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

**What Parents Should Know**

**🏡 About Central Bedfordshire**

* A growing area with over 307,000 residents.
* Most children live safe, healthy lives—but some need extra support.

**👶 Children & Families**

* **15% of children** live in low-income households (up slightly from last year).
* **14% of pupils** receive Free School Meals (lower than the national average).
* Over **8,700 children** receive extra help through Special Educational Needs (SEN) support or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

**🛡️ Keeping Children Safe**

* **Early Help** services supported over 1,300 families before problems became serious.
* **Child Protection Plans** dropped from 224 to 177—showing progress in keeping children safe at home.
* **Children in Care** reduced from 384 to 338.

**🎯 Key Priorities**

The Partnership focused on:

* **Neglect**: Helping families earlier and using tools like the Graded Care Profile.
* **Child Sexual Abuse**: Improving awareness, training, and support.
* **Exploitation**: Tackling serious youth violence and online risks.
* **Mental Health**: Supporting emotional wellbeing in schools and communities.
* **Voice of the Child**: Making sure children are heard in decisions that affect them.

**📚 Learning from Cases**

The Partnership reviewed several serious cases to improve services. Key lessons included:

* Listening to children—even very young ones.
* Being alert to domestic abuse and unsafe adults.
* Acting quickly when children are missing school or home educated in concerning situations.

**🧠 Training & Support**

* 1,005 professionals who work across Central Bedfordshire attended safeguarding training. A further 7,883 professionals completed safeguarding e-learning.
* New tools and guidance shared with schools and services.
* Parents and carers were involved in shaping services and giving feedback.

**🌐 Helpful Resources**

* The Safeguarding Bedfordshire website had nearly 300,000 visits.
* It offers advice, training, and ways to report concerns:
👉 safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk

**📌 What’s Next (2025–26)**

* Continue work on neglect, CSA, and exploitation.
* Focus on children under 5 and non-accidental injuries.
* Strengthen support for children with SEND.
* Improve how the Partnership measures its impact.