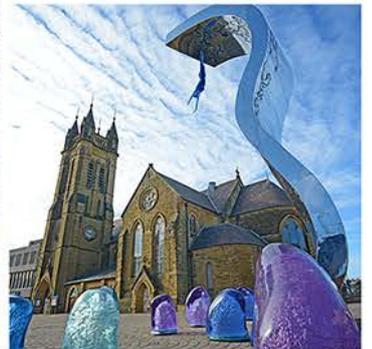


# Blackpool Council



# Safeguarding Annual Report 2014-15

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## Appendix 5 Quality Assurance Monitoring Form

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## Section 1: Foreword

### Introduction

The Safeguarding Team form part of the Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service that sits within Children's Services. This annual report relates specifically to the Safeguarding team, which is managed by the Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service Manager. The Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service Manager reports directly to the Principal Social Worker. (Please see Appendix 1).

The functions, responsibilities and priorities of the team are to ensure there is a robust provision for the management and quality assurance of the child protection process when children are made the subject of child protection plans, management of the Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) Business Manager (whilst actively being involved in the work of the BSCB) and the participation and engagement of children and young people via the work of the LAC Engagement Officer.

The functions and priorities of the service have been influenced over the last 12 months by the Improvement Plan formulated following the June 2012 OFSTED Inspection (Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children); the Ofsted Inspection of June 2014 (Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board) and the work of Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board.

Over the last 12 months there have been no organisational changes or personnel changes which have directly impacted on the service. There was only one change in line management in 2014-15, which involved the Child Protection Licensing Officer moving to be managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The Safeguarding Team consists of:

- 1 FTE Service Manager
- 3 FTE Safeguarding Chairs
- 0.5 FTE Safeguarding Chair
- 1 FTE BSCB Business Manager
- 0.6 FTE BSCB Training co-ordinator
- 1 FTE BSCB Administrator

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- 0.81 FTE Training Administrator
- 1 FTE LAC Engagement Worker

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) took over the regulation of social workers in England from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) on 1 August 2012. All professionals working within the Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service (with the exception of LAC Engagement Officer and BSCB staff) are qualified social workers and as such are registered with the HCPC. The BSCB Business Manager has a Diploma in Probation Studies which is a professional qualification.

In 2014-15 there were also changes in personnel. 1 PT Safeguarding Chair left the team, whilst 1 FT Safeguarding Chair went on Maternity Leave later in the year. Therefore during 2014-15 we had to engage support from agency workers to cover these absences when it took longer than expected to recruit to the PT post. This post was subsequently filled in January 2015. We were fortunate that the agency worker already working within the service took a temporary contract as a Safeguarding Chair to provide maternity cover.

There were also significant personnel changes within the BSCB Business Unit. In 2014, the BSCB Business Manager who had been in post for a number of years moved abroad. Although the post was quickly appointed too this did cause a level of instability within the BSCB Business Unit during the latter part of 2014. On a more positive note the part time role of BSCB Training was successfully filled after several years of being vacant.

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## Section 2: Purpose of Annual Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Safeguarding Team during the period from the 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015. This report will provide:

- A profile of children who are subject to Child Protection Plans in Blackpool.
- Information in relation to service performance and analysis.
- What we know about children's views with regard to how safe they feel at home.
- The views of parents about the child protection process, the impact and effectiveness of child protection plans.
- The views of professionals in relation to how well the child protection process is managed.
- Issues Resolution; where are we?
- Audit activity over the last 12 months.
- Priorities and Action Plan for 2015.

The report will be shared with staff across the service, with colleagues in the Children's Management Team and Children's Services Leadership Team to inform plans and service development and improvement. It will also be shared with partner agencies via the BSCB. .

The BSCB will also produce an Annual Report which will detail the work of the BSCB Business Unit. This will be presented at the BSCB Strategic Meeting.

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## Section 3: Legal Framework

Child protection legislation in use today stems from the Children Act 1989. This seminal piece of law enshrined the principle that the needs of the child should always be put first and that professionals should work with families to help keep children safe from harm. Following Lord Laming's enquiry into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié, the Government published the green paper 'Every Child Matters'. This formed the basis for 'The Children Act '2004.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010, which was updated in March 2013 and then again in March 2015, sets out the key roles and responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding Chairs and Local Safeguarding Children's Boards. This is the statutory guidance under which professionals within the Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service operate.

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## Section 4: Service Roles and responsibilities/Staffing Matters

### 4.1 Role of the Service Manager

The Service Manager has a number of core functions. These include the supervision of all team members (including IPA's), HR matters, Health & Safety and complaints. Regular Audit Activity on behalf of the Safeguarding Service. Attendance at a number of meetings including Children's Management Team meetings, Safeguarding, Quality and Review Team meetings, Solution Focused meetings, Multi-Agency Audit Group, Performance Management and Evaluations Group (BSCB), Child Death Overview Panel (plus associated meetings), CSE Sub-Group, CP/IS and Serious Case Reviews (Child Q). In addition the Service Manager has continued to chair the Multi-Agency Audit Group. The Service Manager also chaired the Shadow Improvement Board for the majority of 2014-15. This ended in January 2015 when this role was handed over to the Principal Social Worker, whilst the Service Manager took on the role of chairing the newly formed BSCB Shadow Board.

### 4.2 Role of the Independent Safeguarding Chair

The core purpose of the Independent Safeguarding Chair is to promote the development of a quality child protection services to the children of Blackpool and to quality assure the work undertaken within children's social care and our partner agencies. The main duties and responsibilities of the Independent Safeguarding Chair is to chair complex multi-agency meetings to ensure children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted in all circumstances; to develop outline child protection plans and monitor them robustly to ensure plans and arrangements are effective in addressing risk and need and improving outcomes. The 'Voice of the Child' and 'Child's Lived Experience' is central to this process.

### 4.3 Role of BSCB Business Manager

The role of the Business Development Manager is to support the Board's delivery of its Business Plan and the discharge of its statutory objectives. This role is undertaken in conjunction with the Independent Chair and through the planning and delivery of work undertaken within the Board's subgroup structures. They maintain the Board's Learning and Improvement Framework through the co-ordination of serious case reviews and other learning activities. The Business Development Manager ensures that the Board remains cognizant of national and regional developments in safeguarding through links with other networks. They additionally manage the training co-ordinator and thereby provide oversight to the multi-agency training programme provided by the Board.

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### **4.3 Role of LAC Engagement Officer**

The LAC Engagement Officer role is to champion meaningful participation activities across the service for children in Blackpool.

The LAC Engagement Officer should effectively engage with young people and others using Children's Social Care services to develop innovative and meaningful participation activities aimed at ensuring their views, opinions and experiences are listened to and influence policy and service development within Safeguarding.

The LAC Engagement Officer offers support, advice and guidance to colleagues on safe, appropriate and effective participation approaches tools and mechanisms.

Since coming into post in October 2013, the Engagement Officer has established an active and well attended children in care council , the councils are split into 3 groups Justuz Junior 5-10 years, Justuz 11 to 17 years and Justuz Flux 17years +. These groups regularly share their experiences and come up with ideas of how they think we can improve the support we offer.

Their views and opinions are taken seriously and the engagement officer regularly attends CMT to share the young people's views and action is agreed on.

The chair of the council attends the corporate parenting panel supported by the Engagement Officer.

They are now involved in the recruitment of all staff for children's services and deliver training on the skills to foster course.

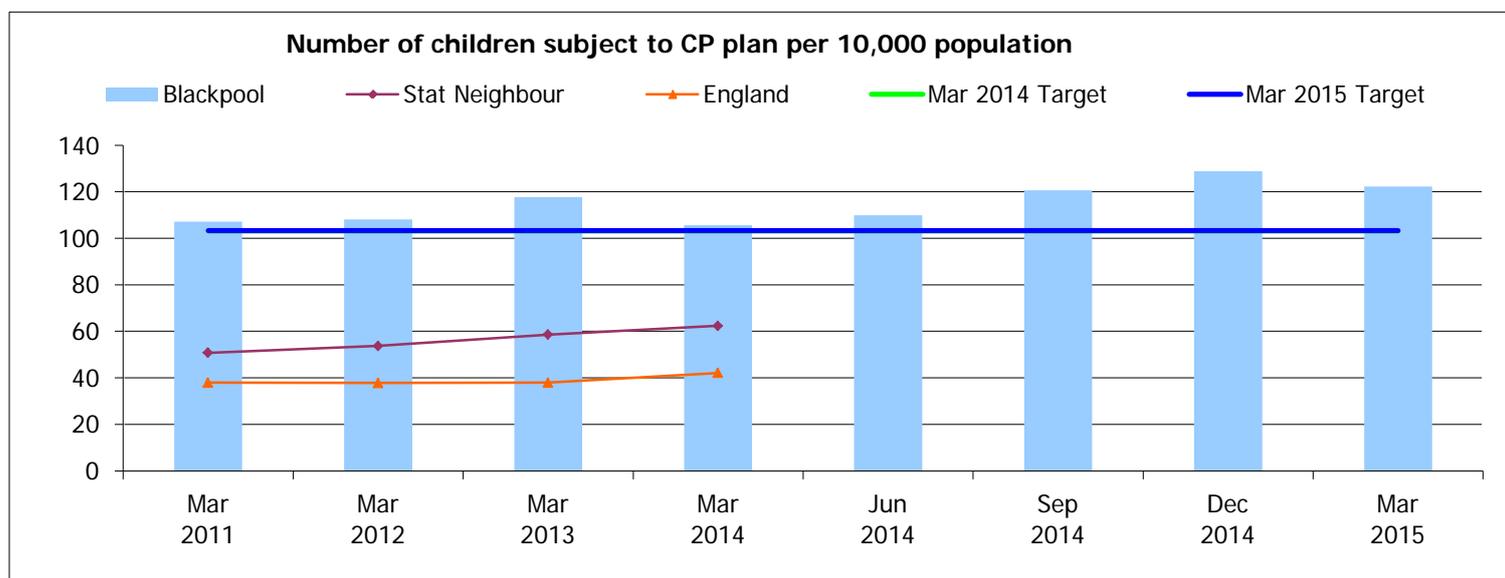
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## Section 5: Profile of Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan in Blackpool

### 5.1 Numbers of Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan

The high number of children subject to child protection plans, per 10,000 population is having a significant impact on the Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service and the wider partnership.

Code	Description																Better to be?
2023SC	Number of children currently subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 population																Low
Data	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015	
Number	313	316	336	307	315	320	319	315	354	350	348	357	374	343	339	355	
Rate	107.1	108.1	117.7	105.6	108.5	110.2	109.9	108.5	121.9	120.6	119.9	123.0	128.8	118.2	116.8	122.3	
Stat Neighbour	50.7	53.7	58.6	62.4													
England	37.9	37.8	37.9	42.1													



The number of children who are the subject to Child Protection Plans on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 was 355. Throughout 2014 – 2015 the number of children who were subject to Child Protection Plans increased and decreased throughout the year ranging from 307 children subject to plans in March 2014 to 374 in December 2014, down to 339 in February 2015 and increasing again to the current figure. There has been significant scrutiny on the number of children who are subject to Child Protection Plans through

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service management, the Improvement Board and Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board, as in Blackpool the number per 10,000 population has at points been almost double the figure of our statutory neighbours and triple the England average.

Over the last 2 years there have been a number of strategies put into place aimed at 'safely' reducing the number of children subject to child protection plans by the Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service, in partnership with Children's Social Care. This includes:

- A new process (in consultation with core group members) of ending child protection plans when a child becomes the subject of an Interim Care Order, Special Guardianship Order, Residence Order or 'looked after' under Section 20 of the 1989 Children Act.
- Holding 'Solution Focused' meetings with regard to children who have the subject of a child protection plan for over 12-18 months. This involves a meeting between Service Managers, Team Managers, Safeguarding Chair and Social Worker to explore barriers and options with regard to child protection planning.
- Increased scrutiny by the Safeguarding service aimed at ensuring that all cases being brought to Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) are appropriate.

Due to a sudden increase in children subject to plan in July and August 2014, the Service Manager for Safeguarding undertook an audit of all children who had been made the subject of plans during that period. (Please see Appendix 2).

The findings were as follows:

- In July and August 2014 there were 73 Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) of which 70 were placed on a Child Protection Plan. By comparison, in July and August 2013 there were 40 ICPC of which all 40 were placed on a CP Plan.
- In July and August 2014 there were 136 RCPC of which 41 were taken off a CP Plan. By comparison, in July and August 2013 there were 160 RCPC of which all 55 were removed from a CP Plan.

Therefore there were 30 extra children placed on Child Protection plans in 2014 compared to 2013 but 14 less children taken off Child Protection plans in 2014 compared to 2013. Out of the 71 cases considered 61 (**86%**) met the 'threshold' for a Child Protection Plan. However, in a number of these cases although the threshold was met for a Child Protection plan the auditor did question if this could have been prevented. In the auditors view 10 (**14%**) cases did not meet threshold for a Child Protection Plan.

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There were a number of reasons identified by the auditor regarding why the threshold for a Child Protection Plan was not met or Child Protection planning could have been prevented and a number of questions were posed and discussed with the Children's Management Team.

- Did children in 'Private Fostering' arrangements, where there are no identified concerns need to be subject to a CP Plan?
- Did children who were victims of CSE, with protective parents need to be subject to a CP Plan?
- Did children who were turning 18 prior to the next review conference need to be subject to a CP Plan?
- Did unborn babies where there are clear arrangements in place to accommodate (Section 20/ICO) immediately following birth need to be subject to a CP Plan?
- Are processes leading professionals to commence CP Planning prematurely?
- Are Social Workers undertaking robust, good quality 'Child & Family Assessments' prior to making the decision to go to a CP conference?
- Does there need to be a further audit of children who are being made the subject of CP Plans under the category of emotional abuse, given the number identified during this audit?

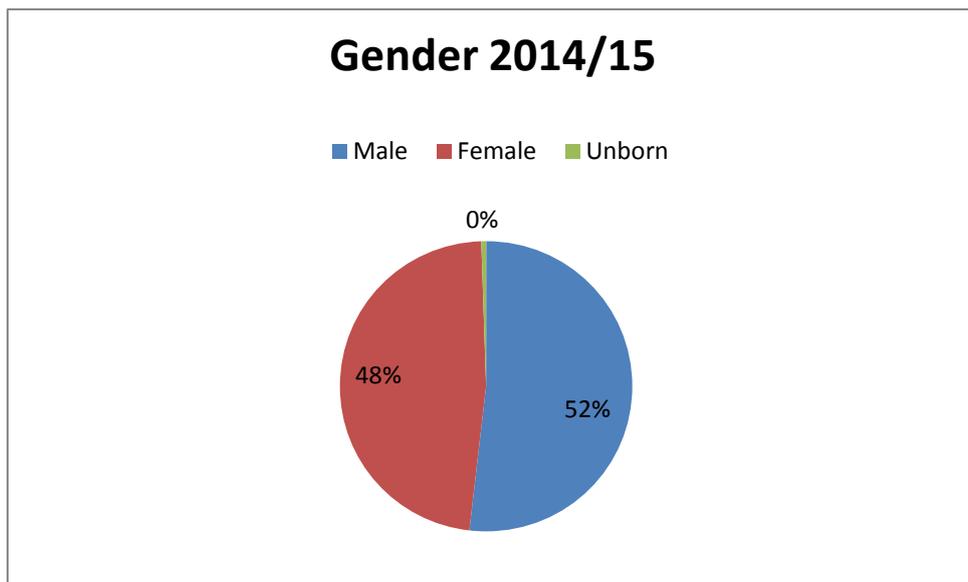
It was also identified that there may be other areas where processes could be improved:

- More consistency in following pre-birth procedures.
- Ensure consideration has been given to all children within a household where there are identified CP concerns.
- Tighten up the procedures of the cessation of the CP Plan when children are accommodated under Section 20 or made subject of an ICO.
- Where there is doubt with regard to threshold the Safeguarding Chair should be more robust in their decision making.

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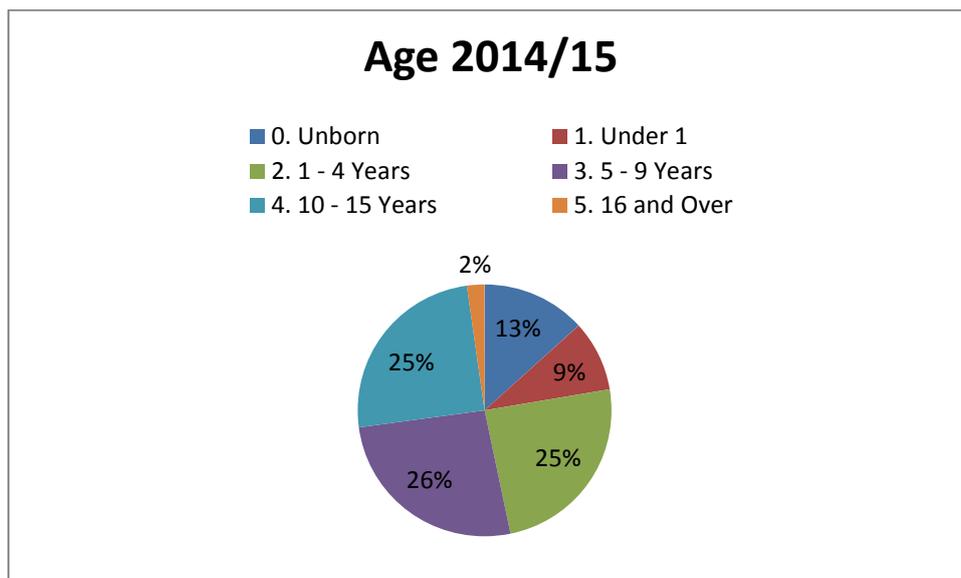
## 5.2 Gender



As in 2013-14 the gender of our children who become the subject of a Child Protection Plans is almost an 'even' split. Females account for 48% and Males 52%. There is of course no gender identified with regard to children who become subject to a Child Protection Plan pre-birth. Given the information detailed above it does appear that gender does not seem to be an issue, and both males and females in Blackpool are equally at risk of reaching the threshold for significant harm.

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### 5.3 Age



The age distribution of children when they become subject to a Child Protection Plan also appears to be 'even' across the age ranges, as was noted in 2013 - 14. However, there have been some changes with regard to the ages of children subject to Child Protection Plans which are worth noting. Firstly, there has been a 3.7% increase in the number of children under the age of one who are subject to plans, with the % equalling 22.4% in 2014-15. What may be of concern moving forward is the high number of pre-birth conferences being held which has resulted in 13.3% of unborn children being made subject to a plan. The point at which a child is born is often the most crucial in terms of decision making and risk due to the high level of care babies require which makes them more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Research by the NSPCC states:

'On average, the under ones are eight times more likely to be killed than older children, and nearly half of all serious case reviews are in relation to babies under one year.' (NSPCC **All babies count: prevention and protection for vulnerable babies: a review of the evidence**: NSPCC 2013)

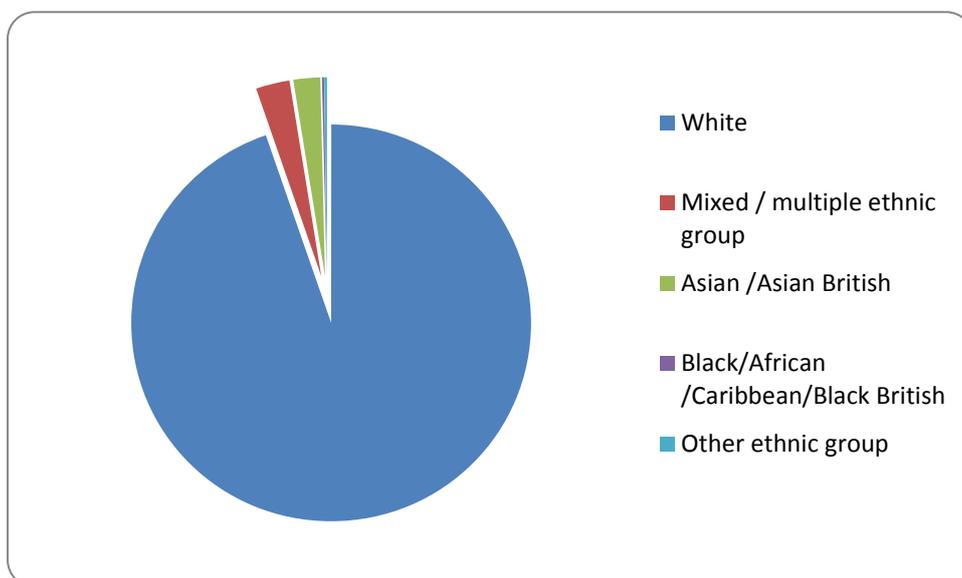
When children under the age of 1 and children aged 1 to 4 years are combined the total accounts for 46.8% of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan in 2014/2015. This is a slight increase from the 2013 -14 figure of 45.0%. Again, this is not unusual as child from birth to the age of 4 years are more likely to be abused and therefore be at risk of significant harm. This is due to the fact they are solely reliant on parents to meet their basic health and developmental needs, they are not in contact with professionals (e.g. school) on a daily basis and cannot physically or emotionally remove themselves from their situation. Due to the above I would expect this % to be high.

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The number of children aged 16 years and over who are subject to a Child Protection Plan has fallen in the last 12 months from 5.1% of the total number to 2.2%. It would be expected that children over the age of 16 years are less likely to be made the subject of a Child Protection Plan as they are by virtue of their age less likely to be a victim of abuse (with perhaps the exception of child sexual exploitation). The fact this number has reduced may suggest that there is more scrutiny with regard to making older children subject to plans. On the other hand, it would also suggest that the children being managed are on plan in 2014-15 by virtue of their age were more vulnerable than those subject to Child Protection Plans in 2013-14.

## 5.4 Ethnicity

### Blackpool Population (Children aged 0 – 17 years)

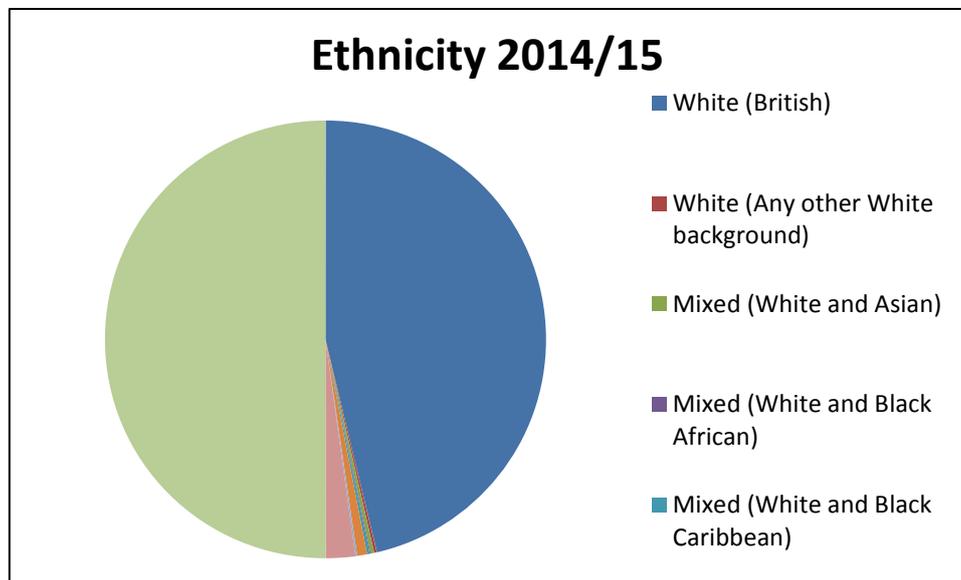


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All Ethnic Groups	All Ethnic Groups	White	Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	Asian/Asian British	Black/African/Caribbean Black British	Other Ethnic Groups
Number of 0-17 years	28,853	27,326	792	624	49	62
Percentage of 0-17 years	100%	94.7%	2.7%	2.2%	0.2%	0.2%

Information provided by Blackpool Corporate Support on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015.(CIN Census 2011)

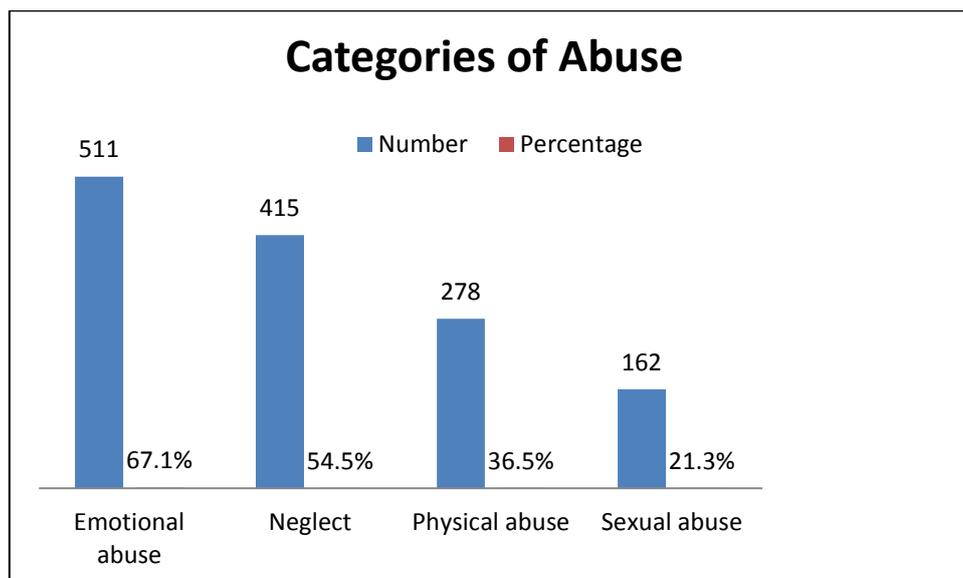
## Children subject to Child Protection Plans



When considering the ethnicity of all children aged 0 -17 years in Blackpool and comparing the numbers who become the subject of Child Protection Plans, there are no outstanding features. 92.5% of children are recorded as 'White British', which reflect the overall % of 'White British' children in Blackpool.

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### 5.5 Category of Abuse



When children are made the subject of a Child Protection Plan attendees from a range of statutory and non-statutory agencies agree a category of abuse. This can be one or a combination of the following categories; Physical, Sexual, Emotional abuse or Neglect. In some local authorities children can only be made subject to one category of abuse. However, in Blackpool it has been agreed by the Safeguarding Service that the categories of abuse, should cover the abuse the child is deemed to be suffering therefore ensuring that professionals and parents are very clear about the concerns of the local authority.

Last year (2013-14) the majority of children, 53.5% are the subject of a Child Protection Plan due to neglect. This year 67.1% of children are on a Child Protection Plan under the category of 'Emotional Abuse'. Working Together 2013 states:

*'The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's development...It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.'* (Working Together 2013)

This is a significant shift and would suggest that the number of children living in households in Blackpool where 'domestic abuse' has been identified as a risk factor has increased.

Blackpool has a specialist team named Catalyst who deal specifically with cases of domestic abuse where there are concerns regarding the welfare of children. The majority of referrals into Children's Social Care come from the Police in relation to domestic abuse incidents.

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*'In Blackpool, 96.7 women per 10,000 adult female population are at risk of suffering high levels of domestic abuse, this is a 40% increase on 2010/2011 figures. This figure is over 2.5 times the Lancashire average figure of 36.8 and nearly 4 times the national average of 26.3.'* (CSNA 2012-13)

It has been identified via the BSCB (Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board) Multi-Agency Audit Group (MAAG) that Blackpool has a good range of resources to support females who are the victims of domestic abuse, but gaps have been identified in the services offered to the perpetrators of abuse, often male. This is in the process of being addressed by the BSCB and a project group has been set up to launch a pilot programme for the perpetrators of domestic abuse in 2015. If this pilot is successful you would hope that the number of children on a plan under the category of emotional abuse will start to decrease.

The number of children on a Child Protection Plan for 'Neglect' also remains high at 54.5%. A 1% increase on last year's figure, but a stable figure. However, again this remains higher than the national figure reported by the NSPCC of 42.0% (31 March 2013). Neglect is defined as:

*'The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment to the child's health or development'* (Working Together 2013)

The 'Blackpool Context' 2015 does lend some insight into the issues facing children in Blackpool:

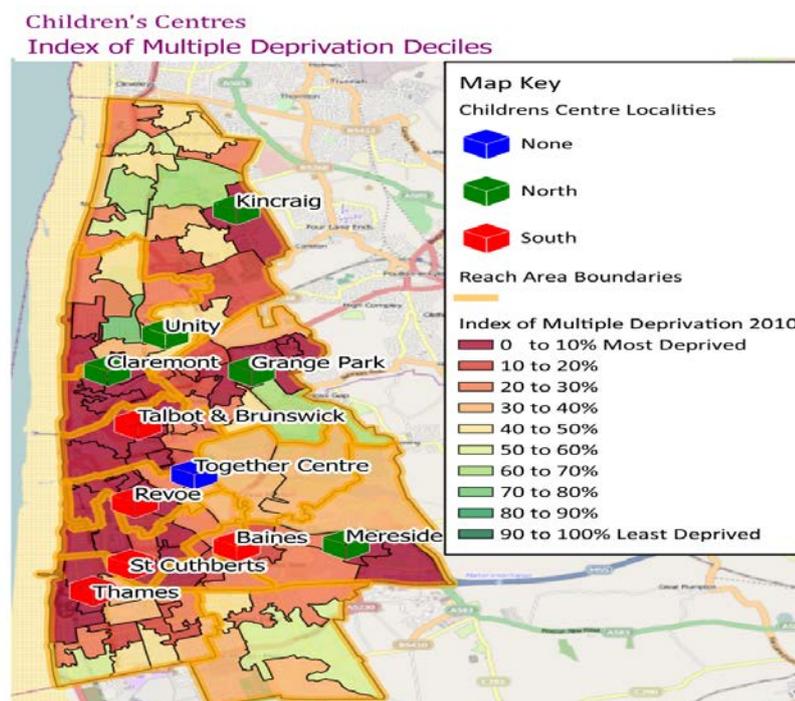
'Blackpool has a large proportion of residents living in deprived areas and is currently ranked the 6th most deprived authority in England under the Indices of Deprivation 2010 – a higher rank than in 2007 (12<sup>th</sup>) and 2004 (24<sup>th</sup>) Additionally, in the 2010 Indices, Blackpool ranked 1st for the concentration of deprivation.

Map 1 below shows the relative positions of local areas in Blackpool. Around half of Blackpool's 94 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's - An LSOA is a small area of approximately 1500 residents), are in the most deprived 20% of all LSOAs in England. Specific areas in the central wards of Talbot, Bloomfield, Brunswick, Claremont and the outer wards of Clifton and Park have the highest ranked levels of deprivation in Blackpool. Poverty is also a significant factor in Blackpool. In 2012, 29.3% of children in Blackpool were estimated to be in poverty, compared to 18.6% of all children in England. Further analysis highlights that 67% of children in poverty live in lone parent families<sup>1</sup>.

There are strong relationships between deprivation and a range of social issues and as a continued effort to address inequalities, Blackpool has launched a Fairness Commission. The Commission is made up of a range of local people representing different organisations which will explore social and other inequalities in depth and make recommendations for further improvements. 2012 also saw the

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introduction of a Child Poverty Framework aimed at reducing the levels of children in low income families and providing support for families' currently in financial difficulty.'



The issue of neglect has and continues to be a high priority for all agencies working with children and families in Blackpool. Again Neglect was the subject of a MA Audit in October & November 2014. The MAAG considered two cases which involved children who had suffered neglect over a sustained period of time and had been subject to child protection plans for over 12 months.

In both cases the signs of neglect were clearly identified, and there was a wealth of information on agency records about what 'neglect' looked like in these two households. Child Protection processes had been followed. It was agreed that agency records detailed significant events but they did not demonstrate that professionals working with the family fully understood the parent's history and how this would impact on their ability/motivation to change.

In both cases it was agreed that both children were experiencing poverty. This was despite evidence that parents were in receipt of welfare benefits and evidence of additional money/resources being constantly provided to the families by agencies. Efforts to address this via budgeting skills/advice were to no avail. The lack of progress centred upon parents willingness to engage with professionals and the services provided. The words 'inconsistent', 'defensive', 'aggressive', 'hostile' and 'obstructive' were

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often used to describe parental attitudes to services. This made engagement difficult at the best of times and almost impossible at others, and was identified as being one of the main barriers to enable change.

It was identified that there was evidence of 'start again' syndrome and that agencies were constantly addressing the symptoms of neglect but not the cause.

However, the most concerning aspect of this audit was that despite high levels of agency involvement and resources being in place, there appeared to be no positive impact on the children.

The Multi-agency audit was presented to the BSCB and a number of recommendations were agreed. Neglect is one of the BSCB priorities and as such a 'Neglect Sub-Group' has been set up to focus on this difficult area.

There may be a concern that the number of children who are subject to a child protection plan under the category of sexual abuse has increased over the past 12 months from 19.2% to 21.3%. This is more in line with National Statistics, as the NSPCC estimate that 24.1% of young adults have experienced sexual abuse (including contact and non-contact), by an adult or by a peer during childhood (Radford et al, 2011).

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### 5.6 Children subject to Temporary Child Protection Plans

Children who are the subject of Child Protection Plans in another area often come to Blackpool to stay as a permanent resident or whilst on holiday.

Blackpool is a seaside holiday resort. As such there can be a number of children who are the subject of temporary child protection plans at any one time.

Last year this appeared to 'peak' in the Easter, Summer Holidays and at Christmas.

At Date	Temporary CP Plan
30.04.14	32
31.05.14	23
30.06.14	27
31.07.14	17
31.08.14	36
30.09.14	37
31.10.14	21
30.11.14	20
31.12.14	25
31.01.15	11
28.02.15	11
31.03.15	7

Children who move with their families to Blackpool often move into a number of 'temporary' accommodation options when they first arrive; friends, family, guest houses, short stay holiday flats or homeless accommodation. Blackpool operates a 'Transfer In' Procedure alongside its Pan-Lancashire colleagues, which states that when a family moves into temporary accommodation a 'Transfer In Conference' will not be held until they have been resident in the area for 3 months, unless they move into permanent accommodation sooner. Given, Blackpool has an abundance of holiday accommodation and affordable housing this policy dissuades other authorities from placing families in Blackpool when they have no familial ties to the area. Whilst immediate child protection concerns will be addressed via the duty and assessment team it does hopefully prevent families from moving from one locality to another, having a change of social worker each time they move, thus leading to further drift in child protection planning.

To ensure that children do not fall through the 'gaps' in the system whilst they are subject to temporary child protection plans, the Safeguarding Administration Officer regularly audits the list of children

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subject to temporary plans. Likewise, once a month the Service Manager for Safeguarding, Quality and Review will audit the list and make direct contact with any authority where the plan for the child is not clear.

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## Section 6: Child's Voice

It is essential that we have a good understanding of what the child's view and wishes are when they are on a child protection plan, explain fully what we do, what their plan is and how this will impact on their family so that they feel valued and listen to.

Each child or young person on a children protection plan has the opportunity to complete a conference pack. This pack is split in two documents one for initial child protection conference and another for the review conference. There are also two separate designs to ensure they are age appropriate, one for children age 5 to 10 years and one for 11 to 18 years.

The social worker is required to support the child/ young person to complete this pack prior to each conference so that their views can be represented at conference.

In April 2014 to March 2015

<b>Age 5-10</b>	<b>Completed Conference Pack</b>	<b>Not Completed Conference Pack</b>
	116	382
	23.29%	76.71%
<b>Age 11-18</b>	<b>Completed Conference Pack</b>	<b>Not Completed Conference Pack</b>
	89	369
	19.43%	80.57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total Completed</b>	<b>Total Not Completed</b>
	205	751
	21.44%	78.56%

A sample of these completed conference packs were looked at to ascertain how children and young people used the packs and how they enable them to get their views across to us in clear and concise way whilst giving us the information we require.

Most of the packs were not completed fully, often leaving questions blank, however when the questions were answered the responses appeared to be honest and open. Some children and young people were able to identify the risk to them and other family members and they could also identify some changes that needed to happen. However very few could identify positive changes that had taken place in the family home since being subject to a child protection plan and this question was often left blank. There

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were some examples of good practice with social workers using stickers to reward and encourage younger children to complete the packs and social worker helping to write their responses for them.

Some questions were found to be too open which led children and young people to give information that was important to them but not relevant to their child protection plan.

Some children/young people did express concerns about being taken in to care and there appeared to be some lack of understanding as to why Children's Social Care was involved in their lives.

Social workers are still printing the packs out in black and white therefore are potentially not visually appealing to children, this also causes problems when the copies are uploaded onto the child's/young person's file in black and white as the majority are difficult to read as the copies are of poor quality.

### **6.1 Voice of Child Framework**

The packs inform the children and young people that their Safeguarding Chair will write to them following conference to explain what decisions were made at their family's conference. There was some evidence of Safeguarding Chairs completing their comments at the back of the pack however again this wasn't consistent on all.

#### **Recommendations**

- A consultation with children/young people, social workers and Safeguarding Chairs will take place and the conference packs will be redesigned with clearer guidance for social workers on how to use the packs so that we can obtain better quality information.
- The packs will be shortened and made more visually appealing to help social workers encourage children and young people to complete them.
- The booklets will be printed and uploaded in colour so they are easy to read and accessible on the system.
- The new packs need to show the process in a way that is clear and understandable and highlights the positive changes when made.
- The information leaflet Children and Young People Guide to Child Protection Conferences needs will be updated and distributed to all children.

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- Safeguarding Chairs need to be consistently writing to children/young people to thank them for their comments, explain to them what decisions were made at conference and why and what happens next.

### 6.2 Advocacy

Blackpool Children's Services commissions the National Youth Advocacy Service (Nyas), which covers a number of areas of work within Children's Social Care. As part of this agreement professionals (with the child's consent) or children and young people themselves can make a request for advocate support at Child Protection Conferences. It was identified in the 2013-14 Annual Report that this area of work needed to be strengthened. The Service Manager for Safeguarding met with representatives from Nyas during the last 12 months. A referral process to Nyas was agreed with managers in September 2014.

Since September 2014, 35 children over the age of 10 have been referred to Nyas prior to the ICPC. Out of the **35** referrals made Nyas have represented children's views at 6 Child Protection Conferences either via report (1) or by attending on the child's behalf with a report (5).

The remaining **29** referrals have not proceeded for a number of reasons:

- In **7** cases the service was declined by the child/young person, 2 of these following a visit by Nyas.
- In **5** cases the service was declined by the allocated Social Worker. It should be noted it is not appropriate for the Social Worker to decline the service. Nyas was advised that if this occurred they should contact the Service Manager for Safeguarding who would speak with the allocated worker. As such the service has not been declined by the Social Worker since November 2014.
- In **9** cases Nyas were unable to contact the Social Worker (5) and/or parent (4) to make arrangements to visit the identified child. A process has now been put in place with Nyas to escalate this to the Service Manager for Safeguarding if Social Workers cannot be contacted.
- In **6** cases Parents declined the service.
- In the final **2** cases the ICPC did not proceed.

(Full Report - Appendix 3)

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It has been agreed that the service will continue to be commissioned via NYAS over the next 12 months. I would therefore hope that more children will be independently represented or supported by NYAS or a similar organisation at Child Protection Conferences.

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## Section 7: Parent's Voice

During 2014-15 there has been one audit with regard to parental participation in Child Protection Case Conferences, the purpose being to enable us to better understand what their experience was like, what we are doing well and what areas we need to improve. This audit was carried out from May - October 2014 and involved parents completing a questionnaire following a Child Protection Case Conference. It was agreed that this would be distributed to parents during the second week of every month (at both initial and review).

### 7.1 What Parents tell us about the Service?

In total 26 parents/carers completed the questionnaire (ICPC = 5 and RCPC = 21). In twenty three out of twenty six cases (88.0%) the Safeguarding Chair met with parents prior to the conference. It should be noted that the Safeguarding Chair met parents in all five ICPC's. In two cases the parents could not be identified. In the respect of the third case there is no record of the Safeguarding Chair meeting with the parent/s. Safeguarding Chairs are aware of the need to carry out this important task.

Twenty five out of twenty six participants (96.0%) advised that they had had the opportunity to express their views in relation to the concerns, demonstrating that Safeguarding Chairs consistently engage with parents during the conference and give them ample time to express their views, so they feel that they have been listened too. This accounted for five out of five (100%) in respect of ICPC's and twenty out of twenty-one in Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPC's). In one case where the response was negative the respondent recorded that '*some of them*' I assume that they felt they were able to share their views some of the time.

Twenty five out of twenty six participants (96.0%) also felt that they had been listened too during the conference process. Again this accounted for 100% in respect of ICPC's. In one case the respondent did not complete the questions which has affected the overall percentage.

In both areas detailed above improvements have been made since the last audit with an increase from 73.0% to 96.0% which is very positive, particularly given the contentious nature of the subject matter.

In the majority of cases parent/s stated they knew what 'needed to change', which indicates that the Safeguarding Chairs are very clear about the child protection issues and what the expectations of parent/s are throughout the whole conference process.

One of the questions participants were asked also to respond to was whether or not the Safeguarding Chair met with them at the end of the meeting. In twenty four out of twenty six cases (92.0%) the Safeguarding Chair did meet with parents after conference. This may have been in order to clarify issues

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raised in conference or to advise parents/carers as to what would be happening next. In one case the question was left blank.

Whilst the majority of participants did not want to comment and how the process had been for them and their family, nine out of the twenty six participants did state they would like share information. However, only four made written comments.

*'Help and Information is given in abundance'*

*'It helps the family a lot'*

*'Stressful'*

*'It has been really upsetting for all of us'*

As you can see from the comments above child protection case conferences evoke a mixed range of responses from parents, some positive and some negative.

Participants in this audit did not comment on how the service could be improved in the future. This is disappointing as I am sure there are many ways in which we can improve the service to improve parental participation.

The report was shared at the Children's Management Team Meeting.

Area to consider:

- Is the current audit process capturing the information we require to improve services for parents?
- What are the barriers for Social Workers in sharing reports with parents prior to conferences?
- How do we ensure conferences and core groups take place at a time when parents can attend?
- Safeguarding Chairs need to consistently meet with parents prior and after conference?

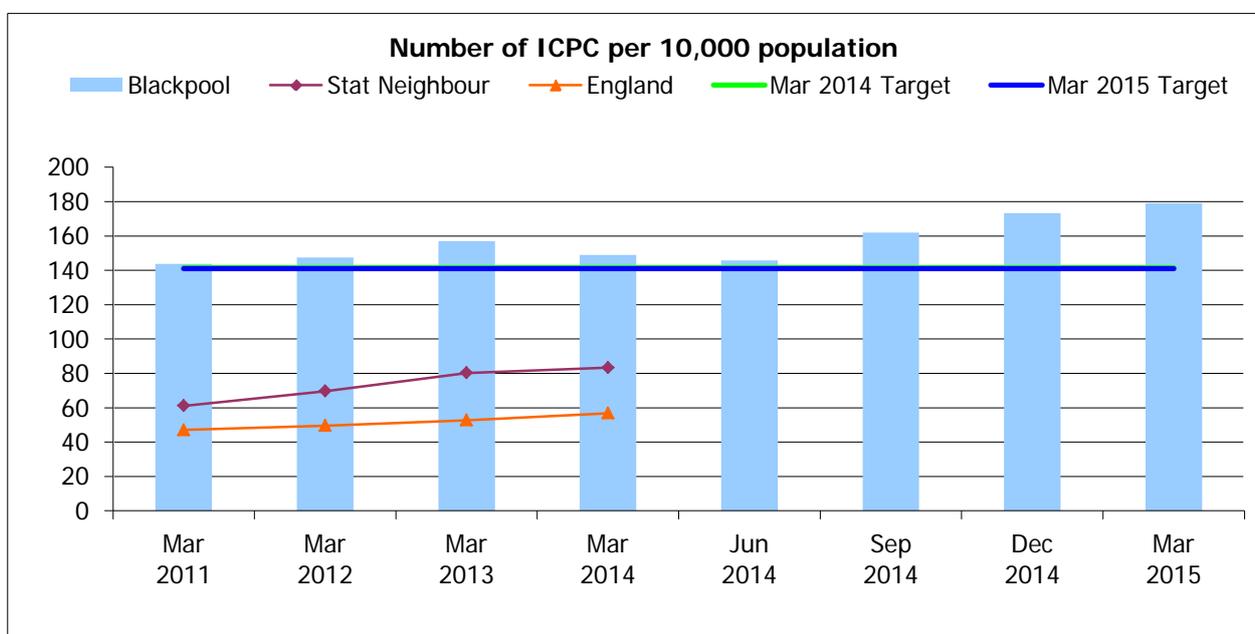
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## Section 8: Performance Information

### 8.1 Initial Child Protection Conferences

#### Rate of ICPC's per 10,000 population (2014-15)

Code	Description															Better to be?
2019SC	Number of initial child protection conferences per 10,000 population															Low
Data	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015
Number	420	431	448	433	434	422	423	432	460	470	483	479	503	502	498	520
Rate	143.7	147.5	156.9	149.0	149.5	145.4	145.7	148.8	158.5	161.9	166.4	165.0	173.3	172.9	171.5	179.1
Stat Neighbour	61.1	69.6	80.2	83.3												
England	47.0	49.6	52.7	56.8												



The number of Initial Child Protection Case Conferences (ICPC) per 10,000 population remains high. From March 2011- 2014 the rate year on year had remained in the 140 (per 10,000 population) range. However, this year the figure has steadily increased from 149.0 (per 10,000 population), in March 2014 to 179.1 in March 2015. Unfortunately the 'downward' trend identified in early 2014 did not continue and the end of year figure was the highest to date.

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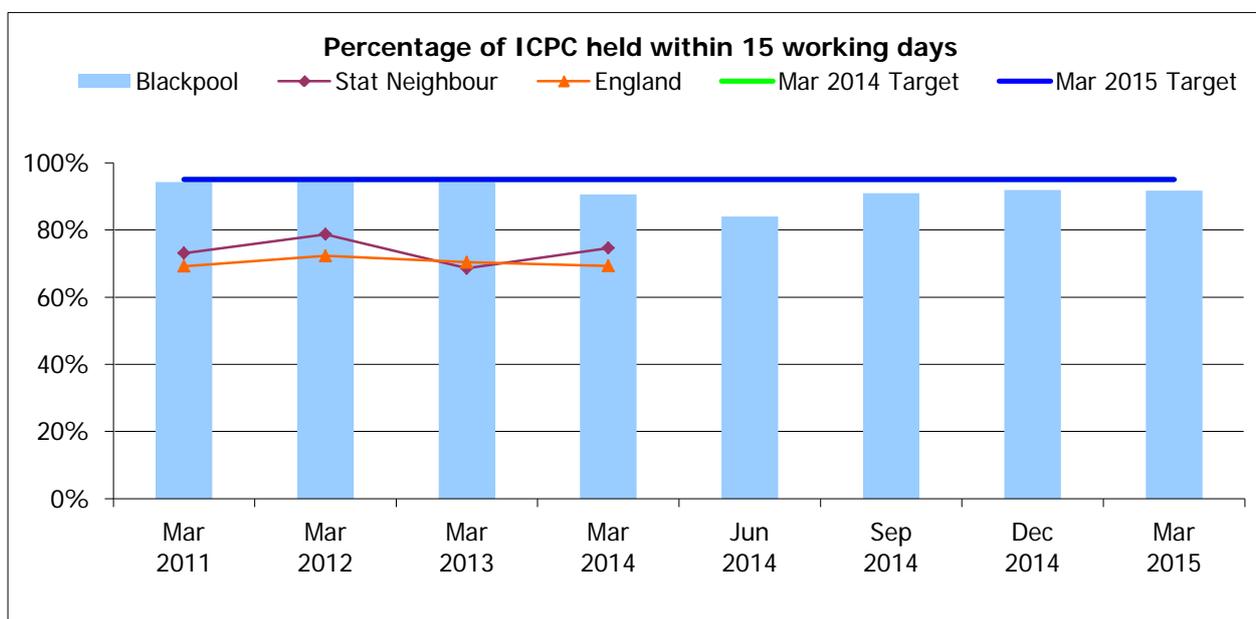
It continues to be a concern that Blackpool consistently has almost double the amount of ICPC's than 'Statutory' neighbours and treble the amount of the England average. This high number of ICPC's does have an impact on the Safeguarding, Quality and Review service, as demand continues to be consistently high.

Given a significant increase of cases being brought to ICPC in July and August 2014, the Service Manager for Safeguarding undertook an audit to assess as to whether threshold for ICPC and the decision to make the identified children subject to a CP Plan had been correct. (Please see Appendix 2).

Prior to and following this audit it was agreed that the Safeguarding Service would start to audit all requests for ICPC, in order to highlight any issues regarding threshold and/or processes and procedures.

### Percentage of ICPC's held within 15 working days of the start of the Section 47 enquiry (2014-15)

2037SC	Percentage of initial child protection conferences held within 15 working days of start of section 47 enquiry															High
Data	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015
Numerator	396	412	422	392	31	59	105	135	183	222	269	309	362	397	426	477
Denominator	420	431	448	433	43	74	125	155	204	244	293	339	394	436	468	520
Blackpool	94.3%	95.6%	94.2%	90.5%	72.1%	79.7%	84.0%	87.1%	89.7%	91.0%	91.8%	91.2%	91.9%	91.1%	91.0%	91.7%
Stat Neighbour	73.1%	78.7%	68.6%	74.6%												
England	69.2%	72.3%	70.4%	69.3%												



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The total number of ICPC's held within 15 days of the start of the Section 47 remains high at 91.7% of ICPC's being held within the 15 working day timescale. This is not only a 1.2% increase from March 2014, but significantly higher than our 'Statistical neighbours and the England average, which given the significant increase in ICPC's taking place throughout 2014-15 should be commended.

The ICPC's which have not taken place within the 15 working day timescale have all been audited month by month and commentary has been recorded within the 'Blue Book'. Some common themes include:

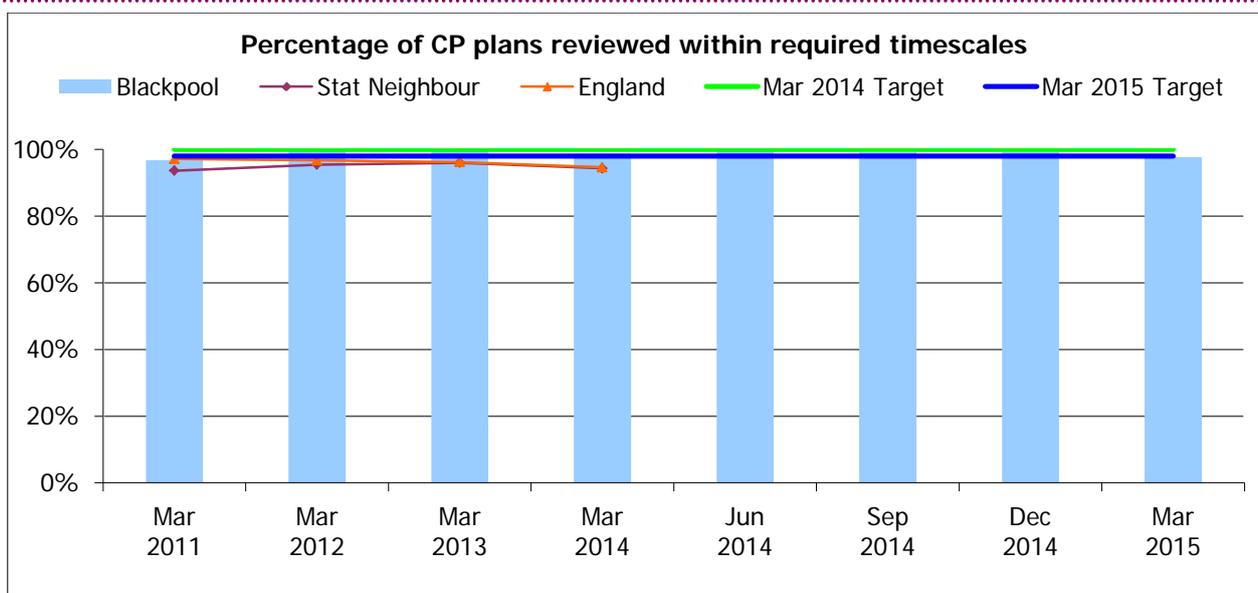
- Issues with the timing of the 'Strategy Discussion' prior to Pre-Birth Conferences, in that they were taking place too early, which although could be viewed as good practice was not in line with Safeguarding procedures.
- Social Worker not contacting the Safeguarding Service and requesting a conference within the agreed timescale. Therefore, in a number of instances the 15 working day timescale had already transpired.
- The incorrect date of the Strategy Discussion being placed on the 'Request for ICPC' form.
- Safeguarding administrators counting 'working days' incorrectly.
- There was no SW report for the ICPC or a key professional was not in attendance, therefore the ICPC was deferred and reconvened with agreement from the Service Manager for Safeguarding.

### 8.2 Review Child Protection Conferences

#### Review Child Protection Conferences held within required timescale (2014/15)

Code	Description															Better to be?
NI 67 / 2034SC	Percentage of child protection plans reviewed within required timescales															High
Data	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015
Numerator	177	225	239	212	229	234	220	218	238	234	226	234	244	216	231	251
Denominator	183	225	240	215	229	234	221	219	240	236	228	236	246	224	238	257
Blackpool	96.7%	100.0%	99.6%	98.6%	100.0%	100.0%	99.5%	99.5%	99.2%	99.2%	99.1%	99.2%	99.2%	96.4%	97.1%	97.7%
Stat Neighbour	93.6%	95.4%	96.0%	94.3%												
England	97.1%	96.7%	96.2%	94.6%												

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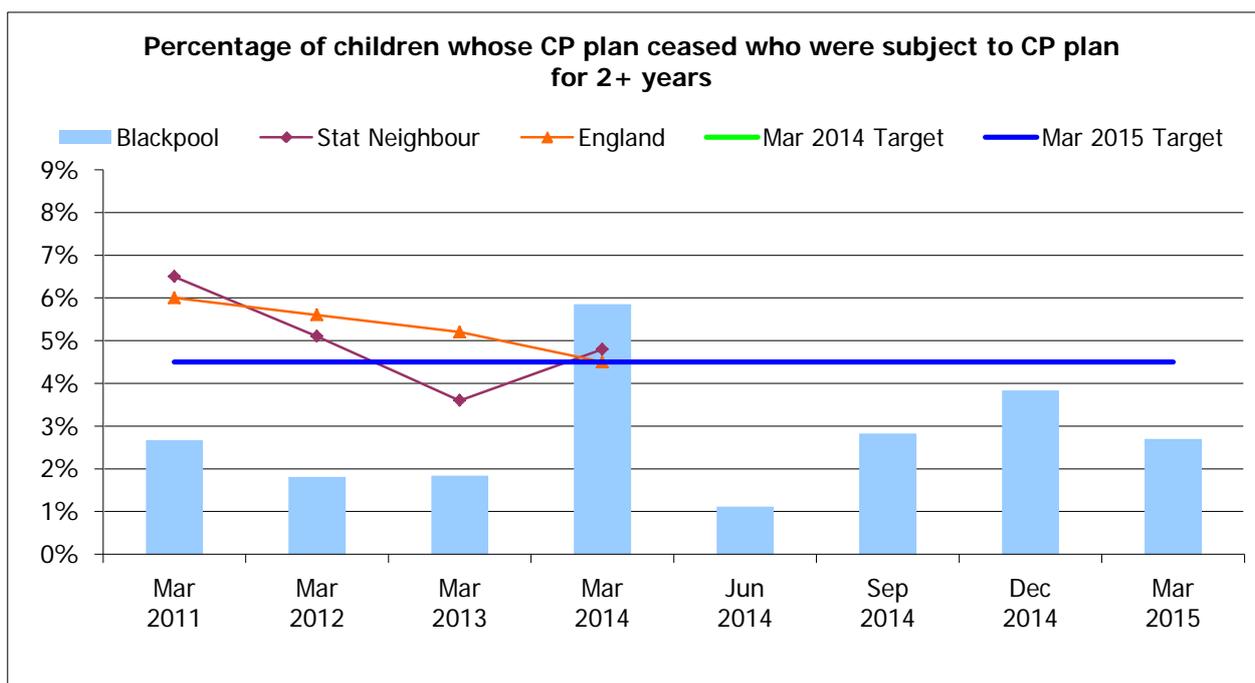
The timeliness of Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPC's) remains high at 97.7%, which again is higher than the England average (94.6%) and our Statistical neighbours (94.3%). There has been a slight decrease in timeliness over the last 12 months by 0.9%. This will need to be closely monitored in 2015-16. The RCPC's which have not taken place within statutory timescales have all been audited month by month and commentary has been recorded within the 'Blue Book'. The main reason for the cancellation of RCPC's was due to the absence of the SW either due to ill-health or annual leave. It is important to note that lack of 'Quoracy' which was identified as an issue in the 2013-14 Annual Report has not been identified as an issue this year, which is positive and perhaps demonstrates the impact of the positive work undertaken by the Improvement Board and partners on the BSCB.

### 8.3 Length of Time on a Plan (2014/15)

Information in relation to the length of time a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan is a 'Performance Indicator' for Children's Social Care. Performance data is collected on the percentage 'whose child protection plans ceased, who were subject of a child protection plan continuously for 2 years or more'.

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Code	Description	Better to be?														
NI 64 / 2036SC	Percentage whose child protection plans ceased, who were subject of a child protection plan continuously for 2 years or more	Low														
Data	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015
Numerator	7	7	7	25	1	1	1	1	1	5	10	10	11	11	11	11
Denominator	262	387	381	427	24	49	90	126	132	177	221	255	287	349	379	407
Blackpool	2.7%	1.8%	1.8%	5.9%	4.2%	2.0%	1.1%	0.8%	0.8%	2.8%	4.5%	3.9%	3.8%	3.2%	2.9%	2.7%
Stat Neighbour	6.5%	5.1%	3.6%	4.8%												
England	6.0%	5.6%	5.2%	4.5%												



Over the past 2 years there has been a significant amount of work undertaken to reduce the number of children who have been subject to a Child Protection Plan for 2 years or more. On the 31.03.15 there were 13 children who had been subject to Child Protection Plan for 2 years or more. When you consider that on the 31.3.15 Blackpool had 355 children subject to Child Protection Plans, this figure is surprisingly low.

Unlike last year the figure has decreased to 2.7% and is now lower than the England average of 4.5% and our statutory neighbours at 4.8%. This has been achieved by 'Solution Focused' meetings taking place with regard to a number of cases, involving children who have been the subject of CP Plans for over 18

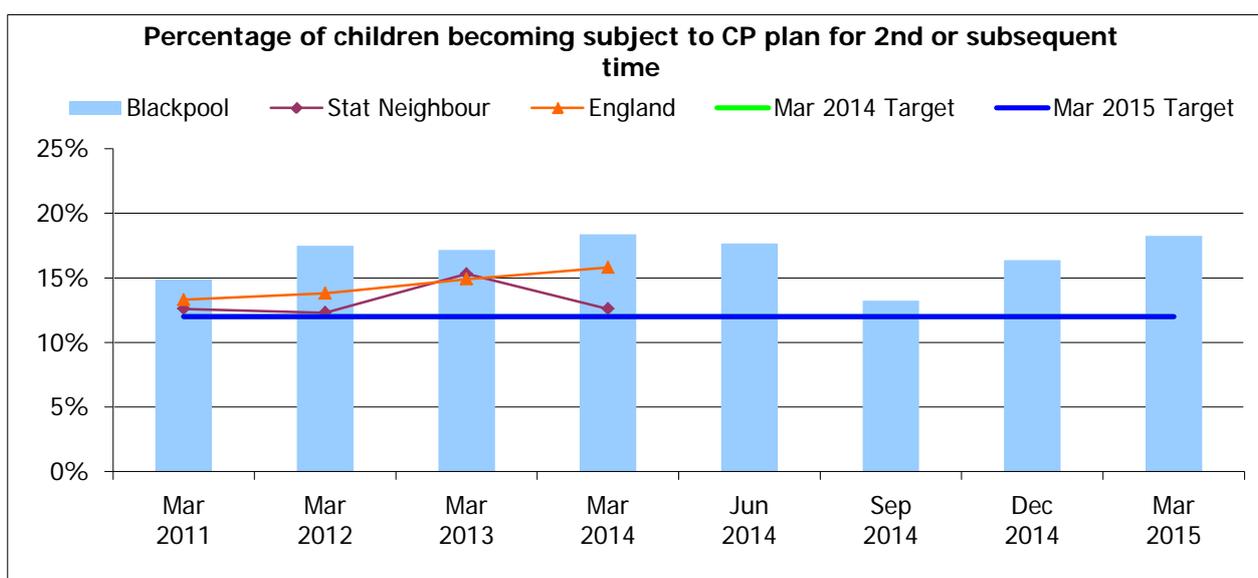
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months. This involves a meeting between Service Managers, Team Managers, Safeguarding Chair and Social Worker to explore barriers and options with regard to child protection planning. This has led to less drift and more pro-active case management.

### 8.4 Children made subject to a plan within 2 years

#### Children subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time (2014/15)

Code	Description																Better to be?
NI 65 / 2028SC	Percentage of children who became subject to a child protection plan for a 2nd or subsequent time																Low
Data	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015	
<i>Numerator</i>	57	68	69	73	5	10	18	20	28	29	36	43	58	67	71	83	
<i>Denominator</i>	383	389	402	397	32	62	102	132	179	219	263	305	354	387	412	455	
Blackpool	14.9%	17.5%	17.2%	18.4%	15.6%	16.1%	17.6%	15.2%	15.6%	13.2%	13.7%	14.1%	16.4%	17.3%	17.2%	18.2%	
Stat Neighbour	12.6%	12.3%	15.3%	12.6%													
England	13.3%	13.8%	14.9%	15.8%													



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In the past three years, the percentage of children subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time has been higher than both the England and statistical neighbour average. Current performance is at 18.2% and is similar to past trends. It must be noted that both indicators are subject to fluctuations, due to the small cohort of children involved, and changes in performance may not be statistically significant.

From 01/04/2014 to 31/01/2015 there were 455 new child protection plans of which 83 had a previous plan. This year an audit has not been undertaken in relation to the above information. However, this will be a priority over the next few months.

However, audits have taken place in relation to this specific area over the last 2 years and the reasons are not always immediately evident, in part because, the decision to make a child subject to a child protection plan is complicated and unique to the individual child. A second or subsequent child protection plan is not necessarily wrong because it may reflect a new risk of significant harm to a child that had not existed previously. What is important is that high and low performance is monitored to ensure that all issues that could be impacting the safeguarding and protection of children are explored and addressed appropriately.

Some of the contributing factors for the increase in social care activity and neglect in families in Blackpool may include the following:

- The impact of recent OFSTED inspection in 2012/14 on our thresholds for child protection;
- The national increase in Child Protection Plans due to high profile cases in the media;
- Pressure from other agencies;
- Significant inward migration of vulnerable families and;
- The ongoing economic recession and its impact on vulnerable families in Blackpool.

A significant proportion was subject to a child protection plan as a result of neglect/emotional abuse as opposed to other types of abuse. In terms of neglect in some complex families, patterns tend to fluctuate and thereby fall above and below the threshold of significant harm. Hence there may be periods of neglect followed by periods of evidenced improvement in outcomes for the child. During these periods, professionals would be correct to conclude that significant harm is no longer present and with the right level of ongoing support, predict continued stability for the child.

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As a result of the high number of children who are subject to a child protection plan as a result of neglect this was identified as a priority area for the BCSB. A 'neglect' sub group has been formed to consider the issue further and is in the process of developing a 'neglect' audit tool for front line practitioners.

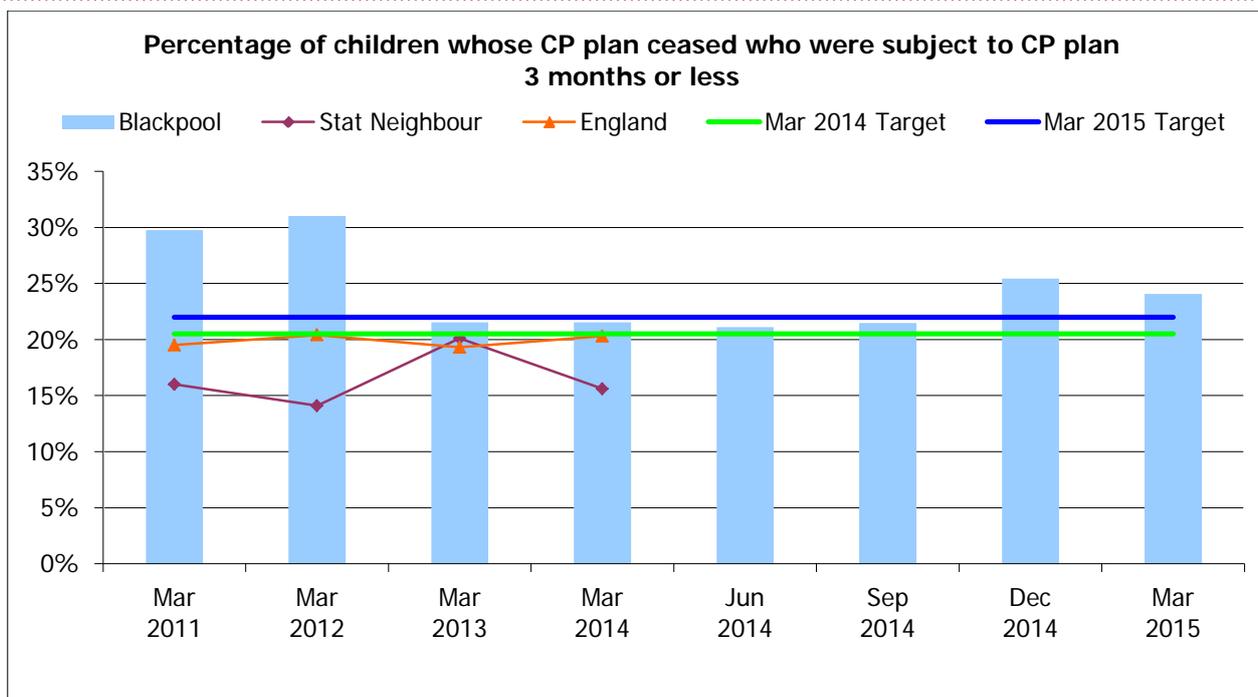
Other emerging themes from this audit that warrant further exploration are:

- Ability of agencies to work together to a formal plan when cases are stepped down from a CP Plan;
- Ability of agencies to confront the parent with the concerns and draw up a plan of intervention with clear outcomes and contingencies;
- Ability of agencies to work with families where there is low level neglect;
- Professional understanding as to what constitutes actual or likely significant harm;
- Use of the BSCB threshold guidance;
- Multi-agency understanding of methodology around neglect; and
- Ability of all agencies to manage low level safeguarding issues.

### 8.5 Child Protection Plan for 3 months or less (2014/15)

Code	Description															Better to be?
CP LP01	Percentage whose child protection plans ceased, who were subject of a child protection plan continuously for 3 months or less															N/A
Data	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sep 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015
Numerator	78	120	82	92	11	15	19	25	28	38	54	60	73	85	94	98
Denominator	262	387	381	427	24	49	90	126	132	177	221	255	287	349	379	407
Blackpool	29.8%	31.0%	21.5%	21.5%	45.8%	30.6%	21.1%	19.8%	21.2%	21.5%	24.4%	23.5%	25.4%	24.4%	24.8%	24.1%
Stat Neighbour	16.0%	14.1%	20.1%	15.6%												
England	19.5%	20.4%	19.3%	20.3%												

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The number of children who have been the subject of a Child Protection Plan for 3 months or less is a Performance Indicator for Children’s Social Care. The figure is better to be low, as it indicates that the decision to make the child subject to a Child Protection Plan was correct. If a child is removed from a Child Protection Plan at the first review (within 3 months) questions should be asked as to the reasons why.

Blackpool’s performance in relation to this specific performance indicator is 24.1%. This is only 3.8% higher than the England average, but is 8.5% higher than Blackpool’s Statutory Neighbours, which is a much wider gap than last year.

An audit was undertaken with regard to this performance indicator and considered children who have been subject to a Child Protection Plan for 3 months or less during a 12 month period (January 2014 – January 2015). This audit has considered 74 children (45 sibling groups)

### Findings:

- **35%** of children who ceased to be subject to a Child Protection Plan after 3 months or less had become ‘Looked After’. 62% of the children who had become ‘Looked After’ had been made the

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subject of an Interim Care Order; 35% had been accommodated under Section 20 of the 1989 Children Act and 3% had been made subject to an order in another country.

- **4%** of the cohort was no longer resident in Blackpool.
- **1%** had turned 18 years of age.
- **9%** of the identified children were residing with their Birth Father.
- **1%** was subject to 'Private Fostering' arrangements.
- **15%** had been subject to a Child Protection Plan in another area prior to moving to Blackpool.
- **2%** already had an older sibling subject to a Child Protection Plan.

It should be noted that there has been a steady reduction in the number of children whose Child Protection Plan has ceased due to the fact they have moved to live with extended family members. The number of children whose plan ceased because they became 'Looked After' has remained stable.

Therefore in **33%** of cases within the cohort there was no clear explanation of why children had been made subject of a Child Protection Plan and then removed within a period of 3 months.

During the audit it was identified that in **11%** of cases the report author questioned as to whether the threshold for a Child Protection Plan had been met and in **9%** of cases was of the view that the plan had ended prematurely. Therefore decision making during the Child Protection process could be questioned in **20%** of the cases considered. Unfortunately, there were no identified themes within these cases which could be used to inform practice moving forward. However, the report will be shared with the Safeguarding Chairs to inform discussions on thresholds and the importance of considering the threshold of significant harm at every conference, and not agreeing to the cessation of plans when key pieces of work are yet to be completed or there is a history of disguised compliance.

The full report was shared with the Children's Management Team and discussed with the Safeguarding Chairs during Group Supervision.

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### 8.6 Core Groups

The 2014 Ofsted Inspection report stated:

*'The local authority's action in relation to ineffective and badly-attended core groups has led to improvements, supported by training and a new core group template. There is now generally better attendance by relevant practitioners. Recent cases were seen where core groups were monitoring the progress of child protection plans effectively, and amending them as appropriate. Arrangements are in place for routine monitoring by managers of core group practice which aims to pick up shortfalls and addressed promptly. While progress has been made, improvements and monitoring arrangements are yet embedded or sustained and recent examples were seen of poor attendance and the core group template not being completed properly.'*

Whilst improvements were recognised and noted it is important that all agencies continue to develop, improve and contribute to this important area of work.

In September 2014 a Safeguarding Chairs who manage Initial Child Protection Case Conferences and Review Child Protection Case Conferences were asked to audit data in relation to multi-agency attendance at core group meetings. This involved the Safeguarding Chair noting core group members and then establishing their attendance at core group meetings within the designated period.

During this period the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan averaged at around 319 children. This is a decrease of an average of 21 children from the previous 6 months.

Information was collected in relation to 231 core group meetings. This compares to 153 audited in 2013.

As noted in the last audit, core group meetings take place in respect of families. Therefore, to try and put the quality of the audit into context (for example), I have been provided with some data via MIT. There were 2696 Core Group or First Core Group episodes with a start date between 1.12.13 and 31.7.14. Excluding episodes copied from other episodes (one sibling to another) it is estimated that approximately 1379 core groups took place during this period.

Therefore, the report offers an insight into the functioning of 16.7% of Core Groups during this period but it does not account for all core group activity. In reality this is a good sample size and an improvement on last year, which in my view is representative of core group activity during this period.

Since the January 2014 audit there has been a decrease in family members (Birth Mothers, Birth Fathers and extended family member) attending core groups. Although this was only a slight decrease the proactive involvement of family members in the child protection process is vital to the progression of the

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child protection plan. If family members are not present professionals need to discuss the reason for this and whether or not there are any barriers for attendance which can be actively pursued.

Social Workers, as would be expected are attending 96.0% of core groups. They are increasingly being supported in this process by Social Work Assistants. This audit also evidenced an improvement in attendance by the Awaken Team. It is positive that a small number of Youth Offending Workers were identified as core group members within this cohort, however once identified attendance needs to be improved.

The Families in Need (FiN) Service incorporates a number of teams whose workers may have been named as core group members. This includes Spring Board, Troubled Families and Edge of Care. When Social Workers are recording who has attended they may not always attribute attendance to the correct team, or they may simply record 'Families in Need'. Sometimes members from FiN team may represent another FiN team at core group meetings. In order to take this into consideration I added all the core groups together where attendance was expected by a FiN worker and did the same with the attendance from the 2014 audit. When considering the service as a whole attendance at core groups has increased by 12%.

Following the last core group audit undertaken it was agreed by the BSCB that School Nurses, Health Visitors and Midwives could represent each other at core group meetings. When considering the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans in 2013-14 these three professionals were estimated to be working with 94.9% of children subject to plans. This is a significant contribution and demonstrates the high expectations of our health colleagues in contributing to child protection plans. In this audit at least one of the three Health Professionals attended 68.0% of identified core group meetings. There appear to have been a significant improvement (of 21.0%) in School Nurse attendance which is positive but a significant decrease (of 47.0%) in Health Visitor attendance when compared to data collected for the 2014 audit.

The lack of representation from CAMHS and Adult Mental Health at core group meetings was a significant concern.

With regard to the attendance of Private Day Nurseries at core groups this was inconsistent. It would appear that some providers are committed to the process and this is evidenced via attendance, whilst others are not yet on board with the process.

During the last audit Children's Centres were not even being identified as core group members. It is positive that they now are, but attendance does need improve.

49.9% of children who are subject to child protection plans are of school age, and teachers within the identified schools will be having more contact with these children than any other professional involved in the child protection process. There was a slight improvement in attendance by Primary Schools (5%)

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when compared to the 2014 audit. 7 out of 10 Primary Schools achieved over 75% attendance, with 4 out of the 7 achieving 100% which is excellent. Surprisingly during this audit Boundary and Thames were identified as attending less than 50.0% of core groups. However, it should be noted that they were expected to consider a higher number, leading me to question if non-attendance is actually a staffing issue. Overall there were also improvements in Secondary School attendance, with notable improvements by Collegiate. However, attendance by South Shore Academy is a particular concern.

Improvements have been noted in Probation attendance. I understand they are now collating their own core group figures which may be useful to consider moving forward.

Representation from Horizon although still low at 38%, is significantly improved from the 2014 audit of 14%. I hope this will continue to improve over the next 12 months.

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## Section 9: Issues Resolution Process and Activity

During 2014-15 the Issues Resolution Process continued to be refined and strengthened. The 'Quality Assurance Checklist' was in the process of being updated when the Ofsted Inspection took place in July 2014. A decision was made to await the Ofsted Report prior to agreeing a final document. Following the publication of the report the form was revamped and now includes several new areas of scrutiny and data collection. For example, information is now collected regarding the following areas:

- The new 'Single Assessment'.
- The timeliness of the social work report for conferences.
- Sharing of social work reports with parents prior to conferences.
- Whether or not the child's wishes and feelings were evident in reports to conference.
- The completion of the Child Protection Plan by the Safeguarding Chair within 24 hours of the conference.
- The involvement of Nyas in representing children within the conference process.
- Parental and Children's attendance at conferences.
- The completion of the Child Protection Participation Work Book.
- Partner agency attendance to conference and core groups.
- Whether or not the following were factors were features within the household:
  - Domestic Abuse
  - CSE
  - Drug/Alcohol Misuse
  - Mental Health

The new Quality Assurance Form was piloted by the Safeguarding Chairs from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015, and formally implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. From this date there is an expectation that a 'Quality Assurance' form is completed following each conference. These forms can be found within the

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'Conference Document' episode. Discussions are underway as to how this information can be collated to present colleagues within and outside the Safeguarding Service.

If there are any concerns identified by the Safeguarding Chair they will contact either the Social Worker or Team Manager 'informally' to discuss the identified issues. These discussions are recorded on the child's file on the Integrated Children's System (ICS).

If there are significant concerns that warrant a more 'formal' approach the Quality Assurance Checklist is completed, which note the identified concerns. This form is then 'tasked' to the Team Manager for a response within 5 working days. The response and if necessary, the subsequent escalation of concerns is recorded within the same episode on ICS.

In 2014-15 100 Quality Assurance forms were tasked to Team Managers, as part of the 'Issues Resolution' process. This is a reduction on last year's figure, and there does appear to have been a period when the new Quality Assurance form was being re-designed that the process was not being utilised as effectively by the Safeguarding Chairs.

Of the 100 Quality Assurance forms tasked to Team Managers, 25 had completed 'Managers Response Forms', in 72 the 'task' had been completed and 3 had received no response. The issues raised by the Safeguarding Chairs included some of the following themes:

- Incomplete Core Group Records or Core Groups being recorded as being held outside statutory timescales (49 cases).
- No complete social work report for conference or the social work report not being shared with parents prior to conference (5 cases).
- Lack of progress in relation to specific areas of the child protection plan. For example; Risk assessments or seeking legal advice (14 cases).
- Outstanding recording in relation to a Section 47 enquiry (2 cases).
- CP Conferences not being held within statutory timescales (4 cases).
- Request for siblings not subject to a child protection plan to be assessed in relation to potential risk of harm (2 cases).
- CP visits not being recorded or being undertaken out of timescale (13 cases).
- Delay in the assessment work in relation to unborn babies and birth plans (3 cases).

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- Concerns regarding previous closure of a case subsequently being the subject of a CP conference (2 cases).
- Concerns as to whether from the information discussed in conference and professional views whether or not the children should remain in the family home (3 cases).
- Issues re contact between children and birth father (1 case).
- Ensuring the main carers (grandparents in this case) is invited to conference (1 case).
- Missing documents on case file, for example; risk assessments and legal planning meeting minutes (2 cases). Significant changes to the child protection plan prior to conference (3 cases).
- Immediate concerns re children's safety; for example, parents threatening to leave the country or increased level of risk identified during the conference (6 cases).
- Safeguarding Chair requesting that consideration be given to a legal planning meeting (2 cases).

\*Please note that the numbers above do not add up to the total of Issues Resolution raised as there are often several issues raised in one form\*

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, a team 'tracking form' will be introduced and all 'Issues Resolution' forms escalated to Team Managers will be collated by the Safeguarding Administrative Team and audited on a weekly basis by the Service Manager for Safeguarding.

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## Section 10: Safeguarding Chair Performance

Safeguarding Chairs due to the nature of their role work chair conferences independently with little opportunity for direct management oversight during conferences. Therefore, it is often difficult to measure how Safeguarding Chairs are performing in their role on a day to day basis. Over a three month period 195 questionnaires (covering 48 conferences) were completed by professionals attending Child Protection Conferences to provide an overview of the performance and management of the conference process.

Overall the audit was very positive. In a number of areas the rate of positive responses (90.0% plus) was achieved in a number of areas. Professional attendees were of the view:

- The Safeguarding Chair clearly explained to attendees the purpose of conference (100%)
- The Safeguarding Chair had managed the meeting well (100%)
- The Safeguarding Chair had been objective and had given equal weight to the views of professionals (100%)
- Attendees had understood the issue of confidentiality (99.0%)
- The Safeguarding Chair had appropriately challenged professionals and family members (95.0%)
- In 95% of conferences attendees had agreed with the outcome of the conference.
- The Child Protection Plan managed the risk of harm to the child/ren in question (92.0%)
- The risk of harm was discussed appropriately (90.0%)

In relation to a number of questions although the response was not over 90.0% this was due to professionals stating the question was either 'Not Applicable' or they did not provide a response. However, overall the response was positive. For example, 83.0% of respondents were of the view Child Protection Plans were SMART, with only 1% stating 'No'. Likewise in 86.0% of responses professionals stated that the Safeguarding Chair enabled them to share information about individual children and in 84.0% of cases it was viewed that parental/family participation had been encouraged, with no negative responses.

There were a number of areas where improvements can be made. These included:

- Professional confidence that when a child's name is removed from a Child Protection Plan their needs will be met.
- The increased participation of children in the conference process and an expectation from Professionals that they should be actively involved in the process.

There were a number of conferences which identified where improvements can be made moving forward. The main issues highlighted related to time management, Safeguarding Chairs speaking directly

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to children and the smooth transition of cases between the duty and locality teams. These will be integrated into the 'Priorities and Action Plan' for 2015.

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## Section 11: Quality Assurance Framework

### 11.1 Audit Activity

During 2014-15 there have been a number of audits undertaken by the Safeguarding, Quality and Review Service. These include:

- Children on a Child Protection Plan for over 18 months (July, September 14 & January 2015)
- Parental Participation Audit (May - October 2014)
- Request for Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) from locality teams (since January 2015)
- Core Group Attendance Audit (January 2015)
- Children subject to 'Temporary Child Protection Plans' (June 2014 and January/March 2015)
- Children subject to a Child Protection Plan for less than 3 months (March 2015)
- Completion of Quality Assurance Forms by Safeguarding Chairs (January - April 2015)
- Professional observation of Safeguarding Chairs (December 2014, January & February 2015)
- Unborn Children (March 2015)
- Timeliness of the distribution of CP Minutes & Reports (Monthly)
- Issues Resolution Tracking (March 2014)

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## **Section 12: BSCB Business Plan 2014-15**

<http://www.blackpollscb.org.uk/contents/documents/2015Final%20Business%20Plan.pdf>

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## Section 13: Priorities from 2014

In 2014-15 the Safeguarding Chairs and LAC engagement officer attended a service Away Day to consider the priorities for the service. These were detailed in the last annual report.

The following actions have been completed in 2014-15:

### **Voice of the Child**

- The Safeguarding Chairs now have access to a separate room where children can wait if they are attending all or part of a Child Protection Conferences.
- A process is in place for Nyas to support children over the age of 10 years at CP Conferences.
- In cases where it has been identified children wish to attend Child Protection Conferences, Safeguarding Chairs try and meet with the child prior to conference.
- The 'Child's Views' are recorded under a separate heading in all Child Protection Conference minutes.
- All Social Workers have access to and can now print 'Child Protection' work books in colour.
- There is a 'Child Friendly' area in the reception area where toys and books are available to children.

### **Parents and Carers of Children subject to CP Plans**

- Safeguarding Chairs are fully aware of the need for Birth Fathers to be involved in the conference process.
- There has been no occasion whereby a parent or carer has been formally 'excluded' from participating in the conference process.
- Enquiries were made with regard to advocacy services for parents. Unfortunately, there are no services in place within Blackpool at this present time.
- Minutes can be and are transcribed into a different language or into braille as and when requested.
- Safeguarding Chairs spend as much time with adults who have or may have learning difficulties/disabilities to explain the conference process and CP Plan.
- Parents can receive Child Protection Conference minutes electronically.

### **Partner Agencies**

- All information forms have been updated.

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- The BSCB distribute information to all partner agencies re 'Working Together' Training, which includes a specific segment on the expectations of professionals who attend Child Protection Conferences.
- Professionals are asked on a monthly basis to provide feedback on the performance of Safeguarding Chairs.

### **Quality Assurance**

- An audit took place in March 2015 to consider the use of the 'Issues Resolution' process by Safeguarding Chairs and identify evidence of appropriate 'challenge' on the child's file.
- A 'Tracking Form' is now in place to monitor and escalate issues via the 'Issues Resolution' process. This is reviewed on a weekly basis by the Service Manager for Safeguarding.
- A 'Good Practice' exemplar re Core Groups has been devised and distributed via the BSCB.
- Invitation lists for all Review Child Protection Conferences are sent to Social Workers for completion 4 weeks prior to conference.
- All invitations for Review Child Protection Conferences are sent to professionals and parents 2 weeks prior to conference, as a minimum.
- The distribution of CP minutes is audited on a weekly basis. In March 2015 80% of CP minutes were being distributed within the agreed 15 working day timescale.

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## Section 14: Priorities and Action Plan for 2015-16

### Voice of the Child

- Do children and young people know who their Independent Safeguarding Chair is and how they can contact them and what their Safeguarding role is and what they can do for them?
- How well do Safeguarding understand the views, opinions, wishes and feelings of children and young people within Conference?
- How well do Safeguarding Chair's understand the needs of the child when chairing a Conference?
- How effectively do we enable children and young people to contribute to CP conferences?
- Are children and young people offered the opportunity to feedback on the Safeguarding service?
- How do we ensure children and young people take up the opportunity to speak to an advocate?
- Are we ensuring minutes and reports are distributed promptly and written in a way that children and young people can understand them?

### Area 1: Voice Of The Child

Action	Lead	Resources	Timescales	Measure of achievement
1. Resources and Plans to be put in place to encourage children over the age of 10 to attend Child Protection Conferences.	Service Manager Participation Officer  Safeguarding Administration Officer	Child Friendly Leaflets explaining the conference process.  Nyas to support children's attendance.	December 2015	Children receive a leaflet prior to conference which they explains the process in accordance with their age and level of understanding.  There is an increase in referrals to Nyas and attendance at

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		Safeguarding Chair time to plan the child's participation prior to conference and to meet with them prior to conference.	At all conferences where a child has attended.	<p>conference. This information will be collated via the QA Monitoring Form.</p> <p>Safeguarding Chairs spend time with children prior to conference and their attendance is planned in a meaningful way.</p> <p>More children participate in Child Protection Conferences. This information will be collated via the QA Monitoring Form</p>
2. The Child's views need to be clearly documented in conference minutes.	Safeguarding Administration Officer	None identified.	At all conferences	The Child's views are evident within Child Protection Case Conference minutes.
3. A higher % of Social Workers complete 'Child Protection' workbooks with children over the age of 4 years.	<p>Service Manager</p> <p>Childcare Teams</p> <p>LAC engagement officer</p>	<p>Social Workers have access to 'Child Protection' work books.</p> <p>Child Protection work books to be re-designed with direct input from children.</p>	<p>Immediately</p> <p>December 2014</p>	<p>The % of 'Child Protection' workbooks being completed increases.</p> <p>A new Child Protection work book is designed and in place following consultation with</p>

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				children.
4. Children to be given the opportunity to feedback on the effectiveness of child protection plans.	Service Manager Nyas	Consideration to be given to financing Nyas to undertake a direct piece of work with children who have been subject to plans	March 2016	A report detailing the impact and outcomes for children is completed.
5. Nyas is utilised effectively in the child protection process.	Service Manager Safeguarding Administrative Officer  Nyas	Safeguarding Chairs to advocate the use of Nyas in child protection planning.  Nyas to provide appropriate leaflets to children explaining their role in the process.	Mandatory for every child over 10 years of age.  March 2016	The % of children who are subject to child protection plans where there is an active Nyas worker increases.
6. Safeguarding Chairs to provide 'feedback' to children following conferences.	Service Manager Safeguarding Chairs	The 'back page' of the Child Protection workbook to be utilised effectively.	For every child who completes the CP workbook.	There is evidence via audit that Safeguarding Chairs are completing the 'feedback' form.

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## Parents and Carers of Children subject to Child Protection Plans

- Are parents (mother and fathers) /carers invited to CP conferences?
- Are decisions to exclude parents from Conferences defensible and reviewed on a regular basis? Are parents enabled to contribute by all other means?
- Is the role and responsibilities of the Conference Chair clearly explained and understood by parents/carers? Is the way we do this effective?
- How effectively do we enable parents / carers to prepare for and contribute to Conferences?
- How well do we enable parents/carers to contribute in a meaningful way to discussions and decisions about their child/ren's CP Plan?
- Are we ensuring minutes and reports are distributed promptly and written in way that parents/carers can easily understand them?
- How well do we understand parents/carers experience of attending Conferences and do we effectively use this feedback to develop and improve?

## Area 2: Parental & Carer Participation

Action	Lead	Resources	Timescales	Measure of achievement
1. Birth Fathers need to be identified during the child protection process.	Safeguarding Chairs	None	March 2016	There is evidence via audit that Birth Fathers are routinely identified and 'if not' Safeguarding Chairs are asking questions as to their whereabouts.
2. The exclusion of birth parents from the child protection process should be	Safeguarding Chairs	None	March 2016	Exclusions are clearly documented in child protection minutes and reviewed with the

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clearly documented and reviewed.				service manager prior to the next conference.
3. Adults with learning difficulties/disabilities or who speak a different language who attend conferences to have their needs met.	Principal SW Service Manager  Safeguarding Chairs	All minutes to be transcribed into an alternative language or Braille as and when requested.  Safeguarding Chairs to identify parents with learning disabilities/difficulties and meet with them to explain the minutes.	March 2015	Parents with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak a different language to have access to conference minutes and reports in a way in which will enable them to read and understand them.
4. Parents to be given the choice to receive conference minutes electronically.	Safeguarding Administration Officer Service Manager ICT Manager	None	All parents to be given this option at conference.	Parents can receive conference minutes electronically.
5. Parental Feedback to be collated and considered.	Service Manager Safeguarding Administration Officer	Questionnaires to be distributed to Parents.  Audit Reports to be completed.	Monthly  2-3 times per year.	Regular feedback from Parents in order to develop service.

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## Partner Agencies

- Is the role and responsibilities of the Safeguarding Chair clearly explained and understood by other professionals and agencies involved with the child or young person?
- Are professionals and agencies involved with the child or young person fully conversant with what is expected of them and are they enabled to contribute fully and meaningfully to Conferences?
- How effectively are we communicating with other professionals and agencies involved with the child or young person?

### Area 3: Partner Agencies

Action	Lead	Resources	Timescales	Measure of achievement
1. Professionals are asked for feedback on the performance of Safeguarding Chairs.	Service Manager Safeguarding Administration Officer	Questionnaires are given to Professionals attending CP Conferences to complete. Information to be collated into an Audit Report	Monthly 2-3 times per year.	Regular Feedback from Professionals is evident and actions are agreed and delivered.
2. Safeguarding Chairs to specifically ask professionals attending conference for the child's views.	Safeguarding Chairs	None	Immediate	Children's views are evident in Child Protection Conference minutes from a number of sources.

## Quality Assurance

- Do we monitor the performance of the local authority by quality assurance during the CP process and challenging poor practice?
- Are Safeguarding Chairs kept informed of significant incidents or developments between CP Conferences?
- Are significant decisions consistently made at Conferences? e.g. parent moving back home.

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- How effective are we at challenging delays in implementing decisions or practice?
  - Are the recommendations we make from reviews SMART?
  - Are we sufficiently focussed on the child?
  - Are we escalating challenges or concerns consistently?
  - Do you have access to independent legal advice and is this being used?
  - Are invites sent out in a timely manner?
  - Are reviews consistently taking place within required timescales?
  - When do we hold an 'early' CP Conference review?
  - Are social workers spoken to in advance of the review?
  - Are social worker reports and professional reports for Conference shared with parents/carers 48 hours prior to review consistently?

### Area 4: Quality Assurance

Action	Lead	Resources	Timescales	Measure of achievement
1. Safeguarding Chairs to consistently use the Issues Resolution Process.	Service Manager Safeguarding Chairs	None	As and when required	There will evidence on Children's files of appropriate challenge by Safeguarding Chairs when required.  Cases will be audited to ensure compliance.
2. A 'Tracking' Form to be used by Safeguarding	Service Manager	None	Weekly	The 'Issues Resolution' process will be monitored

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<p>Chairs and utilised in supervision sessions.</p> <p>This form will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Service Manager.</p>	Safeguarding Chairs			by Safeguarding Chairs and the Service Manager to ensure a conclusion is reached.
3. Invitation lists are sent to Social Workers 4 weeks prior to conference for completion.	Safeguarding Administration Officer	None	May 2014	Conference Invitations are sent out in a timely manner.
4. Review Conference Invitations to be sent 2 weeks prior to conference date.	Safeguarding Administration Officer	None	Immediate	Conference Attendees get good notification of the date/time of next conference.
5. CP Minutes to be distributed within 15 working days of conference.	Safeguarding Chairs Safeguarding Administration Officer Service Manager	None	Within 15 working days of a CP Conference.  Weekly	High % of CP Minutes distributed within 15 working days of conference.
6. New Performance Management	Service Manager	None	Monthly.	New Performance Data will be

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Data will be collated. (Please see new QA form in Appendices.)				considered in SQR meetings and in Children's Management Team meetings.
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### Safeguarding Service, Management and Leadership

- Are we clearly communicating the statutory role and responsibilities of the Safeguarding Chair and strengthening their position in the authority at a strategic and operational level?
- Is the Safeguarding role valued and is it operating in a supportive service culture and environment in which they can feel confident in their role?
- How well do you know what aspects of their roles Safeguarding Chairs do well, how the Safeguarding service can be improved and what the barriers to improvement are and what we are doing to address them?

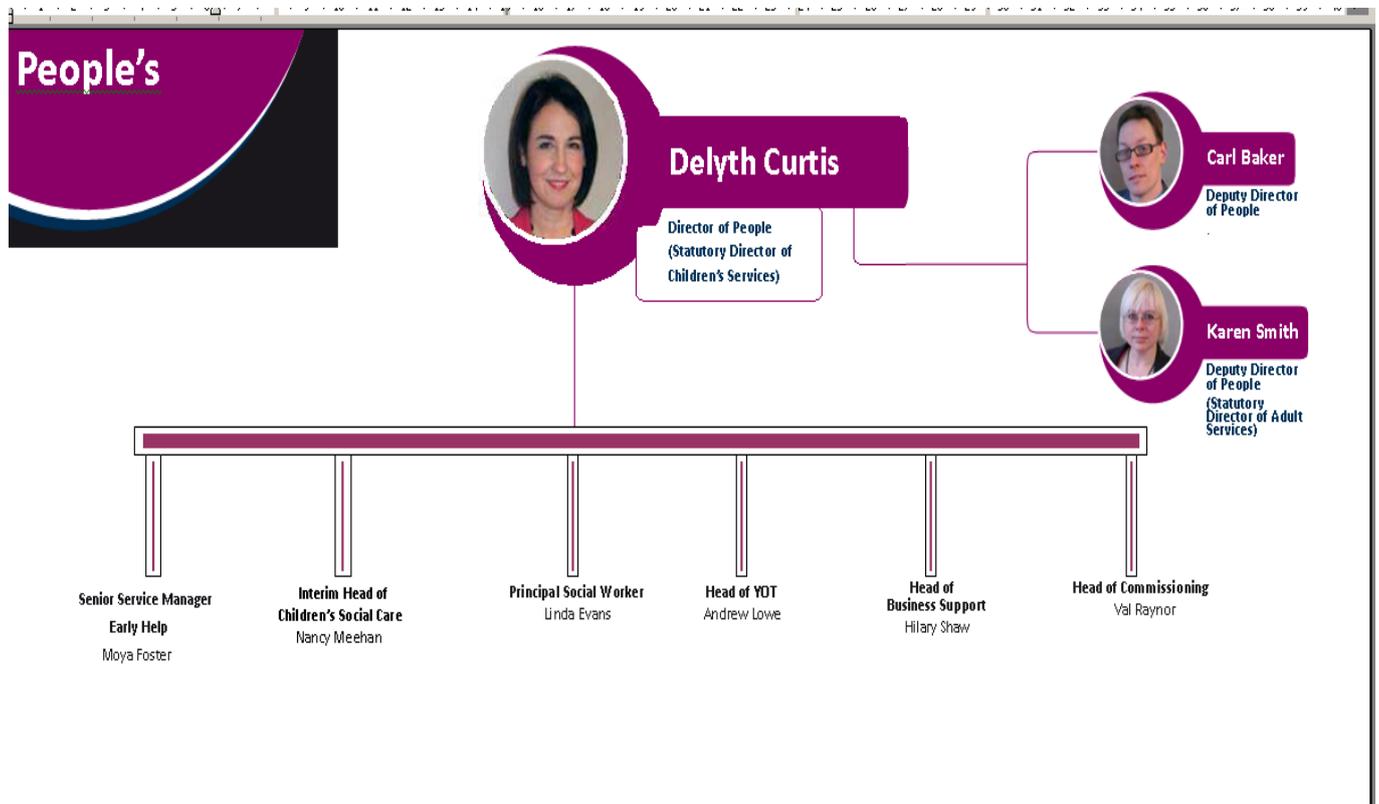
### Area 5: Management & Leadership

Action	Lead	Resources	Timescales	Measure of achievement
1. Safeguarding Chairs to be able to attend more local and regional groups.	Service Manager Principal SW	Increase in Team Capacity	March 2016	Safeguarding Chairs attend more local and regional groups as part of their role.
2. A group supervision session to undertake a SWOT analysis.	Service Manager Safeguarding Chairs	None	July 2015	The Safeguarding Service has a clear insight into service needs and future development.

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## Appendix 1

### Children's Social Care Organisational Chart



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## Appendix 2

### Audit

#### Children made subject to a 'Child Protection Plan' in July/August 2014

##### Introduction

The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans rose dramatically in July and August 2014 from 315 to 354.

In July and August 2014 there were 73 Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) of which 70 were placed on a Child Protection Plan. By comparison, in July and August 2013 there were 40 ICPC of which all 40 were placed on a CP Plan.

In July and August 2014 there were 136 RCPC of which 41 were taken off a CP Plan. By comparison, in July and August 2013 there were 160 RCPC of which all 55 were removed from a CP Plan.

Therefore there were 30 extra children placed on CP plans in 2014 compared to 2013 but 14 less children taken off CP plans in 2014 compared to 2013.

In order to understand the increase in ICPC's in July and August 2014, a more thorough audit has been undertaken of the 71 cases which were brought to ICPC.

The Auditor has undertaken the audit considering documents relating to Strategy Discussions, Section 47 enquiries and case conference minutes. It should be noted that this has not been a deep dive audit of each case.

##### Cases

All 73 cases were considered during this audit. Each case accounted for 73 children, a total of 37 families. Previously, Child Protection numbers have risen when we have held conferences in respect of a number of 'large' families. This audit identified that the number of children per family varied. Please see table below:

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Number of Children in Family	Total in cases audited
1	19 Families
2	10 Families
3	2 Families
4	4 Families
5	1 Families
6	1 Families
	<b>Total = 37</b>

The majority of cases which were brought to ICPC, (19) involved families with 1 or 2 children. There were 6 families with 4, 5 or 6 children. Therefore, the rise in the number of children placed on 'Child Protection Plans' during July & August 2014 cannot be accounted for by a high number of families with more than 3 children.

Ages of Children	Total in cases audited
Pre-Birth	7
0-1	13
2-4	10
5-10	22
11-15	16
16-18	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

As you can see from the table above the children made subject to Child Protection Plans during this period crossed the whole range from pre-birth to 17 years of age.

However, the audit did highlight that there were some issues regarding the lack of consistency and timeliness in relation to pre-birth conferences. For example:

- One Case came to ICPC only 4 days prior to the child's birth. The original contact had been made to CSC 3 months earlier. Likewise in a further two cases the threshold was clearly met for an ICPC, however this was only progressed to ICPC 4 weeks prior to birth which is not in line with Safeguarding Procedures.
- In another case the ICPC was not held until 3 days after the child's birth, despite there being clear safeguarding concerns, the PLO process having commenced some weeks earlier and professionals knowing that mother may go into labour at any time. Having said that the child was accommodated under Section 20 on the day of the ICPC questioning the need for a CP Plan at all at this late stage.
- In a further case there was a clear plan to accommodate the child following birth. Admittedly this was a high risk case. However, in these cases where there is a clear plan of action you have to

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ask the question if a CP Plan is required. In this case the child became subject to an ICO the day after birth. The reason the child was made the subject of a CP Plan arose from the anxiety of professionals that Birth Mother would try and remove the baby from the hospital. If this had occurred would the fact the child was subject to a CP plan have prevented this or altered the decision making process?

- Likewise in another case the ICPC was held the day after the child was born and the child became subject of an ICO 2 days later.
- There was a delay noted in ceasing the CP Plan in cases where children were accommodated following the ICPC under 'Section 20' or Interim Care Order. This led to children remaining on CP Plans unnecessarily.

There were also 5 cases where children age 16 years or older were made the subject of CP plans. In 3 cases the child was 17 years of age. In 2 of these the child will have turned 18 prior to the next RCPC and the plan will end automatically. In these two cases you have to question the appropriateness and purpose of making the children subject to CP Plans.

- In one case it was identified that the child aged 16 years was at risk of sexual exploitation. It has already been identified that the management of CSE cases via CP planning is not always best practice, and proposals have been made to use an alternative model.
- In another case it is my view that the threshold for a CP Plan was not met. The reason for this is detailed later in this report.

All the children were placed on Child Protection Plans under different categories of abuse. Please see table below:

Category of Abuse	Number of Children
Neglect	12
Sexual Abuse	3
Emotional Abuse	13
Emotional Abuse & Neglect	8
Physical & Emotional Abuse	19
Physical Abuse & Neglect	1
Sexual Abuse & Neglect	8
Neglect, Physical & Emotional	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>
Child in Need	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

When considering the information above it should be noted that a significant proportion (64% - in 4 different categories) of the children who became subject to CP plans during this period did so under the

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category of 'Emotional Abuse' which is used in the main when children are experiencing domestic abuse. There needs to be a specific focus on this area of work, if the number of children subject to CP plans is going to be safely reduced.

## Threshold

73 cases were audited during this period. In 2 cases the children were not made subject to CP plans at the ICPC and 'Child in Need' Plans were developed. This was appropriate. I have considered 'threshold' in relation to all the other cases.

Out of the 71 cases considered 61 (**86%**) met the 'threshold' for a Child Protection Plan. However, in a number of these cases although the threshold was met for a CP Plan I did question if this could have been prevented. This will be discussed in more detail below.

In my view 10 (**14%**) cases did not meet threshold. In two cases the reasoning was quite straightforward. In one case the child was subject to a 'Private Fostering' arrangement. In another case the child was subject to CSE and it is recognised that the CP process may not be best way in which to manage such cases.

The remaining 8 cases, involved 5 families

- In one case involving two children Birth Mother disclosed to the Children's Centre her partner was allegedly an alcoholic and a domestic violence incident had taken place. This involved Father 'smashing up the house' in front of the children and 'grabbing her by the throat'. This was not witnessed by the children. This was the first contact to CSC regarding the family. CSC asked Mother to leave the home and move into a refuge. When she refused Father was asked to leave the family home and the case proceeded to ICPC. The decision to proceed to ICPC appears to have been made within 24 hours of the referral. My view is that the decision was premature and required further consideration once further work had been undertaken with the family to understand fully the issues being raised. In my view this could have been achieved via the Social Worker undertaking a 'Child & Family Assessment' over a 42 day period initially and then making a decision as to whether to progress a CIN or CP plan. This may have fostered a better working relationship with Birth Mother moving forward.
- One case involved a 16 year old girl who had gone to A & E threatening self-harm. There were concerns regarding Grandmother's (with whom she resided) attitude to her grandchild's mental health needs. There were some minor concerns re the child's vulnerability to CSE, but this was not clearly evidenced. In my view this case could have been managed via CIN. The child was removed from a CP Plan at the 3 month review.
- Another Case was in respect of a 5 month old child. Birth Mother and Father had separated. There was an agreement in place due to Birth Father's violent behaviour and issues regarding domestic abuse that he was not allowed unsupervised contact with the child, and Birth Mother

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could not supervise this contact. Birth Mother took the child to see Paternal Grandmother (with whom Birth Father resided) understanding that he had gone out for the day. He subsequently returned and as such broke the agreement. Birth Mother fully admitted that this was an error of judgment. There were no other concerns about her care of the child. In this case the Safeguarding Chair questioned threshold but a majority decision was made that the child should be subject to a CP Plan.

- In a case involving 3 children the Birth Mother had mental health issues and the father was said to be dependent on alcohol, although this was not evidenced which led to neglect of the children. The main concern, however, was that Father refused to engage with professionals and conference attendees were of the view that in the long term this would be detrimental to the children. The threshold for a CP Plan was not met. The Safeguarding Chair instigated a 'healthy' debate regarding threshold. However, Father was adamant at the conference that he would not work with agencies under a CIN Plan.
- The child in another case was 17 years of age when the ICPC took place on the 26.8.14. The child was due to turn 18 only eight weeks later.

I identified one case which came to ICPC too early. This involved an 11 year old child whose adult sibling was in prison for sexual offences against children. When the case was brought to ICPC the sibling was in prison and not due out for another 2 months. Therefore the child was not at risk of significant harm at the point of CP planning.

Furthermore it should also be noted that 15 out of the 73 (21%) children were removed from CP Plans at the first review. Out of these, one child moved to another area; one became a LAC and the other turned 18 years old. A more detailed audit of children who have ceased to be the subject of a CP plan at the 3 month review will take place in early 2015.

### **Other Issues**

- In one case the child went to live with her Birth Father. However, there were concerns relating to alcohol misuse and domestic abuse regarding his partner. His partner's children were open cases to CSC under CIN. It is my view that when the decision was made to proceed to ICPC with his birth child, consideration should have been given to proceeding to ICPC with the other children in the household. In this case, you had a child who was subject to a CP Plan residing with other children who were not. This will be discussed with the Safeguarding Chairs.
- In another case, the child was made the subject to a CP Plan on 14.8.14 and has been accommodated under Section 20 since the 29.7.14. Although threshold is met, the child was made subject of a CP Plan because Birth Mother withdrew consent for Section 20 at the ICPC. There is evidence on ICS that she has withdrawn consent on several occasions. I understand the case will be presented in court on the 8.12.14, but there has been significant delay and it is questionable as to whether legal processes have been correctly followed.

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- In this case the child was residing with her grandmother. I have asked the Safeguarding Chair for an update, as I identified concerns about Grandmother and also questioned if we had 'placed' the child and she was therefore 'looked after'.

In a number of cases, males were asked to leave the family home and written agreements were put into place with regard to no contact. Whilst in some cases this may immediately safeguard the child/ren there has to be a plan in place which considers what needs to happen to allow the family to re-unite if they wish to do so.

### Conclusion

In order to understand the significant rise in children subject to CP Plans in July and August 2014, an audit has been undertaken on the 73 children who went to ICPC and the 71 who became the subject to CP Plans during this period. The rise in numbers is not due to an increase in large family units, as has previously been an issue. However, a high % of children made the subject of CP Plans were placed on a plan under the category of sexual abuse.

Therefore, a specific focus has been given in this audit to 'thresholds' and as with any audit I have highlighted specific areas which in my view need to be given consideration when explaining the rise in numbers.

Out of the 71 cases considered 61 (**86%**) met the 'threshold' for a Child Protection Plan. However, in a number of these cases although the threshold was met for a CP Plan I did question if this could have been prevented. In my view 10 (**14%**) cases did not meet threshold.

In my view there were a number of reasons why I did not consider the threshold for a CP Plan was met or CP Planning could have been prevented. For example, I would ask the following questions?

- Do children in 'Private Fostering' arrangements, where there are no identified concerns need to be subject to a CP Plan?
- Do children who are victims of CSE, with protective parents need to be subject to a CP Plan? (It has already been identified that in such instances making the child subject to a CP Plan is not always good practice and steps are underway to change procedures).
- Do children who are turning 18 prior to the next review conference need to be subject to a CP Plan?
- Do unborn babies where there are clear arrangements in place to accommodate (Section 20/ICO) immediately following birth need to be subject to a CP Plan?
- Are our processes leading professionals to commence CP Planning prematurely?
- Are we undertaking robust, good quality 'Child & Family Assessments' prior to making the decision to go to a CP conference?

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- Do we need to audit children who are being made the subject of CP Plans under the category of emotional abuse, given the number identified during this audit?

In other areas we need to improve our processes.

- We need to be more consistent in relation to following pre-birth procedures.
- We need to ensure consideration has been given to all children within a household where there are identified CP concerns; this could be evidenced via a 'Child & Family Assessment', Strategy Discussion or Section 47 enquiry.
- We need to 'tighten' up the procedures of the cessation of the CP Plan when children are accommodated under Section 20 or made subject of an ICO.
- Where there is doubt with regard to threshold the Safeguarding Chair should be more robust in their decision making.

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### Appendix 3

#### Nyas Child Protection Referrals since commencement of service

#### SEPTEMBER 2014 – APRIL 2015

Date	Case Number	Response from Social Worker	Response from Family/YP	Outcome
18/09/14	NYR87685	Contacted SW – was given YP's mobile number to contact YP and informed YP was attending the conference	Contacted YP – YP declined support from Nyas	Service declined by YP
24/09/14	NYR87865	Contacted SW – was given parent's mobile number to contact YP and informed YP was not attending the conference due to having additional needs	Contacted parent by phone and was told that she would ask him when he came home from school and contact me if he needed help. YP has good relationship with CAHMS worker who can contribute W&F. YP/parent did not call back.	Service declined by YP
24/09/14	NYR87867	Contacted SW by phone then email. Social		Service declined by social worker

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		worker confirmed YP not attending conference and had completed a conference pack.		
26/09/14	NYR87871	Sibling of NYR87865		Unable to advocate for YP as older sibling declined service
24/10/14	NYR88833	Contacted SW by phone then email, SW on annual leave so contacted SC, SC, and phoned and emailed Team Leader. No response from Team Leader.	N/A	Unable to gain permission from LA to contact family to offer advocacy support in time for ICPC
18/11/14	NYR89661	Contacted SW by phone then email. Social worker gave permission to contact carer.	Phoned carer but no response.	Unable to make contact with carer
18/11/14	NYR89662	Contacted SW by phone – SW agreed to speak to YP tomorrow and call me back if YP agreed to service	SW reported that parents would not agree to referral	Parents declined service

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18/11/14	NYR89664	Contacted SW by phone - SW agreed to speak to YP tomorrow and call me back if YP agreed to service	SW reported that parents would not agree to referral	Parents declined service
18/11/14	NYR89665	Contacted SW by phone – SW declined service as YP not able to contribute due to age/ability		SW declined service
18/11/14	NYR89666	Contacted SW by phone - SW declined service as YP not able to contribute due to age/ability		SW declined service
18/11/14	NYR89669	Contacted SW by phone - SW declined service as YP not able to contribute due to age/ability		SW declined service
18/11/14	NYR89670	Contacted SW by phone - SW declined service as YP not able to contribute due to age/ability		SW declined service

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18/11/14	NYR89676	Contacted SW by phone then email – no response		Social worker did not respond to my attempts to make contact
01/12/14	NYR90137	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Visited young person and submitted report to conference
02/12/14	NYR90174	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Visited young person and explained advocacy service. Young person decided not to accept the support offered.
20/01/15	NYR91475	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Visited young person to explain advocacy service. Young person decided not to accept the support offered.
20/01/15	NYR91476	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Visited young person and explained advocacy service. Young person requested advocate to write W&F report for conference and attend in their absence.
20/01/15	NYR91477	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Visited young person and explained advocacy service. Young person requested advocate to write W&F report for conference and attend in

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				their absence.
20/01/15	NYR91478	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Visited young person and explained advocacy service. Young person requested advocate to write W&F report for conference and attend in their absence.
20/01/15	NYR91491	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Visited young person and explained advocacy service. Young person requested advocate to write W&F report for conference and attend in their absence.
28/01/15	NYR91730	Contacted SW who said conference may not take place as YP may be moving to another LA.		SW confirmed conference would not be taking place due to the young person moving from Blackpool to another LA.
02/03/15	NYR92854	Contacted SW by phone then email – no response		Social worker did not respond to my attempts to contact him.
02/03/15	NYR92857	Contacted SW by phone then email – no response		Social worker did not respond to my attempts to contact him.
02/03/15	NYR92859	Contacted SW by		Social worker did not

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		phone then email – no response		respond to my attempts to contact him.
02/03/15	NYR92867	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Young person declined service
02/03/15	NYR92869	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Parents gave permission for YP to have advocate	Visited young person and explained advocacy service. Young person requested advocate to write W&F report for conference and attend in their absence.
12/03/15	NYR93216	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Phoned carer but no response.	Unable to make contact with carer
12/03/15	NYR93221	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Phoned carer and explained advocacy service. Carer chose not to give permission for YP to have advocacy support	Carer declined service
12/03/15	NYR93223	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Phoned carer and explained advocacy service. Carer chose not to give permission for YP	Carer declined service

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			to have advocacy support	
12/03/15	NYR93228	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Phoned carer but no response.	Unable to make contact with carer
12/03/15	NYR93232	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Phoned carer but no response.	Unable to make contact with carer
09/04/15	NYR94064	Phoned and emailed social worker and Service Managers	Received email from Service Manager to state that this ICPC would not be going ahead.	Conference did not proceed
24/04/15	NYR94621	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Phoned carer and explained advocacy service. Carer chose not to give permission for YP to have advocacy support	Carer declined service
24/04/15	NYR94622	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Phoned carer and explained advocacy service. Carer chose not to give permission for YP to have advocacy	Carer declined service

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			support	
24/04/15	NYR94637	Contacted SW – gave permission to contact parents	Phoned carer and explained advocacy service. Spoke to young person and explained advocacy service. YP chose to have support from another professional who was more familiar.	Young person declined service.

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## Appendix 4

### Children subject to a CP Plan for less than 3 months

1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014

#### Purpose of report

This report has been prepared to consider the number of children (**23.7%**) who have been subject to a Child Protection Plan for 3 months or less during a 12 months period (1.1.14 – 31.12.14) compared to an England average (**20.3%**) in 2013 – 14. Over the last 12 months the number of children who's Child Protection Plan ceased within a 3 month period or less has increased by 3.1%, whilst the England average was also showing a slight increase of 1% from 2012-13 to 2013-14. This would indicate that although the % has increased locally and England average gap has increased over the last 12 months.

#### Methodology

In gathering information for this report I have:

- Considered the 74 children (45 sibling groups) where children were made and then ceased to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan between the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 & 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.
- Established which children became 'Looked After' by the Local Authority either via court order (Interim Care, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order).
- Children who had gone to reside with family members or friends.
- The number of children who had been subject to a Child Protection Plan in another Local Authority prior to the Child Protection Plan 'transferring' to Blackpool.
- Children who had moved out of the local area.
- Children who had turned 18 during the audit period.
- Read all pertinent Initial and Review Child Protection minutes.

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### **Findings**

During the above period **74** children have ceased to be subject to a Child Protection Plan who had only been on a Child Protection Plan for 3 months or less. This is exactly the same number for a similar 12 month audit period from January 2012 to December 2013. The overall % has increased as the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans during this audit period reduced.

The number of children equates to **45** sibling groups during this reporting year, which is a reduction of 7 sibling groups when compared to the previous reporting period (2012-13) when the 74 children equated to 52 sibling groups.

The families were made up of:

- 31 individual children
- 6 x 2 sibling groups
- 4 x 3 sibling groups
- 3 x 4 sibling groups
- 1 x 5 sibling group

**26** children (**22** sibling groups) became 'looked after' by the Local Authority during the first 3 months of being made subject to a Child Protection Plan. Upon becoming 'looked after' the Child Protection Plan ceased. **9** children were accommodated under Section 20 of the 1989 Children Act; **16** were made subject to Interim Care Orders and **1** child was made the subject to a court order in Ireland.

Out of the **48** remaining children (**23** sibling groups) **3** children (**1** sibling group) left the area, thus becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan in another Local Authority. **1** child turned 18 years of age and the Child Protection Plan automatically ceased.

Of the remaining **44** children (**21** sibling groups) **5** (**2** sibling groups) were residing with a family members (Birth Fathers) two of whom sought 'Child Arrangement Orders' for three out of the five children. The other 2 children (**1** sibling group) had remained with their Birth Father who had 'Parental Responsibility' and there were no plans for them to return to their Mother's care. Therefore it was appropriate that the Child Protection Plan ceased. When considering previous audits in relation to the cessation of Child Protection Plans there appears to have been a steady reduction in the number of children who moved to reside with family members on a permanent basis and therefore leading to cessation of the Child

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Protection Plan. For example, in 2011-12 a similar audit identified that **18** children had moved to reside with extended family members, and in 2012-13 **9** children. Whether or not these children were placed with family members under the status of being 'Looked After' was not fully investigated during this audit process.

Of the remaining **39** children (**18** sibling groups), **1** child was subject to a 'Private Fostering' arrangement when the plan ceased. This child was part of a larger sibling group already counted in the figures above.

Of the remaining **38** children (**18** sibling groups), there were **11** children (**4** sibling groups) who had been the subject of Child Protection Plans in another Local Authority prior to moving to Blackpool. Therefore, when they moved to Blackpool they were placed on Child Protection Plans having already been on Child Protection Plans in another Local Authority for a period of time, so although it appears the Child Protection Plan ceased after a period of 3 months or longer they had been subject to a Plan for much longer. These children will not be considered for scrutiny within this audit.

Of the remaining **27** children (**14** sibling groups) **2** children already had an older sibling who had been subject to a Child Protection Plan for a longer period of time. Therefore, work had already been taking place with the parents of the child prior to the identified child being placed on a Child Protection Plan.

Therefore, in the 12 month period from the 1st January 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 there were **25** children (**13** sibling groups) who were made the subject to Child Protection Plans who ceased to be subject to a plan within a period of 3 months, who remained at home and/or still resident in the Blackpool area. (Please see Appendix 3)

These **25** children represented **13** sibling groups. In order to try and analyse these cases I have separated these into distinct groups:

- Children where the threshold was met for a Child Protection Plan.
- Children where the threshold was not met for a Child Protection Plan.
- Children where a Child Protection Conference should have been convened earlier.
- Children where the decision to cease the plan within the three month period was appropriate.
- Children where the decision to cease the plan within the three month period was not appropriate.

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Within the audit it was identified that from the above cohort of **25** children there were **15** children (7 x sibling groups) where the threshold was met for a Child Protection Plan.

There were **8** children (6 sibling groups) where in my view the threshold for a Child Protection Plan was not met.

In one case the child was made subject to a Child Protection Plan prior to birth. This was due to historical concerns in 2010 regarding an older sibling. Concerns related to a physical assault, Birth Mother's mental health, neglect and domestic abuse within her previous relationship. Although concerns were identified, Mother was stated to be in a stable relationship and was co-operating with all agencies. In my view the threshold for 'Significant Harm' was questionable and the case could have been managed just as effectively under a 'Child in Need' plan. This view is supported by the very fact that the child's name was taken off a plan 8 weeks later.

In another case, similarly the child was made subject to a Child Protection Plan prior to birth. The Birth Mother was a 15 year old child. Her own Birth Mother had abandoned her and she was residing with her Maternal Grandmother in the Blackpool area. Birth Mother and Birth Father were no longer in a relationship. At the ICPC Birth Mother was described as a 'model pregnant mother', and the midwife advised that in the right environment she would cope well with parenting. Birth Mother was actively engaged with the 'Family Nurse Partnership' and was attending education where she was described as 'self-motivated, focused and could work independently'. There were no indicators of risk identified. This case could have been managed under a 'Child in Need' plan.

In a case involving 3 children, the children were placed on Child Protection Plans due to the risk presented by a man who had absconded from prison. Following a sighting of him near the home address Birth Mother had gone to a refuge with the three children. Prior to the ICPC the man was arrested and was placed back in custody. Given the man who presented a risk was back in custody and not due for release and furthermore the Birth Mother had taken appropriate action to protect her children they should not have been made the subject of Child Protection Plans.

Another case involved a 16 year old girl who had gone to A & E threatening self-harm. There were concerns regarding Grandmother's (with whom she resided) attitude to her grandchild's mental health needs. There were some minor concerns re the child's vulnerability to CSE, but this was not clearly evidenced. In my view this case could have been managed via CIN.

A further case was in respect of a 5 month old child. Birth Mother and Father had separated. There was an agreement in place due to Birth Father's violent behaviour and issues regarding domestic abuse that he was not allowed unsupervised contact with the child, and Birth Mother could not supervise this

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contact. Birth Mother took the child to see Paternal Grandmother (with whom Birth Father resided) understanding that he had gone out for the day. He subsequently returned and as such broke the agreement. Birth Mother fully admitted that this was an error of judgment. There were no other concerns about her care of the child. In this case the Safeguarding Chair questioned threshold but a majority decision was made that the child should be subject to a CP Plan.

In one case birth parents had been arrested as the Police had been advised by a third party that they had indecent images of children in their possession. No admissions were made and the computer was taken away for examination. The child went to live with Maternal Grandmother. My view is that this case was brought to ICPC prematurely as there was no hard evidence that the child was at risk of significant harm, and despite this both parents were working with the Local Authority.

There were two other cases where the threshold for a Child Protection Plan was questionable. Work had already taken place under a CIN Plan. In this case I would question whether the Child Protection Plan was required as it appeared to be used as a method to simply engage birth parents in the work.

When considering all of the above children whose Child Protection Plan ceased within the first 3 months, there were **7** children (**3** x sibling groups) which in my view this decision was premature.

One case, involved a 10 year old girl who had been the subject of a Child Protection Plan previously from the 19.7.12-28.1.14. During the initial period of Child Protection Planning the Birth Mother had started a relationship with a 'Person who poses a Risk'. This man was not the child's Birth Father and had convictions of sexual abuse with regard to a female child of a similar age to the subject being discussed. A further 'Initial Child Protection Conference' (ICPC) was held for a second time when concerns were raised that the 10 year old girl was having unsupervised contact with the said male. Previous NSPCC assessments had concluded that he should not be present within the family home and her Birth Mother was not able to protect her from sexual harm. The Child Protection Plan had only ceased previously as the Birth Mother had stated that she had separated from the male. Prior to this separation the Local Authority were in the PLO process and considering legal proceedings. At the second ICPC a recommendation was made for a legal planning meeting. The child was removed from a Child Protection Plan at the first review as Birth Mother was once again stating that she had ended the relationship. In my view this was premature, given the history of the case (Birth Mother had married this man whilst the child was subject to a CP Plan); the Edge of Care team had only been working with the family for 4 weeks and further work with the NSPCC had not taken place.

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\*In this case it should be noted that Birth Mother later advised she was pregnant with the Males child. The conception date was when the Child was subject to a CP Plan\*

Another case involved 3 siblings who were made subject to a Child Protection Plan under the category of emotional abuse. The children were between the ages of 3 and 12 years. There were concerns regarding Birth Mother's drug misuse and poor mental health which had an impact upon the children's needs and to keep them safe. This had led to Birth Mother being hospitalised, one of the children being accommodated (Section 20), and the other two going to stay with friends and family. Upon discharge from Hospital Birth Mother had requested the children to be returned home? Therefore, the children were made subject to Child Protection Plans. At the Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC) agency reports were positive and Birth Mother had fully engaged in the Child Protection Plan. However, the children were only subject to Child Protection Plans for 11 weeks and this was a relatively short period of time given the issues of concern had led to the children going to live in alternative accommodation.

A further case involved 3 siblings between the ages of 1 and 9 years who had been made subject to the Child Protection Plans under the category of emotional and physical abuse. In this case Birth Father was serving a suspended sentence for affray, following an incident when he threatened his wife and children with a baseball bat and knives. Following the incident he has been diagnosed with 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder'. Following the incident Birth Mother had ended the relationship with Birth Father, when the relationship was resumed the case was brought to ICPC. At the 3 month RCPC the Child Protection Plan ceased, however there was no evidence in the child protection minutes that the psychological assessment or 'Combat, Stress and Trauma' therapy had not been completed.

### **Conclusion**

Over the last 12 months there has been an increase in the number of children who have been the subject of a Child Protection Plan for 3 months or less, by 3.1% to 23.7%. Although the percentage increase alone does not appear to be high, the gap between the Blackpool % and that of our local comparators and the England average % is increasing.

This audit has considered 74 children (45 sibling groups) who were made and then ceased to be subject to Child Protection Plans between the 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.

### Findings:

- **35%** of children who ceased to be subject to a Child Protection Plan after 3 months or less had become 'Looked After'. 62% of the children who had become 'Looked After' had been made the

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subject of an Interim Care Order; 35% had been accommodated under Section 20 of the 1989 Children Act and 3% had been made subject to an order in another country.

- **4%** of the cohort was no longer resident in Blackpool.
- **1%** had turned 18 years of age.
- **9%** of the identified children were residing with their Birth Father.
- **1%** was subject to 'Private Fostering' arrangements.
- **15%** had been subject to a Child Protection Plan in another area prior to moving to Blackpool.
- **2%** already had an older sibling subject to a Child Protection Plan.

It should be noted that there has been a steady reduction in the number of children whose Child Protection Plan has ceased due to the fact they have moved to live with extended family members. The number of children whose plan ceased because they became 'Looked After' has remained stable.

Therefore in **33%** of cases within the cohort there was no clear explanation of why children had been made subject of a Child Protection Plan and then removed within a period of 3 months.

During the audit it was identified that in **11%** of cases the report author questioned as to whether the threshold for a Child Protection Plan had been met and in **9%** of cases was of the view that the plan had ended prematurely. Therefore decision making during the Child Protection process could be questioned in **20%** of the cases considered. Unfortunately, there were no identified themes within these cases which could be used to inform practice moving forward. However, the report will be shared with the Safeguarding Chairs to inform discussions on thresholds and the importance of considering the threshold of significant harm at every conference, and not agreeing to the cessation of plans when key pieces of work are yet to be completed or there is a history of disguised compliance.

Sharon Cooper

Service Manager

Safeguarding, Quality and Review

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## **Appendix 6**

### **Quality Assurance Monitoring Form**

# Safeguarding Annual Report 2014-15

## Quality Assurance Checklist CP Conference



### Child and Social Worker Details

#### Child Details

Child's Name:	Child's Alias:	Date of birth or expected date of delivery	Gender	Disability	Address	Ethnicity

#### Social Worker Details

Name:

Organisation Name:

#### Conference Details

Conference Chair:

Date of Conference:

#### Type of Conference:

Initial       Review       Pre-Birth       Transfer In

Date of next Re-view:

### Initial Conferences Only

1. Was an Outline Child Protection Plan defined on the Single Assessment?\*

Yes       No

2. Was an Initial Core Group Meeting arranged to take place within 10 working days of the ICPC?\*

Yes       No

3. Were key members of the Core Group identified at the ICPC?\*

Yes       No

If not, who was not identified?

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## Review Conferences Only

1. Has an Assessment of Risk & Need been completed and updated within the last 12 months?\*

Yes  No  N/A

2. Was the child seen alone at home on statutory visits?\*

Yes  No

3. Have Monthly Core Group Meetings taken place?\*

Yes  No

4. Have the recommendations of the last Conference been completed?\*

Yes  No

If not, why not?

## All Conferences

1. Was a Social Worker Report completed and signed by the manager on frameworki 48 hours prior to ICPC or 72 hours prior to RCPC?

Yes  No

If no, was a written report presented to the meeting?\*

Yes  No

If no, was the conference adjourned, and reconvened within 28 days?\*

Yes  No

2. Was the report shared with birth Mother 2 days (for ICPC) or 3 days (for RCPC) prior to Conference?

Yes  No

3. Was the report shared with birth Father 2 days (for ICPC) or 3 days (for RCPC) prior to Conference?

Yes  No

4. Is there evidence the Social Worker told the child about the child protection concerns in a manner appropriate to their age and understanding?

Yes  No

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5. Were the child's wishes and feelings recorded in the Social Work Report?

Yes  No

6. Did the Safeguarding Chair complete the Conference Outline CP Plan within 24 hours?

Yes  No

If not, why not?

### Conference Attendance Details

1. If the child was over 10 years of age was a referral made to NYAS?

Yes  No  N/A

2. If Yes, did they advocate for the child within the conference process?

Yes  No  N/A

3. Did the following people attend and/or participate within the conference process?

Child / Young Person (Over 10 years)

Attended and participated  Attended but did not participate  
 Did not attend, but participated (via advocacy/in writing or other means)  Did not attend and did not participate  
 N/A

If they did not attend or participate, why not?

Were they invited?

Yes  No

Parent(s) / Person(s) with Parental Responsibility - Mother?

Attended and participated  Attended but did not participate  
 Did not attend, but participated (via advocacy/in writing or other means)  Did not attend and did not participate

If they did not attend or participate, why not?

Were they invited?

Yes  No

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## Parent(s) / Person(s) with Parental Responsibility - Father?

- Attended and participated  Attended but did not participate  
 Did not attend, but participated (via advocacy/in writing or other means)  Did not attend and did not participate

If they did not attend or participate, why not?

### Were they invited?

- Yes  No

## Other Significant Adults?

- Attended and participated  Attended but did not participate  
 Did not attend, but participated (via advocacy/in writing or other means)  Did not attend and did not participate

If they did not attend or participate, why not?

### If they attended, please state the relationship to the person\*

- Grandparent  Aunt/Uncle  Family Friend  Other

If other, please state:

### If the child is over 4 years of age did they complete the CP Workbooks?

- Yes  No  
 N/A

### Were the views of the daily lived experience of the child shared within the Conference?

- Yes  No

### 4. Was the Conference quorate?

- Yes  No

If not, why not?

### 5. Did the allocated SW attend the Conference?

- Yes  No

If not, who attended?

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### 6. Did the following key partner agencies attend the Conference and provide a written report?

#### Police

Yes  No  N/A

#### Police Report

Yes  No  N/A

#### Health Visitor

Yes  No  N/A

#### Health Visitor Report

Yes  No  N/A

#### School Nurse

Yes  No  N/A

#### School Nurse Report

Yes  No  N/A

#### YOT

Yes  No  N/A

#### YOT Report

Yes  No  N/A

#### Mental Health

Yes  No  N/A

#### Mental Health Report

Yes  No  N/A

#### FIN (Families In Need) Service

Yes  No  N/A

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## FIN (Families In Need) Service Report

Yes  No  N/A

## Education

Yes  No  N/A

## Education Report

Yes  No  N/A

## GP

Yes  No  N/A

## GP Report

Yes  No  N/A

## Midwifery

Yes  No  N/A

## Midwifery Report

Yes  No  N/A

## Drug / Alcohol

Yes  No  N/A

## Drug / Alcohol Report

Yes  No  N/A

## Probation

Yes  No  N/A

## Probation Report

Yes  No  N/A

## Nursery

Yes  No  N/A

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## Nursery Report

Yes  No  N/A

## Early Years

Yes  No  N/A

## Early Years Report

Yes  No  N/A

## Other

Yes  No  N/A

## Other Report

Yes  No  N/A

Please state name of other agency if applicable:

## 7. Were the following key partner agencies required at Core Groups and did the required number attend?

### Police

Yes  No  N/A

Police No. Required:

Police No. Attended:

### Health Visitor

Yes  No  N/A

HV No. Required:

HV No. Attended:

### School Nurse

Yes  No  N/A

SN No. Required:

SN No. Attended:

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## YOT

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
YOT No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
YOT No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## Mental Health

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
Mental Health No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
Mental Health No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## FIN (Families in Need) Service

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
FIN No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
FIN No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## Education

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
Education No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
Education No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## GP

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
GP No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
GP No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## Midwifery

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
Midwifery No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
Midwifery No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

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## Drug / Alcohol

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
Drug / Alcohol No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
Drug / Alcohol No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## Probation

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
Probation No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
Probation No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## Nursery

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
Nursery No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
Nursery No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## Early Years

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
Early Years No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
Early Years No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

## Other

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> N/A
Other No. Required:	<input type="text"/>	
Other No. Attended:	<input type="text"/>	

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8. Were future Core Group Meeting dates set at Conference?

- Yes  No  
 N/A

9. Did the main carers have any drug or alcohol issues?

- Yes  No  N/A

10. Was domestic abuse a feature within the household?

- Yes  No  NA

11. Was mental health a feature in the household?

- Yes  No  NA

12. Was Child Sexual Exploitation a concern in relation to this child?

- Yes  No

13. Have any issues arisen that required escalation, under the Issues Resolution Protocol, to the Team / Service Manager?

- Yes  No

If Yes, please comment:

14. If Issues Resolution commenced following the last conference, has this been resolved?

- Yes  No  N/A

15. If issues resolution has been resolved, please advise at which level it was resolved\*

16. Any further comments?

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<sup>i</sup> HMRC Children in Low Income Families, 2012