activity aligned to the improvement actions. The activities recorded are primarily audits. The performance framework which was widely circulated across the partnership, is being used on a limited basis and further awareness and understanding of the framework needs to be driven by the CIG to ensure the partnership’s approach to continuous improvement is structured and of a consistent quality. • The framework is now two years old and would benefit from a review to update as necessary and to consider how best to promote on a single agency and partnership basis. This will be taken forward by the CIG. • Reports from national and local learning reviews have been provided to the CIG, identifying the learning for the North Lanarkshire partnership. This provides the opportunity for the partnership to disseminate the learning for consideration by managers and practitioners on a single and multi-agency basis to inform and improve practice. The QI&P Framework supports this activity. <p>Future Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the QI&P Framework to ensure it is still ‘fit for purpose’. Agree a communication strategy to disseminate and support its use across the partnership, on a single and multi-agency basis. 		

Management Information and National Data

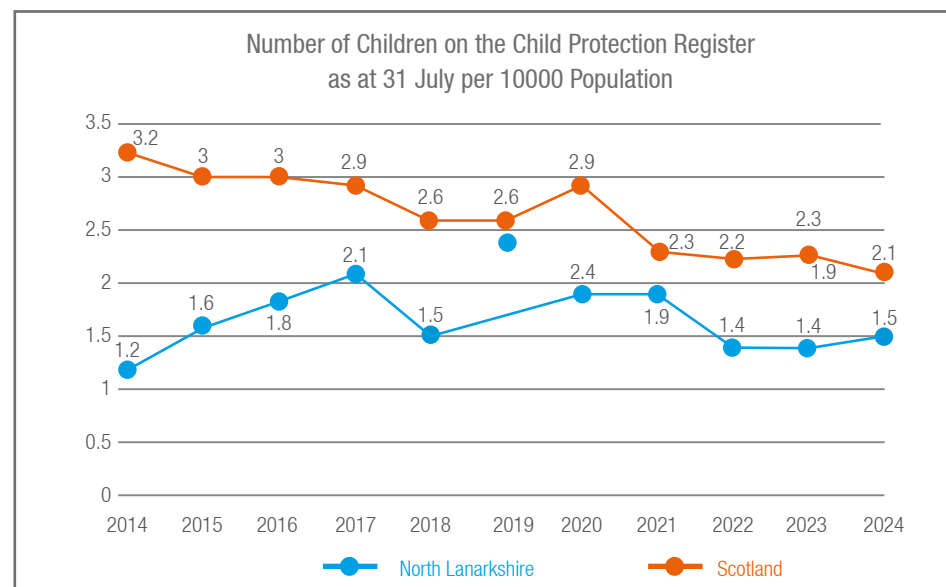
North Lanarkshire was an early adopter of both versions of the national child protection minimum data set. From August 2023 North Lanarkshire CPC has transferred to version 2 of the data set. It has supported our partnership to use data to drive forward improvements, and these have included safe and together, contextual safeguarding and signs of safety. Our next improvement action, informed by our use of data is exploring the use of transitional safeguarding in partnership and led by our colleagues in adult services.

To help monitor child protection activity and identify trends, the committee reviews child protection statistical information. In North Lanarkshire we have adopted the National Minimum Dataset version 2 for Child Protection. The national figures published annually by the Scottish Government provide the opportunity to ‘benchmark’ against other local authority areas across Scotland. These figures in conjunction with local child protection information collected by agencies and services working in North Lanarkshire, form the basis for child protection management information.

National Data and Local Comparison

The national data is taken from the children’s social work statistics published by the Scottish Government on 25th March 2025. This section presents data on children registered on the child protection register from 1st August 2023 until 31st July 2024.

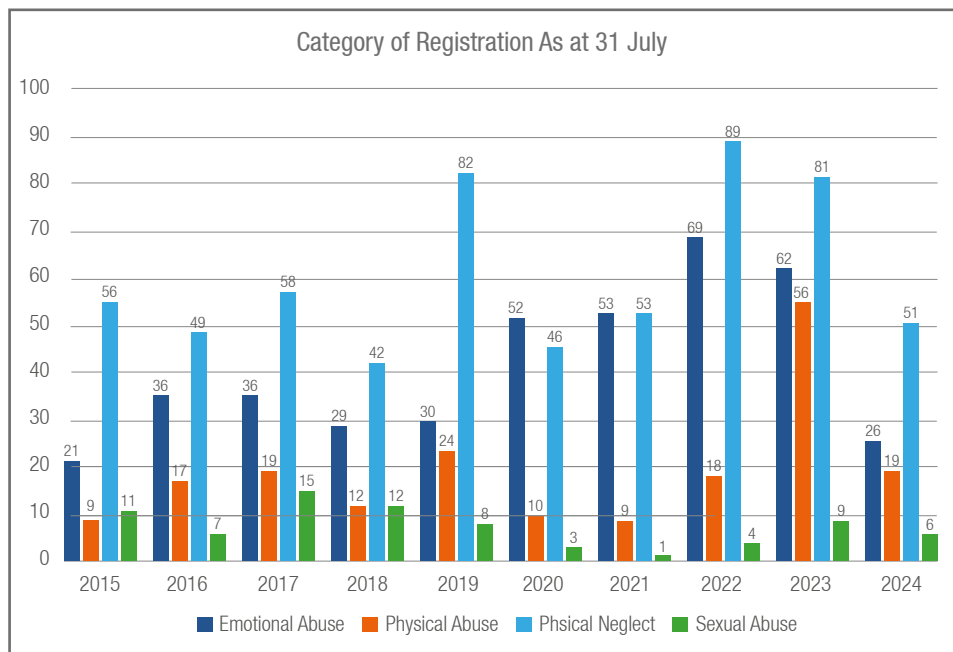
Chart 1: Rate of children on the child protection



The figures show that a total of 2,129 children were on the child protection register on 31 July 2024, an increase of 3% since 2023. Around half (48%) of children added to the child protection register in 2023-24 lived in one of the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland. The most common concerns identified at child protection planning meetings for children registered during the year were domestic abuse, neglect, parental substance use, parental mental ill health, and emotional abuse.

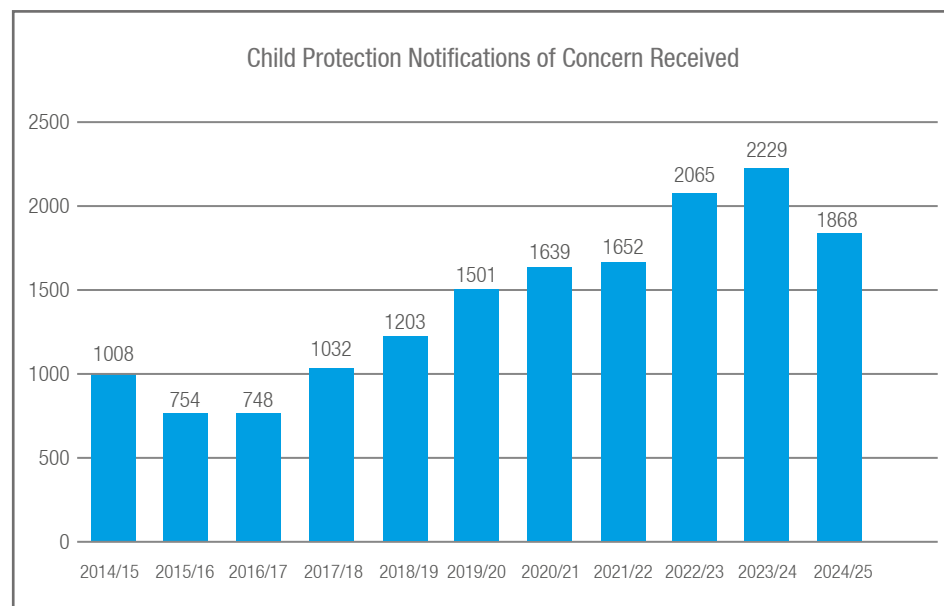
The rate of children on the child protection register in NLC has always been lower than the national average rate. When we compare the difference over the past four years, we can see that this has varied between 0.4 to 0.9, however the decrease in the national rate in 2024 was not seen in NLC which instead had a slight increase. National rate comparisons for 2025 are not available as a benchmark for the rest of the following data as they are yet to be published.

Chart 2: Category of Registration



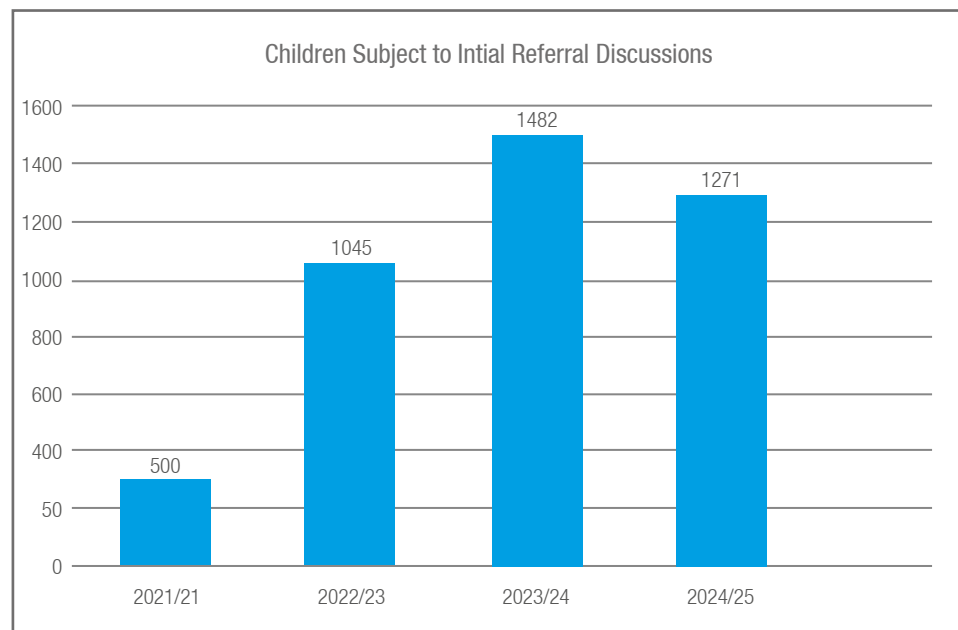
Neglect continues to be the most commonly recorded reason for child protection registration up to 2024 for NLC and this trend has remained since 2021. We are unable to collect the full annual data due to switch to MOSAIC, but data available from quarter 4 in 24/25 (May-Jul 25) indicates that Neglect remains the most common concern recorded at child protection registration.

Chart 3: Notification of concerns received



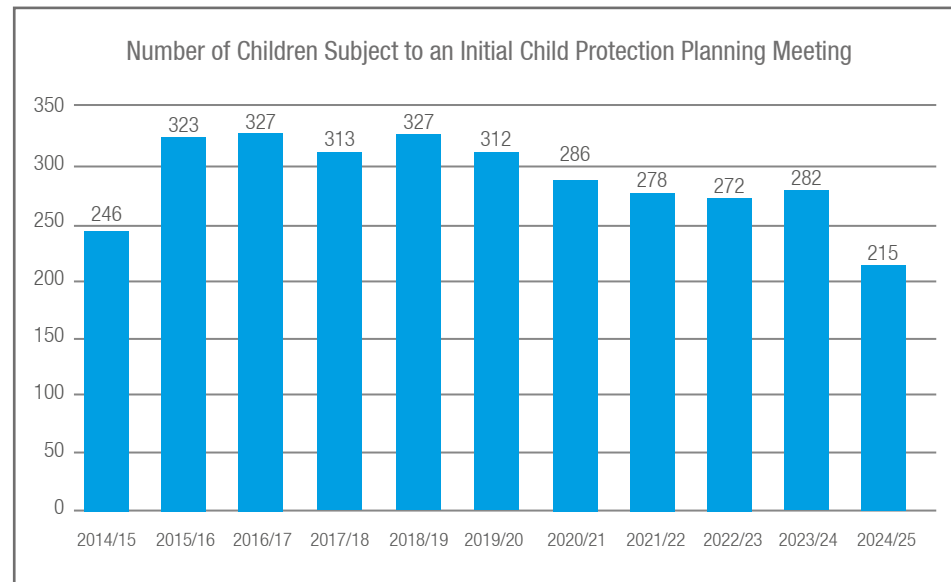
The number of child protection referrals has reliably increased every year since 2017/2018, until the current 24/25 data point. Although there has been a sharp decline in child protection referrals received it should be noted that the total for the year remains above those received before 22/23.

Chart 4: Children Subject to Initial Referral Discussions



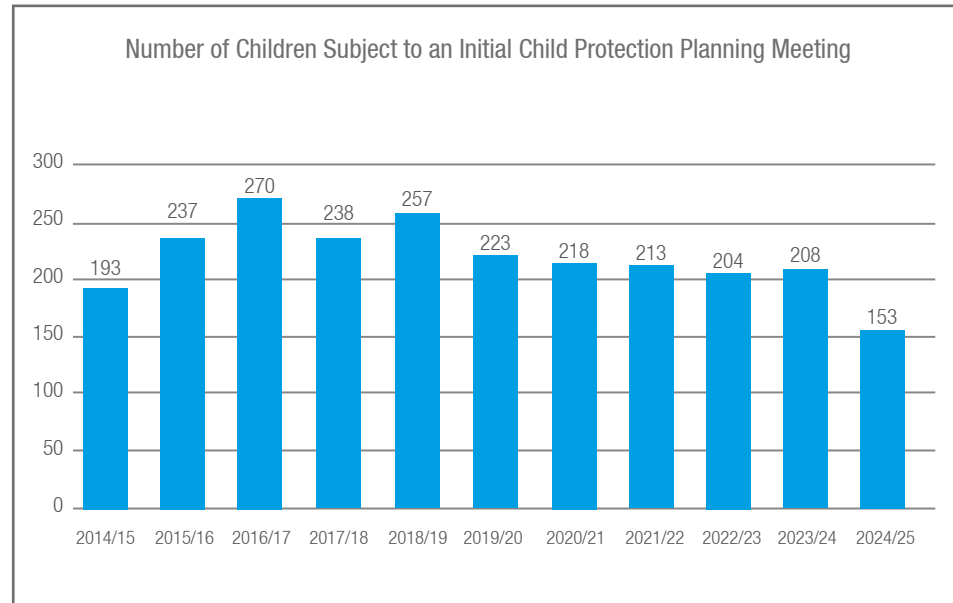
The number of children subject to IRD discussions has also decreased over the past year which is again the first decrease in referrals seen over the past four years. Despite this the number of IRDs remains higher than all years apart from 23/24. Police Scotland’s IRD data can be used to compare different trajectories across Scotland. Comparing IRD numbers in 2023-24 to 2024-25, nationally there was a 5% fall. However, at a local authority area level, 14 local authorities had more IRDs in 2024-25 than 2023-24 (two local authorities seeing an increase by around 30%), while 18 local authorities had fewer IRDs (two local authorities seeing a decrease by around 34%).

Chart 5: Number of children subject to an initial child protection planning meeting



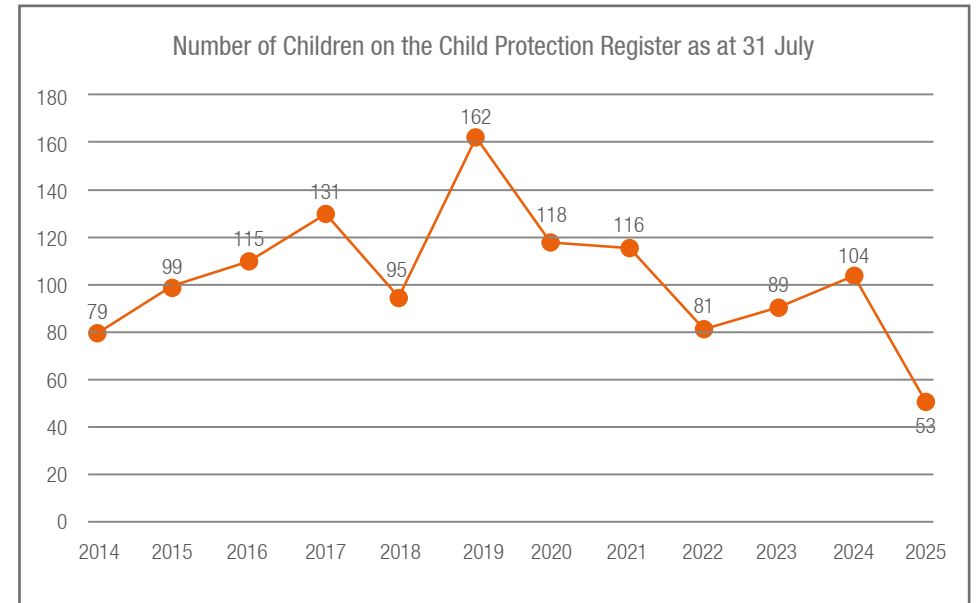
The number of initial child protection planning meetings, previously known as case conferences has remained fairly stable since 2020, but again a sharp decrease has been seen over the past year, with the number of children subject to CP planning meetings lower than has been recorded before in the data.

Chart 6: Number of new child protection registrations



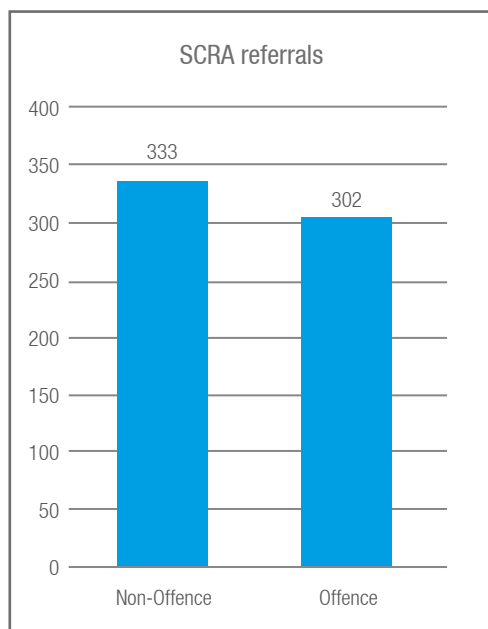
The number of children’s names registered on the child protection register has also remained fairly stable from 2019/20, until the past year where a substantial reduction can be seen. The level of child protection registrations is again at the lowest recorded level across the data points from 2014/15.

Chart 7: Number of Children on the Child Protection Register



The number of children on the child protection register on 31st July 2025 was at the lowest level ever seen in this chart. This clearly indicates that the decrease in initial child protection activity extends right through the recorded data for the year. Comparison across Police Scotland’s IRD and Child Protection Report data illustrates a decrease for Scotland as a whole in 2024-25 compared to 2023-24. This decrease is more evident in the North Lanarkshire figures than averages for the rest of Scotland.

Scottish children's reporters administration (SCRA)



North Lanarkshire children referred to the children's reporter both in relation to non-offence and offence grounds remains relatively low although there has been an increase in the number of referrals on offence grounds over the past year. Referrals to SCRA continue to be responded to timeously, with maintenance across the year of over 80% of Reporter's decisions made within 50 working days of receipt of the referral.

In conclusion, we have made progress across all areas of our business plan over the two years it has been in place. We will now review our priorities to consider where refinement is required to build upon what is working well to keep children safe. Further work is required from the partnership to address the areas for improvement identified through our self-evaluation and continuous improvement activities:

- Further develop the impact of our improved data work to ensure this translates into focusing where improvement work can have the greatest impact.
- Improving parent and carer participation in service design and delivery
- Ensuring high quality assessment and planning based on robust understanding of family history and context
- Review and embed the implementation of Signs of Safety
- Progression of the Bairns' Hoose model
- Strengthening transitions work across Child and Adult Protection



Business Planning

The Child Protection Committee vision is:

“All children and young people in North Lanarkshire have the right to be cared for and protected from abuse and harm in a safe environment in which their rights are respected”

Our committee has nine high level outcomes which link to our vision and take account of the functions and responsibilities of Child Protection Committees outlined in ‘Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities (2019)’.

They also take into account local priorities for the child protection committee identified through self-evaluation, inspection and other review activity, the priorities of the wider children’s services partnership and the national priorities identified in the Child Protection Improvement Programme.



High Level Outcomes

01	Learning from range of sources, including research, local quality assurance activity, practice experience, performance information, and significant case reviews informs priority setting policy and practice developments.
02	Evidence informed changes to policy and practice are introduced, monitored and evaluated, and improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
03	Evidence informed, up to date procedures, protocols and guidance are available in relation to core child protection business and related priority issues, these are implemented effectively and impact on practice and outcomes.
04	The North Lanarkshire workforce is competent and confident in their individual, managerial and collective roles to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect or exploitation.
05	Relevant, up to date public information is available in a range of accessible and engaging formats to individuals and communities across North Lanarkshire.
06	The views of children and families are taken into account in relation to issues that affect them directly and in policy and practice development.
07	Collaboration and co-operation between the Child Protection Committee and other national and local multi-agency partnerships is effective.
08	National strategy and policy developments inform Child Protection Committee activity.
09	Local leadership of child protection is effective in driving improvements in child protection practice and in improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of or affected by abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Our priorities for 2025 – 2026

The current business plan has been in place for 2022/2023 and 2023/24 and will now be reviewed and evaluated. As part of this work, we will consider what improvement actions have been completed, what requires further work, and where additional improvement actions are required. We will draw on learning from learning reviews and national priorities. It will be underpinned by a detailed workplan that sets out the role of supporting sub-committees in delivering these outcomes in a way that enables the CPC to demonstrate the impact of its collective activities on improving the safety of children, young people and families in North Lanarkshire. The work plan will be reviewed routinely during CPC meetings.



Appendix 1

Governance and Reporting

North Lanarkshire Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce, implement, and monitor the Single Outcome Agreement. Report annually to the Scottish Government. Receive bi-annual reports from the Children’s Services Partnership.
Chief Officers Public Protection Group (COG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the strategic overview for public protection, including child protection. Individually and collectively provide leadership and accountability for public protection. Receive quarterly reports from the Child Protection Committee and Children’s Services Partnership (CSP). Agree the Child Protection Committee Annual Report and Business Plan and the Children’s Services Report and Annual Action Plan.
Children’s Services Partnership (CSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide governance across all elements of the Children’s Services Plan. Report biannually to North Lanarkshire Partnership. Report to the COG. Receive quarterly reports from the Improving Children’s Services Group. Report to and share minutes with the NLC Policy and Resources Committee.

Child Protection Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement child protection policy and strategy across and between agencies/services. Deliver on Key Functions grouped as follows: public information, continuous improvement and strategic planning. Report on a quarterly basis to the COG. Produce an annual report and business plan.
Improving Children’s Services Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce, implement and monitor the Children’s Services Annual Action Plan. Develop and implement an effective performance framework. Collate information for the Children’s Services Improvement Tool. Receive quarterly reports from themed groups and locality planning groups. Produce quarterly reports for the Children’s’ Services Partnership and wider communication.
Themed Subgroups and Locality Planning Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to planning, monitoring and evaluation. Produce and update priorities and plans. Produce quarterly reports to the Improving Children’s Services Group. Deliver on the actions in the ICSP. Collect information for the Children’s Services Improvement Tool and use this to prompt discussion and scrutiny.

Appendix 2

North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee Membership - as of 31st July 2025

Title	Organisation
Independent Chair	North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee
Co-ordinator Child Protection	North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee
Detective Superintendent	Detective Superintendent, Specialist Crime Division
Chief Nurse Public Protection	NHS Lanarkshire
Chief Social Work Officer (Education, Families, Justice & Integrated Practice)	Education & Families, North Lanarkshire Council
Associate Medical Director, MHLA & Addictions	Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire
Senior Nurse Emergency Medicine	NHS Lanarkshire
Associate Nurse Director	Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire
Manager, Children & Families	Education & Families
Locality Reporter Manager North Lanarkshire	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
Chief Officer (Education)	North Lanarkshire Council, Education & Families

Title	Organisation
CP Development Officer (Education)	North Lanarkshire Council, Education & Families
Service Co-ordinator (Domestic Abuse)	North Lanarkshire Council, Education & Families
Housing Services Manager	North Lanarkshire Council, Enterprise & Housing Resources
Strategic Lead ADP	Lanarkshire Alcohol & Drug Action Team (ADAT)
Head of Democratic and Legal Services	North Lanarkshire Council, Corporate Services
Pediatrician (Child Protection)	NHS Lanarkshire
Principal Psychologist	North Lanarkshire Council, Education & Families
Agreed representative	On behalf of Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL)
General Manager for Specialist Children's Health Services Unit, North Lanarkshire HSCP	NHS Lanarkshire
Admin Assistant	North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee

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getting
it right
for every child
in North Lanarkshire