



South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership

Section 11 Audit Report 2024-25

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March 2025

Introduction

The Section 11 self-assessment audit tool was circulated to all partners across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset in the summer of 2024 to assess, monitor and evidence progress and achievements in relation to meeting safeguarding requirements. This year the tool took the form of a questionnaire that was sent directly to front line practitioners, the aim of this was to try and achieve some triangulation of the responses in 2023-24 when senior managers of organisations completed the Section 11 returns.

The survey was circulated across the region and practitioners asked to identify which areas they work in. A total of 493 responses were received. This included 38 responses to a specific survey for frontline police officers who had the survey added to their pocket book, and 455 practitioners from other organisations. 22% indicated that they work in South Gloucestershire.



This report has been produced for the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership and has drawn on the themes identified in the audit process from the professionals who work in South Gloucestershire.

There were 27 questions within the audit covering a range of themes. There is a list of the questions used in [Appendix One](#).

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004

Places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

What is Section 11? (from [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#))

Section 11 places a duty on:

- Local authorities and district councils that provide children's and other types of services, including children's and adult social care, public health, housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing authorities and youth services
- NHS organisations and agencies and the independent sector, including NHS England, ICBs, NHS Trusts, NHS Foundation Trusts and general practitioners

- the police, including Police and Crime Commissioners and the chief officer of each police force in England and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime where they exist
- the British Transport Police
- the Probation Service
- governors or directors of prisons and young offender institutions (YOIs)
- directors of secure training centres (STCs)
- youth offending teams (YOTs)

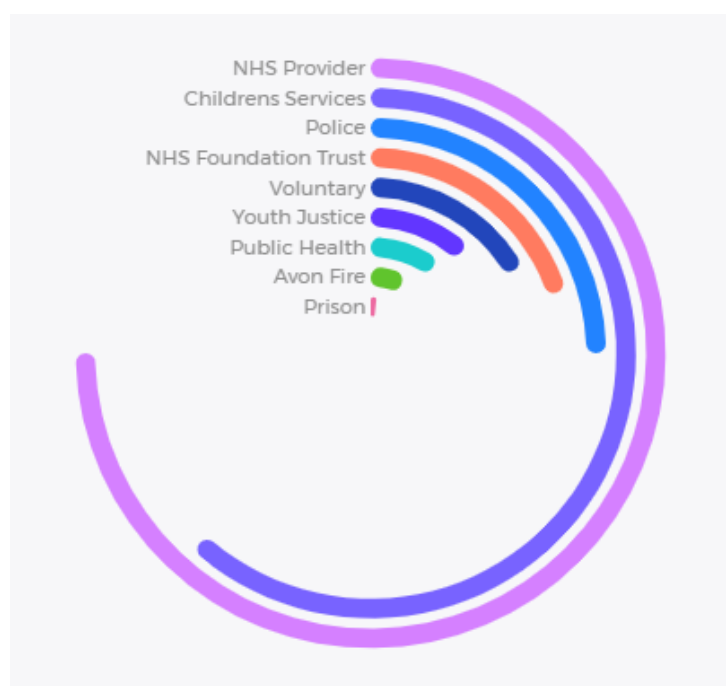
These organisations and agencies should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

- a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- clear whistleblowing procedures, which reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis' 'Freedom to Speak Up Review' and are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed
- clear escalation policies for staff to follow when their child safeguarding concerns are not being addressed within their organisation or by other agencies
- arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other practitioners and with safeguarding partners
- a designated practitioner (or, for health provider organisations/agencies, named practitioners). Please see Health Practitioners with Specific Duties for more detail) for child safeguarding. Their role is to support other practitioners in their organisations and agencies to recognise the needs of children, including protection from possible abuse or neglect. Designated practitioner roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Practitioners should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision, and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively
- safe recruitment practices and ongoing safe working practices for individuals whom the organisation or agency permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check
- appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training
- creating a culture of safety, equality, and protection within the services they provide

In addition:

- employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role
- staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and the procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare
- all practitioners should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they have knowledge, skills and expertise that improve over time

Organisations who took part from South Gloucestershire



Education providers and Early Years settings are not required to complete a section 11, as they have a statutory duty to complete the section 175 audit annually instead, this explains why they are not represented in this diagram.

Survey Responses

Are you aware of a person in your organisation with a lead role in safeguarding children?



When looking at all the responses across Avon & Somerset 7.8% answered no to this question. For those who work in South Glos the percentage was slightly lower at 6.5%.

Last year 90% of organisations rated outstanding for how they share information about the lead safeguarding role and 10% good. There was a recommendation that this information should be included in induction, as 75% organisations reported that they include this information in their induction

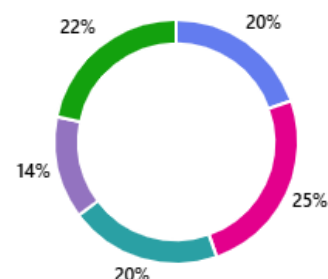
process. Data by sector included below

Sector	% Yes	% No
Police	77	23
All health	98.3	1.7
Children's Services	89.2	10.8
Voluntary	100	0
Youth Justice	100	0
Avon Fire	100	0
Prison	100	0

How are you informed and updated on the person who holds the lead for safeguarding?

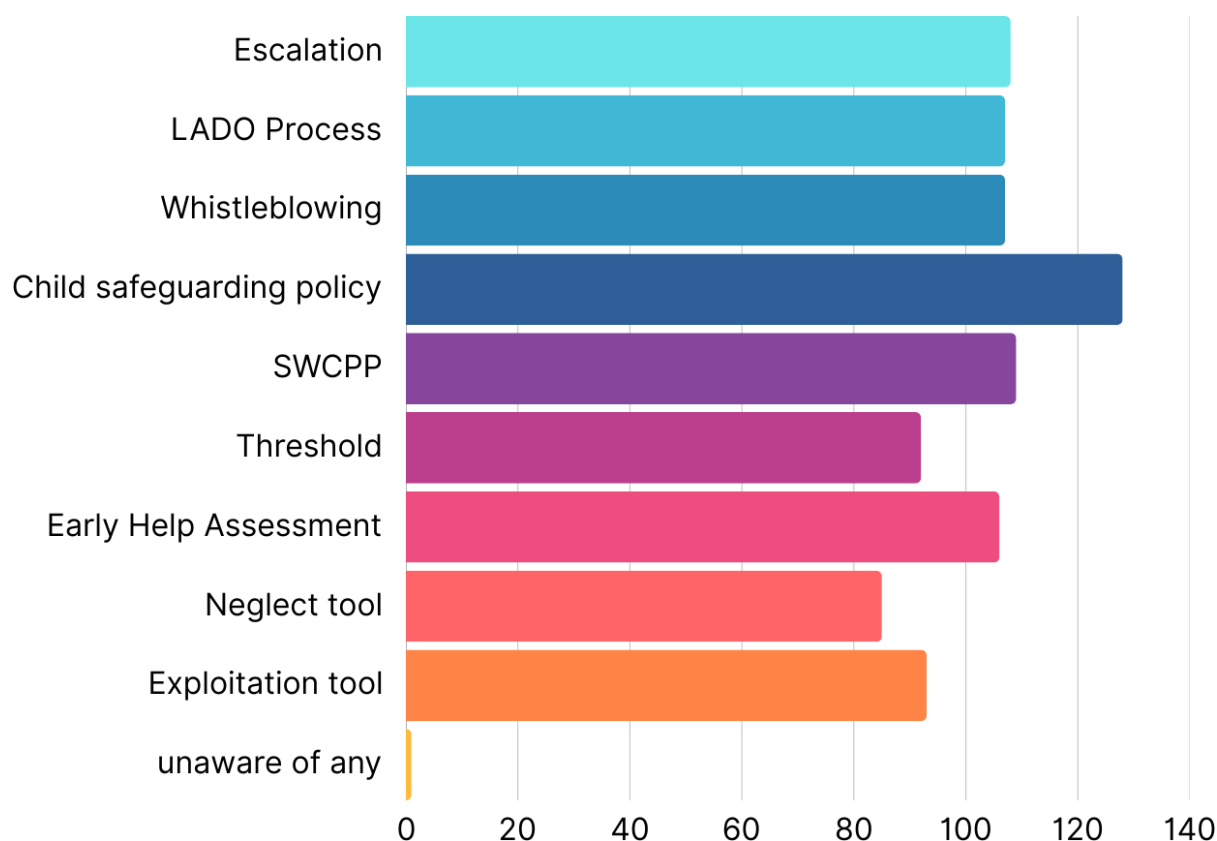
(select all that apply)

● Induction	280
● Supervision/team meetings/forums	359
● Training	288
● Agency Intranet/SharePoint/website	194
● Newsletters/emails/internal communications	311



Policies and Tools

Are you aware of the following policies and tools?



93% of all practitioners were aware of their organisation safeguarding policy. Those who were not aware came from Sirona, the police, Youth justice and children's services – however these were very small numbers.

79% were aware of the [South West Child Protection Procedures](#) (SWCPP), which is encouraging as this is a jointly funded set of procedures by children's partnerships across the region.

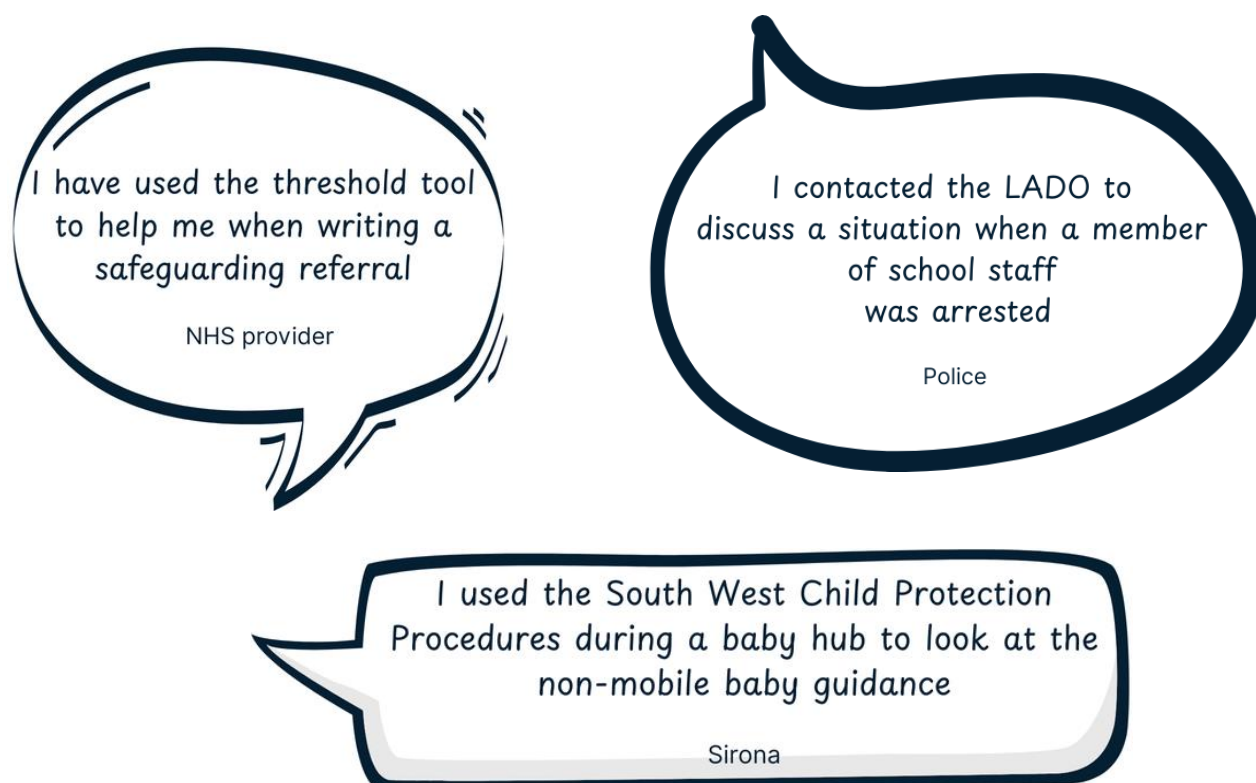
Of more concern is that 67% indicated that they are aware of [The Right Help in the Right Way at the Right Time](#), our threshold tool. The other tools with lower awareness are the neglect tool (62%) and the Exploitation Identification tool (67%) Both of these have been redesigned and are about to be relaunched at the time of writing (Feb 2025).

17% of practitioners described experiencing barriers to using the tools. These included 30% of practitioners who said they are hard to find, and a further 30% said that lack of time is a barrier.

Recommendation: The Children's Partnership to promote the threshold tool and accompanying Bitesize workshops.

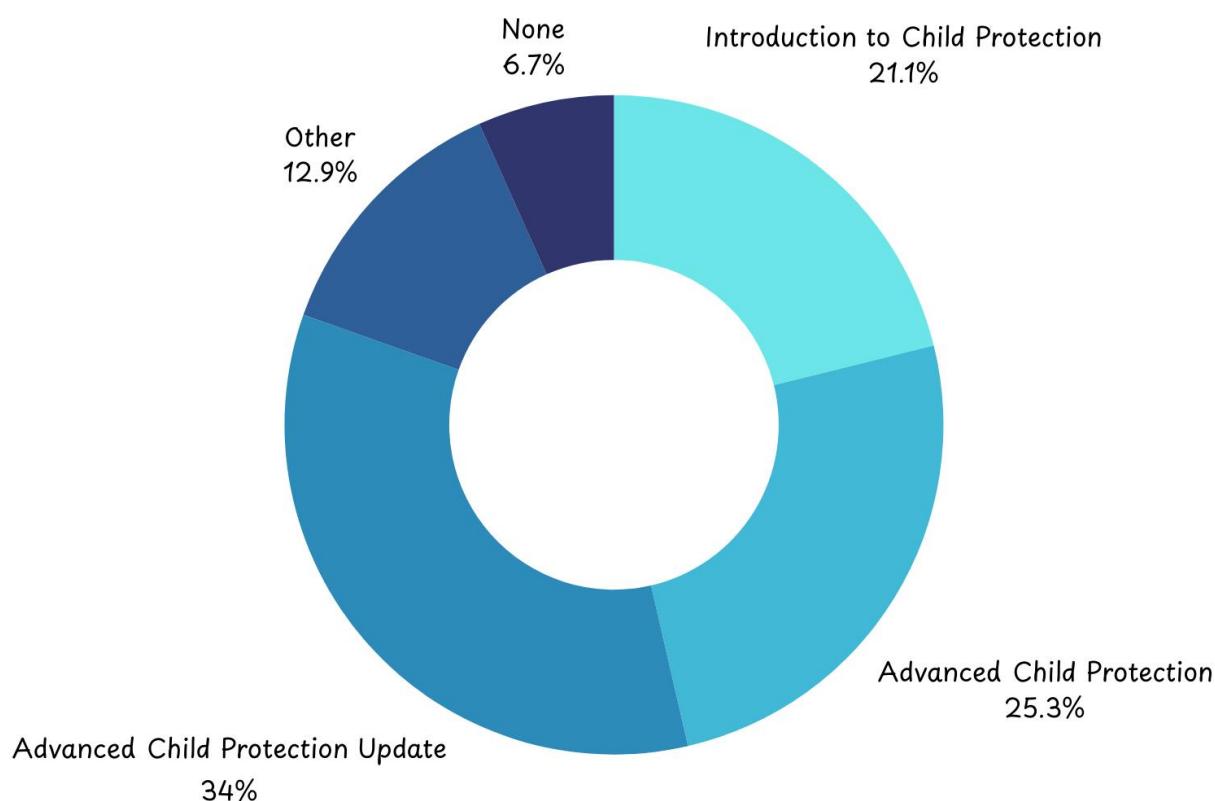
Recommendation: Promote the new Neglect tool and Exploitation Identification Tool when they are launched in Spring 2025 to increase practitioner awareness and monitor use.

Practitioners were asked to give examples of when they have used a tool or policy in their practice successfully.



Multi Agency Training

What Multi Agency Child Protection Training have you attended in the last year?

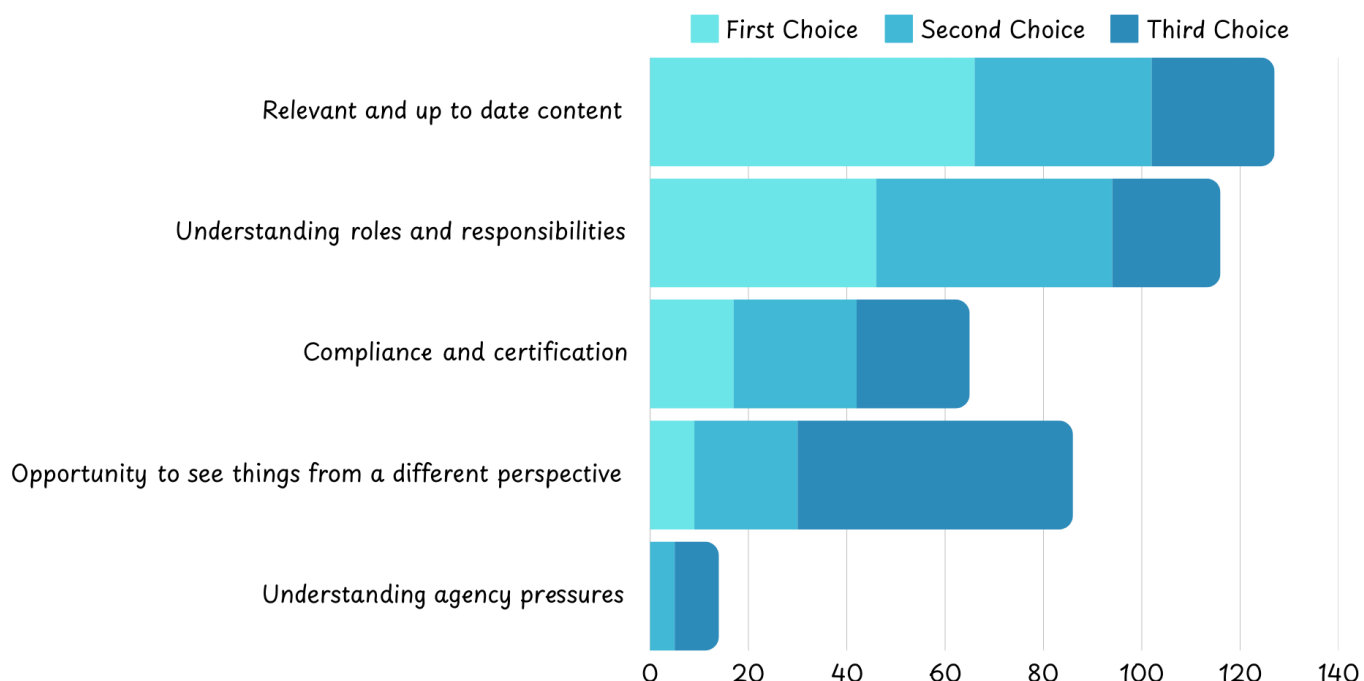


For those practitioners who responded to the survey who work in South Gloucestershire only 13 had not accessed any multi agency training in the last 12 months. This is encouraging because when organisations responded to the 2023-24 Section 11 there was a recommendation made about promotion of multi-agency training as it was not well understood and one third of organisations did not reference any multi agency training in their evidence. The practitioner responses indicated that over 93% have accessed some multi agency training which indicates that the offer of training provided by the partnership is reaching front line professionals even if their organisation are not aware of this at a strategic level. More work needs to be done to ensure that the programme is accessed by all those who need it and the offer is understood by all organisations working with children and families in South Gloucestershire.

What is important about attending multi agency training?

Practitioners were asked to rank the following themes in order of importance to them when attending multi agency training. Relevant and up to date content was the highest overall, and 66% of responses listed this as their first choice.

The table at the top of page 8 show the first three choices made by all South Glos practitioners.



Safeguarding Themes you would like to attend training on

- Child Neglect, support for using neglect tool
- Contextual Safeguarding, Serious Youth Violence, grooming, missing children, knife crime, county lines
- Online Harms, internet safety
- Sexual Abuse, managing disclosures of sexual abuse
- SEND, children with additional needs, physical disability, learning disability
- Children's mental health
- Parents with learning disability, parental mental health,
- Domestic abuse, child to parent abuse, so called 'honour' based abuse
- Working with trauma, PTSD
- Transgender children, gender sensitive practice

South Gloucestershire children's partnership is in the process of commissioning new Risk Outside the Home training and Serious Youth Violence training which will be available after April 2025. The 2025-26 business plan includes the recommendations from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel report ['I wanted them all to notice'](#). This includes a recommendation outlined below:

Safeguarding partners should undertake a multi-agency training needs assessment, to ensure that their practitioners are able to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in this area. This should include the achieving best evidence joint training. The response to this assessment may require multi-agency and single-agency training initiatives, in a range of formats, supported by evidence informed resources. They should additionally give specific attention to the role

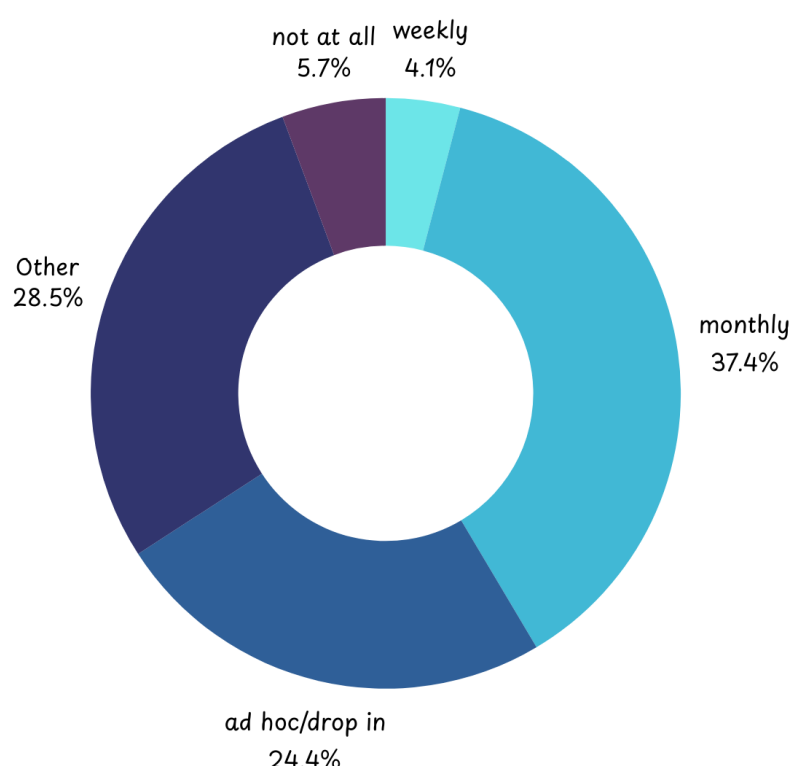
of schools, early years and other education settings and how they can identify and help children affected by child sexual abuse

This section 11 audit will form part of this training needs assessment, and the learning development sub group will take forward this recommendation and will also consider the other themes identified above.

Recommendation: Learning and Development sub group to undertake a further needs assessment and consider the themes identified in this section 11 audit

Supervision

How often do you have safeguarding supervision?



Those who indicated they do not have supervision were predominantly GPs.

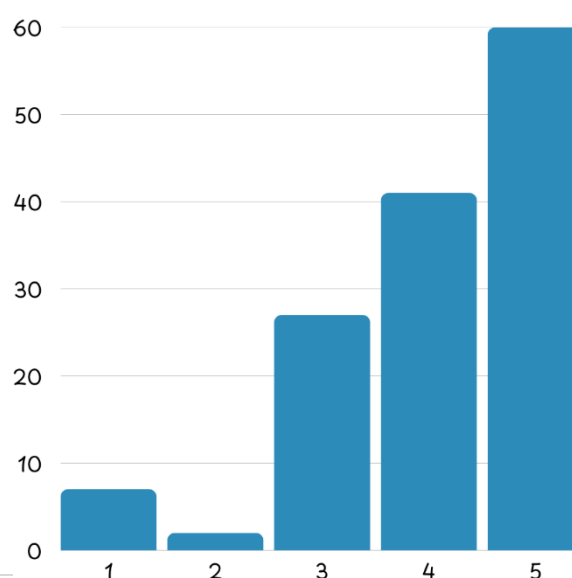
For those who answered 'other' the responses included bi-monthly, 6 weekly and quarterly.

In the last Section 11 audit (2023-24) organisations were asked about the supervision that is available to their staff. In that audit 80% of organisations reported that they provide monthly 1:1 supervision for their staff.

How satisfied are you with the quality of your supervision? (where 1 is not very satisfied and 5 is very satisfied)

For those who answered 1, this was predominantly because they do not receive supervision, rather than a comment on the quality of the supervision they receive.

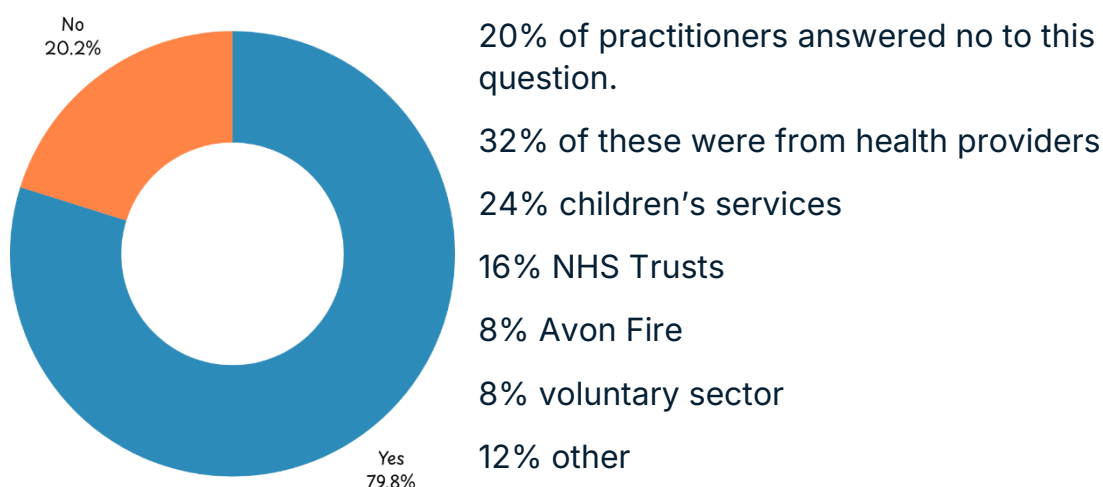
73% of responses scored a 4 or 5 for the quality of supervision they receive, this is a strength across the partnership.



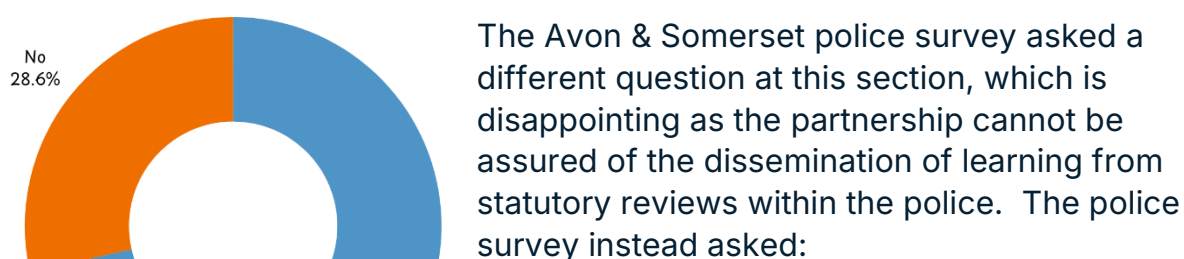
Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs)

In the last audit in 2023-24 organisations were asked to report how they know that learning from CSPRs is impacting practice. At this time 55% of organisations rated themselves as outstanding, 30% good, 5% requires improvement and 10% of organisations reported that CSPR learning was not applicable to them. These organisations were contacted directly to support their understanding of reviews and dissemination of learning.

In the 2024-25 audit practitioners were asked if they receive briefings or updates about local and national CSPRs.



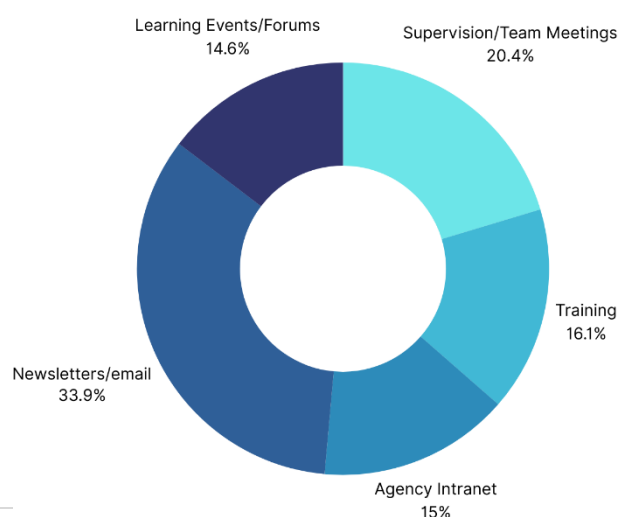
There remains a need to ensure that practitioners are receiving the learning from reviews for practice to change and improve.



Do you receive briefings or updates to help you be effective in safeguarding children?

The response to this is indicated in the chart with 28.6% answering no to this question.

This final chart shows how briefing and learning is shared – newsletters and email are the most common mechanism.



Can you give an example of how learning from a local or national Child Safeguarding Practice Review has impacted your practice?

Baby M - May 2023
We received a briefing which made me really mindful of my work with under 1s. Being aware to openly show curiosity with parents around any bruises/markings.

Family A -
Contacting fathers more

Considering Fathers in assessing risk - particularly in maternity services.

It has resulted in changes in practice - such as recent discussions around creating, using and maintaining formal escalation routes

I have set up a new group to share information, I have also included items from briefings in team newsletters.

Led to changes in policy & procedure based on learning outcomes

There was some training around professional curiosity and information sharing following the cases of Arthur and Star

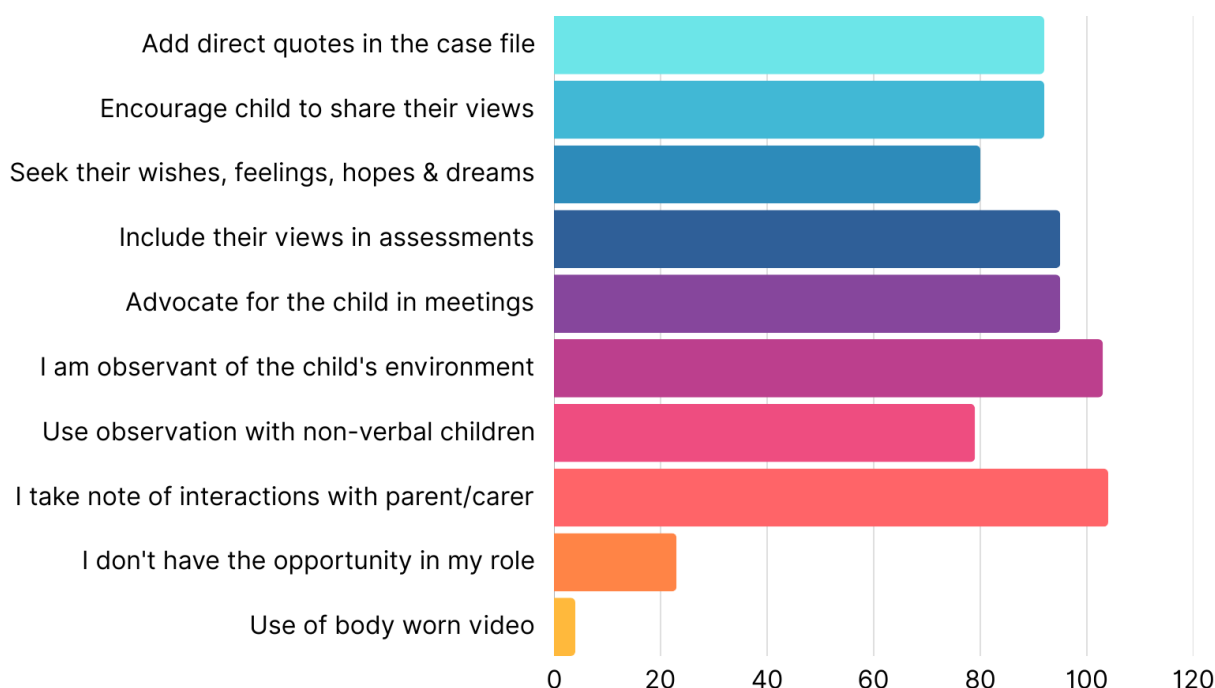
The language I use in recording especially in relation to care experienced children.

An example of this is the South Glos safeguarding website which has a self evaluation tool and checklist when working with father's or other important male role models or figures in a child's life, this can help develop a social worker's skills in being inclusive of father's and also how to support them in engaging with the process, getting their worries, views and perspective's across and how they can take on a more engaging role with their children or children who are important to them.

Hearing the Child's Voice

How do you ensure you understand and capture the baby/child/young persons lived experience as part of your regular practice?

A small number of respondents did not work in roles that have direct contact with children and so were unable to answer this in the same way. The questions for the police were slightly different to include the use of body worn cameras which are not relevant to other roles which explains why this is so much smaller than other options. Respondents could choose as many answers as they wanted that described what they do.



In the 2023-24 Section 11 self-assessment, 65% of organisations rated themselves as outstanding for being assured that practitioners were routinely capturing the views of children and 10% rated red – or requires improvement. The data captured directly from practitioners indicates that all of them who do direct work with children are trying in multiple ways to ensure they hear the child's voice, and this provides assurance for the partnership and individual organisations that this is an improving picture.

Please give an example of how you consider racial, ethnic and cultural identity and its impact on children and families' experiences?

Responses to this question were free text. Last year 55% of organisations told us that they have mandatory training in response to this theme. Very few practitioner responses mentioned this (7%).

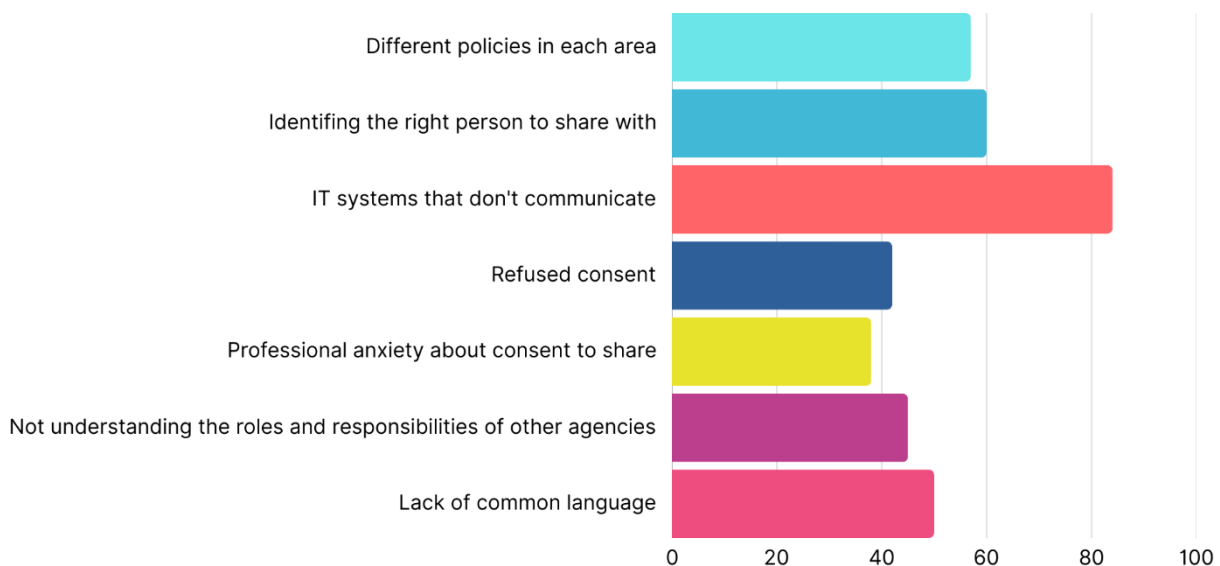
Key themes in response to this question are as follows:

- Recording of ethnicity accurately

- Providing information in different formats/languages
- Getting to know families and understanding what is important for them
- Making adaptations to meet cultural needs
- Social graces
- Acknowledging when you don't know something and asking
- Using translator services
- Unconscious bias, and being aware of privilege
- Being child centred
- Considering barriers because of past experiences
- Being mindful of when important cultural or religious days are

Information Sharing

What are the barriers you face to effective information sharing?



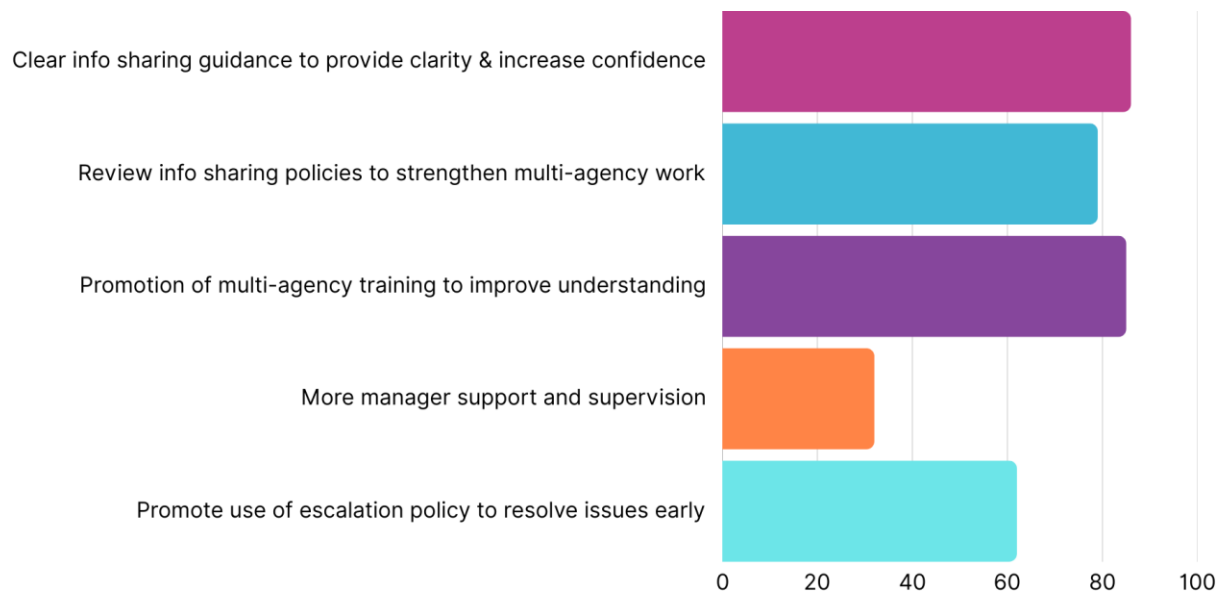
The pattern of answers from South Glos professionals mirrors exactly the responses across the region, 23% of all respondents in Avon & Somerset referenced IT systems. A piece of work needs to happen across the region to explore where our policies could be shared or aligned. Business managers across Avon & Somerset met in February 2025 and discussed information sharing protocols so this seems a sensible route to take this forward.

The 2023-24 Section 11 audit identified that 90% of organisations have an information sharing policy, and so this issue is wider than a shared multi agency policy, as practitioners are also navigating single agency policies.

What would support you to share information more effectively?

Practitioners were also asked what would support them with more effective information sharing. The responses here mirror those given by organisations in the last audit. South Gloucestershire is introducing a new bitesize information

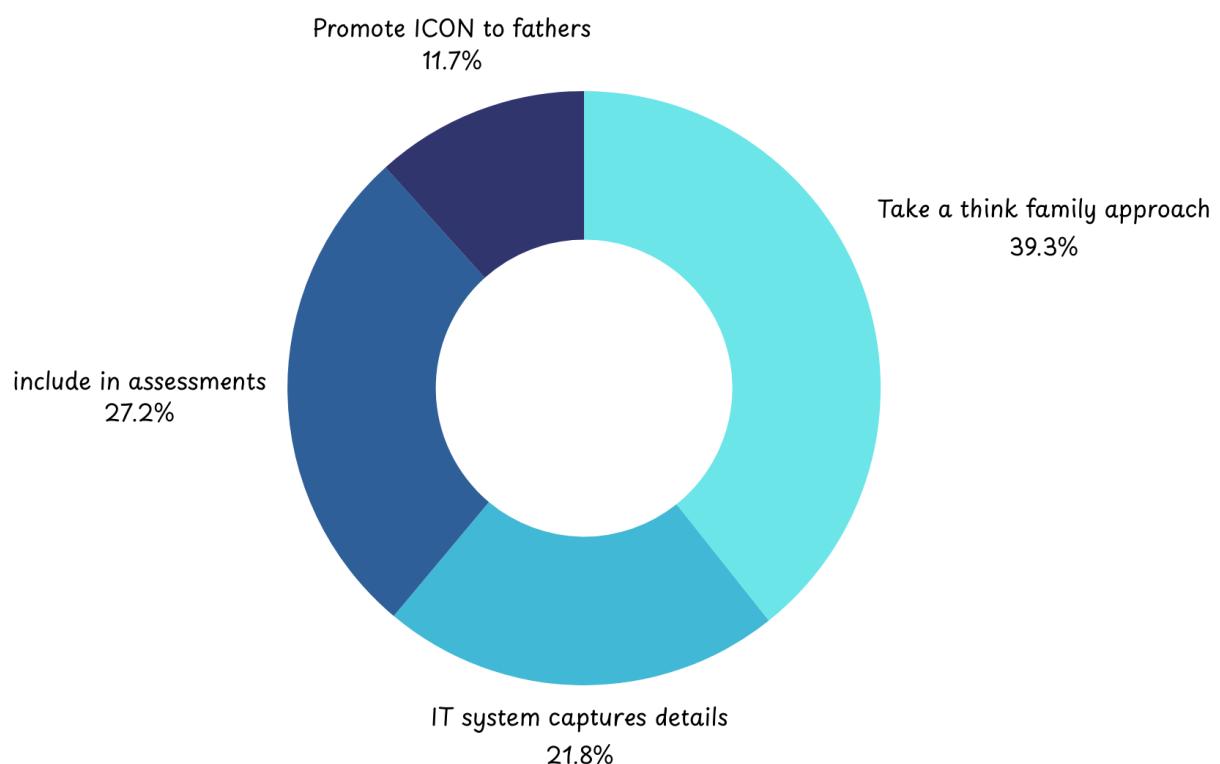
sharing workshop of practitioners who work with either adults or children and the aim of this session is to improve professionals legal literacy and provide clarity about good information sharing practice.



Recommendation: Explore alignment/shared information sharing policies and protocols across Avon & Somerset.

Thematic Questions

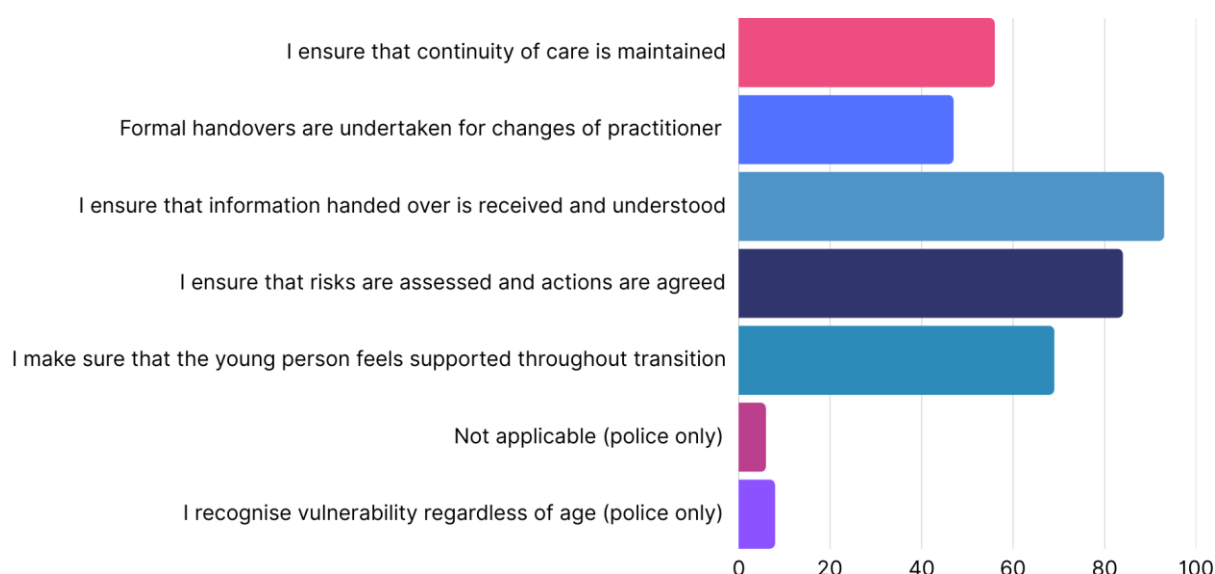
How do you ensure the voices of fathers/male carers/non-resident parents are heard within your work with families?



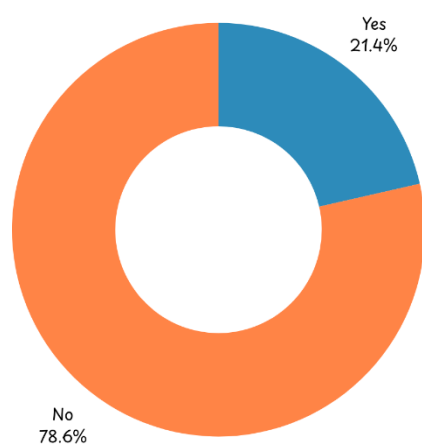
South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership has had a priority about working with fathers throughout this year. As part of this the Best Start in Life workstream produced a working with fathers self-assessment and this was presented and launched at a partnership stakeholder event. The partnership also promoted the multi-agency regional ICON¹ training so it is good to see this reflected in the responses.

How do you ensure smooth transition for children and families?

For this question there was a slight variation of questions for the police due to the nature of their roles. Practitioners could select as many options as were relevant and although the crucial sharing of information and risk assessments score highly it is disappointing that the most person-centred elements, of continuity of care (15%) and feeling supported (19%) scored lower. The quality assurance sub group has undertaken an audit about transition to adulthood in March 2025 and learning from this will be shared. A repeat audit jointly with the quality assurance sub group for the safeguarding adults board will also take place in early 2026 to review the findings and compare.



Do you use the neglect toolkit as part of your regular practice?

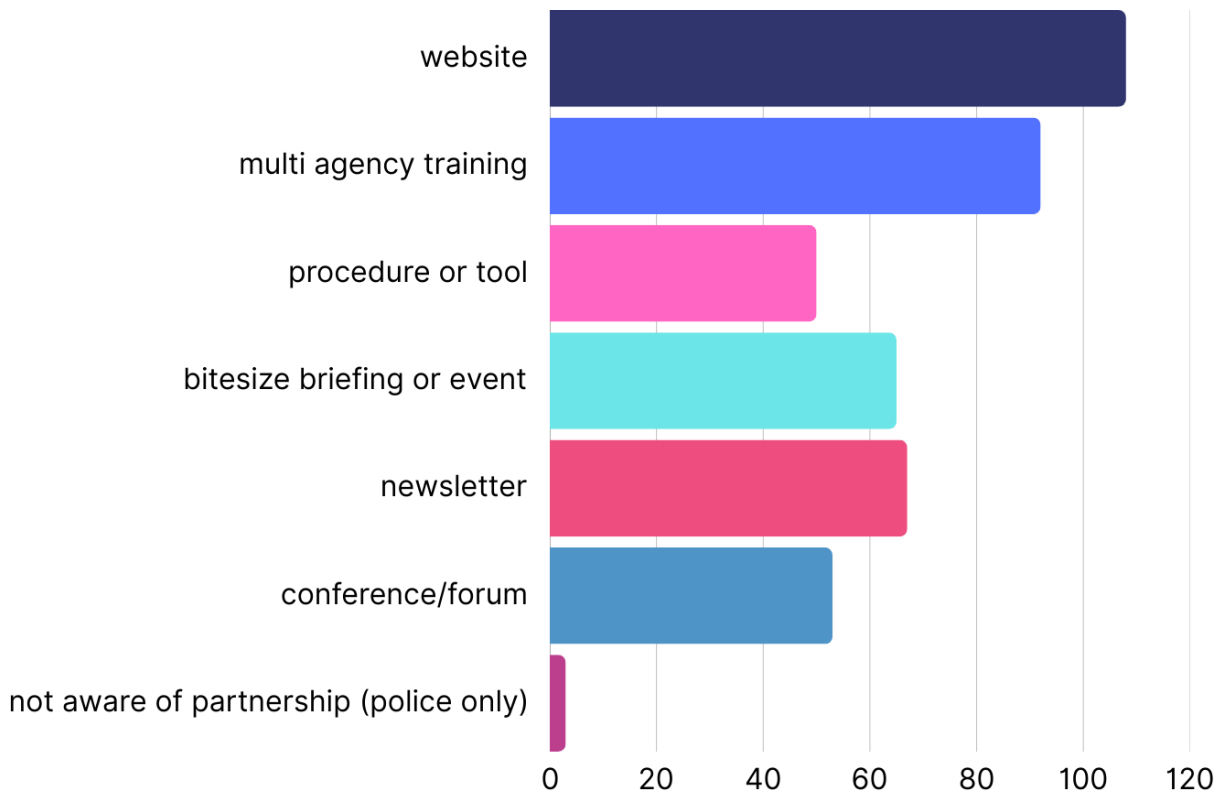


21.4% of practitioners said that they routinely use the neglect toolkit. Whilst this response is disappointing it is not surprising, and the children's partnership have redesigned the tool, and it is ready for a relaunch in Spring 2025. This data will be useful as a benchmark to seek assurance that the new tool is effective and being used by professionals. Neglect is our highest category for child protection plans.

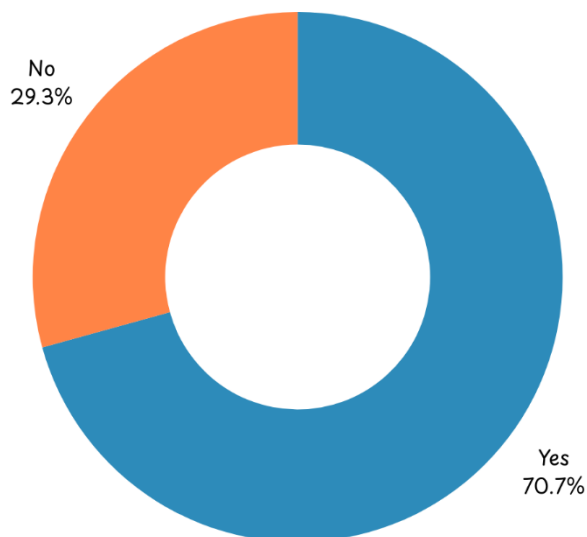
¹ [Home - ICON Cope](#)

Children's Partnership

Have you accessed your local safeguarding children partnership's:



Do you know how to contact/give feedback to your local children's partnership?



The children's partnership has recently changed the format of newsletters and practitioners are now able to sign up to receive this directly instead of having it shared by a manager. This has increased the distribution list by 20% since the format changed in December 2024 and since the survey for this Section 11 audit closed. Almost 30% of people do not know how to contact the partnership and this mirrors the regional picture, but it is encouraging that a high number of responses

indicated visiting the website where contact details are located.

Recommendations

Recommendation: The Children's Partnership to promote the threshold tool and accompanying Bitesize workshops.

Recommendation: Promote the new Neglect tool and Exploitation Identification Tool when they are launched in Spring 2025 to increase practitioner awareness and monitor use.

Recommendation: Learning and Development sub group to undertake a further needs assessment and consider the themes identified in this section 11 audit (I wanted them all to notice recommendation).

Recommendation: Explore alignment/shared information sharing policies and protocols across Avon & Somerset.

Recommendation: Consider including a practitioner survey going forward for Section 11 audits.

Appendix One

Question set

1. Which area of the Avon and Somerset region do you work in?
2. Organisation sector
3. Name of your department / team
4. Are you aware of a person within your organisation with a lead role in safeguarding children?
5. How are you informed and updated on the person who holds the lead role for your organisation on child safeguarding?
6. Are you aware of the following policies/tools - local areas may have slightly different titles, but all partnerships have all these documents
 - a. Escalation policy
 - b. Allegations Management (LADO)
 - c. Single agency whistleblowing policy
 - d. South West Child Protection Procedures
 - e. Threshold Document
 - f. Early Help Assessment
 - g. Neglect Toolkit
 - h. Child Exploitation Screening Tool
7. Are there any barriers to using these policies/tools?
8. Please explain what barriers prevent you from using these policies/tools
9. If you are able to, please provide an example of when you have used one of the policies/tools effectively in your practice
10. What child multi-agency safeguarding training have you completed in the last two years?
11. Please rank in order of importance what is most important to you about attending multi-agency training
 - a. Relevant and up to date
 - b. Understanding roles and responsibilities
 - c. Opportunity to see things from a different perspective
 - d. Compliance with my certification for my role
 - e. Understanding agency pressures
12. Are there any child safeguarding themes you would like to see training available to you on?
13. How often do you have safeguarding supervision?
14. How satisfied are you with the quality of your supervision - where 1 is not very satisfied and 5 is very satisfied
15. Please can you explain your rating?
16. Do you receive briefings or updates on learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews?

17. How do you receive briefings/updates?
18. Can you give an example of how learning from a local or national Child Safeguarding Practice Review has impacted your practice?
19. How do you ensure you understand and capture the baby/child/young persons lived experience as part of your regular practice?
20. Please give an example of how you consider racial, ethnic and cultural identity and its impact on children and families' experiences?
21. What are the barriers you face to effective information sharing?
22. What would support you to share information more effectively?
23. How do you ensure the voices of fathers/male carers/non-resident parents are heard within your work with families?
24. How do you ensure smooth transition for children and families?
25. Do you use the Neglect Toolkit as part of your regular practice?
26. Have you accessed your local safeguarding children's partnerships
 - a. Website
 - b. Multi agency training
 - c. Procedure or tool
 - d. Bitesize briefing/event
 - e. Newsletter
 - f. Conference/forum
27. Do you know how to contact or provide feedback to your local children's partnership?