**Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – Annual Report 2024/25**

**Executive Summary**

**Overview**

The CBSCP Annual Report outlines the safeguarding landscape in Central Bedfordshire, highlighting demographic trends, key safeguarding data, partnership priorities, audit findings, and learning from case reviews. The report reflects a strong multi-agency commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people.

**Key Demographics**

* Population: 307,200 (16.7% growth since 2013).
* Children (0–17): 17.7% increase.
* Ethnicity: 83.5% White British; over 60 languages spoken in schools.
* Crime rate: Lower than average; health outcomes slightly better than national average.

**Children in Low-Income Households**

* Central Bedfordshire: 15% of children aged 0–15 in low-income households (up from 14%).
* Comparatively lower than Luton (43%) and Bedford (24%).

**Education**

* 49,415 pupils in local schools.
* 25.5% from minority ethnic backgrounds.
* 14% eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).
* 5,665 children receiving SEN support; 3,068 with EHCPs.

**Safeguarding Activity**

**Children’s Services Front Door**

* 17,256 enquiries and 2,286 referrals (slight increase from previous year).

**Early Help**

* 1,059 Early Help Assessments by Children’s Services.
* 691 children classified as Children in Need (down from 762).

**Child Protection**

* 177 children with Child Protection Plans (down from 224).
* 338 Looked After Children (down from 384).

**Partnership Priorities (2024/25)**

* **Strong Leadership**
* **Learning from Case Reviews**
* **Back to Basics Training**
* **Effective Assessments**

**Key Focus Areas**

* Neglect
* Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)
* Exploitation
* Mental Health & Wellbeing

**Golden Threads**

* Voice of the Child
* Information Sharing
* Transitions
* Early Help
* Quality Assessments

**Audit & Assurance Work**

* Multiple audits conducted including:
  + Neglect (CIN and Multi-Agency)
  + Serious Youth Violence
  + Re-referrals
  + Child Sexual Abuse (NSPCC Snapshot)
  + Child to Parent Abuse
  + Voice of the Child & Was Not Brought (WNB)
* Formation of a Pan Bedfordshire Assurance & Improvement Group.
* Increased use of Graded Care Profile (GCP2) to assess neglect.

**📊 Neglect Strategy**

* GCP2 completions increased significantly (122 in 2024/25).
* Multi-agency chronologies piloted for under-2s with CP Plans.
* Training and awareness raised across agencies.

**⚠️ Exploitation & Youth Violence**

* Audit revealed good practice but highlighted gaps in:
  + Needs analysis
  + Multi-agency coordination
  + School engagement
* Actions taken include revised strategy, new panels, and training.

**🧒 Voice of the Child**

* Sub-group reinstated.
* Young people’s page and conference planned.
* Training improved post-training knowledge from 33% to 98%.

**🧠 Mental Health & Wellbeing**

* 332 practitioners completed themed eLearning.
* Reflect Support Service and training promoted.
* Early years and school-based resilience programmes in place.

**📚 Education & Safeguarding**

* Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Education Group addressed:
  + CSA
  + Online harms
  + Legal orders
  + Use of AI
* “You said, we did” actions implemented.

**Case Reviews**

**CSPR: Isabella**

* Toddler found deceased; learning focused on domestic abuse, voice of the child, and cross-border safeguarding.

**CSPR: Baby Harry**

* Infant death: learning focused on pre-birth assessments, re-referrals, and under-20s support pathways.

**Rapid Reviews:**

* **Child A**: Sexual abuse by stepfather; highlighted issues with neglect, information sharing, and over-reliance on written agreements.
* **Family B**: Neglect in Elective Home Education context; learning around professional curiosity, escalation, and lived experience.

**Training & Development**

* 1,005 professionals who work across Central Bedfordshire attended training linked to themes like neglect, CSA, exploitation, and mental health. A further 7,883 professionals completed e-learning on similar themes.
* Multi-agency chronologies and joint supervisions piloted.
* Voice of the Child training and conference planning underway.

**Website & Communication**

* Safeguarding Bedfordshire website had 288,404 visits.
* Most visited pages: Training, Partnership info, and reporting concerns.

**Partner Contributions**

* Detailed updates from:
  + Bedfordshire Police
  + Fire Service
  + Domestic Abuse Services
  + Hospitals
  + Probation
  + Public Health
  + Cambridgeshire Community Services
  + East London Foundation Trust
  + BLMK ICB
  + Central Bedfordshire Council Children’s Services
* Strong emphasis on co-production, voice of the child, and continuous improvement.

**Financial Overview**

* Total budget: £210,062.90
* Main contributors: Central Bedfordshire Council (63%), BLMK ICB (26%), Bedfordshire Police (10%).
* Spend focused on staffing, training, website, and case reviews.

**Priorities for 2025/26**

* **Neglect**
* **Child Sexual Abuse**
* **Exploitation**
* **Under 5s & Non-Accidental Injuries**
* **Voice of the Child**

**Additional Focus Areas**

* Embedding learning from reviews
* Strengthening impact measurement
* Enhancing partnership development
* Building stronger links with SEND