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# Schools Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit (SSA) 2024 –2025

NYSCP BUSINESS UNIT FINDINGS

STEPHANIE FREETH

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## 1. Introduction

The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) conducts a biennial mandatory School Safeguarding Audit across all educational settings in North Yorkshire, including maintained, academy, free, independent, special schools and pupil referral units. Schools are considered ‘relevant agencies’ within Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023<sup>1</sup>) and are named as such in our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements<sup>2</sup> (MASA).

The audit is mandated under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002<sup>3</sup> for maintained schools and further education institutions, and Section 157<sup>4</sup> of the same Act for independent schools, academies, and free schools.

This report aims to provide assurance to North Yorkshire’s Safeguarding Children Partnership of the safeguarding arrangements in place across education establishments in the county. The report will also provide statutory safeguarding partners with an understanding of the themes, patterns and trends identified in schools across North Yorkshire.

In addition to providing the Safeguarding Children Partnership with assurance, the safeguarding audit also serves as a practical tool for schools and their governance structures to better understand safeguarding in their organisation. Via the tool, schools can identify emerging themes, pinpoint areas for development and develop action plans in order to improve safeguarding practice in their organisation.

## 2. Local Context

Education is globally recognised as a fundamental human right, essential for personal and societal development, and is enshrined in international law and is vital for achieving other human rights. As a Partnership, we recognise that education is our children’s greatest liberator, supporting not just the acquisition of knowledge, but also fostering the ability to think critically, engage meaningfully with society, and navigate the complexities of the modern world. At an individual level, we can all remember our favourite teachers from our own school years, the impact they had on us and how they

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<sup>1</sup> [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

<sup>2</sup> [NYSCP-MASA-Arrangements-Dec-24.pdf](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Education Act 2002](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Education Act 2002](#)

shaped our formative years, and we recognise that education staff are in a unique position as they are asked to provide safe and nurturing environments where all children can both learn and thrive.

Across North Yorkshire, 77,520 children attend our schools and nurseries. There are 295 state-registered primary schools, 158 of which are Local Authority maintained and 137 are academies or free schools. 48% of primary schools have fewer than 100 pupils and 21% have fewer than 50. There are 41 secondary schools, 12 of which are Local Authority maintained and 29 are academies or free schools. Our largest secondary school has 2070 children, and the smallest has 363. There are also independent schools, special schools, pupil referral units and additionally there are also post-16 colleges.

### 3. Audit Methodology

Schools are required to complete the safeguarding audit tool and ensure it is ratified by their governing board, and a representative sample (3%) of schools were then selected to participate in multi-agency panel visits. Schools were invited to include representatives from their organisation to discuss their audit responses, including the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Chair or Safeguarding Governor and/or the School Business Manager. Schools were selected at random across North Yorkshire to reflect diversity in type, size and geographical location. Panels included senior representatives from across the safeguarding children partnership, including Police, Health, and the Local Authority (Children's Social Care, Youth Justice, Inclusion, Local Area Designated Officer (LADO), and the School Improvement Service).

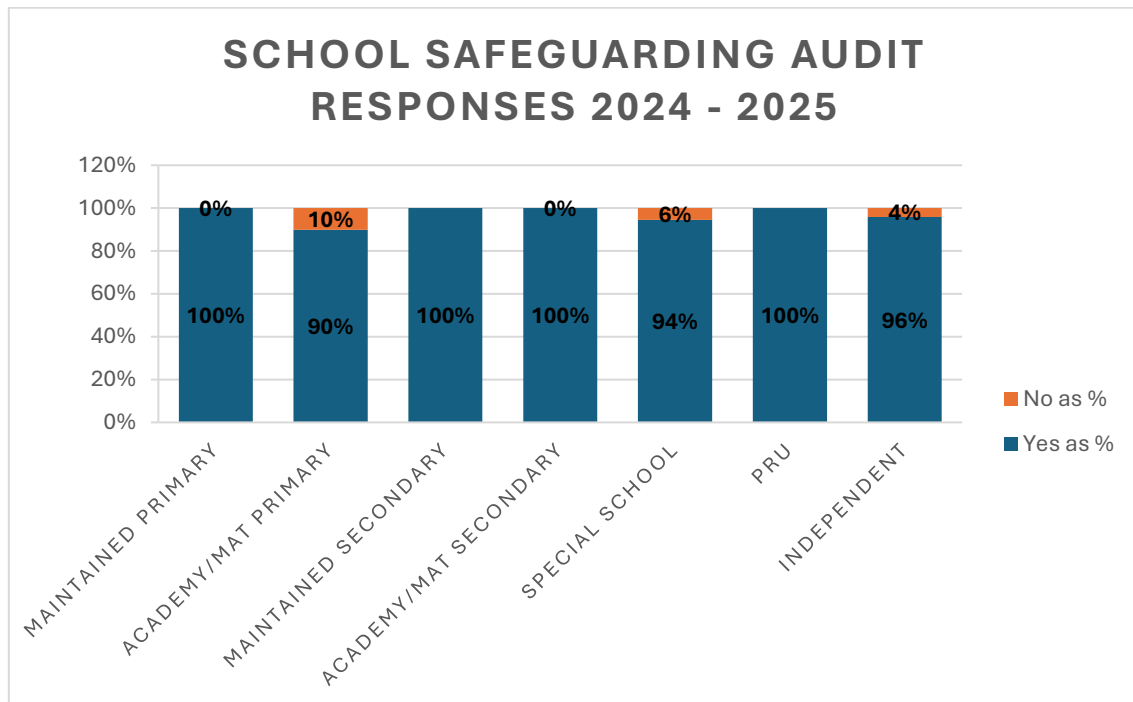
The panels aimed to:

- Explore emerging safeguarding themes.
- Review evidence supporting schools' self-assessment scores.
- Understand how scores were determined.
- Identify strong practice and areas for development.
- Gather feedback for future audits.
- Assess training and resource needs.

Upon completion of the audit panel sessions, NYSCP panel representatives met to share findings, focusing on sharing examples of good practice and areas for development, the feedback from which is contained within this report.

## 4. Response Rate

The 2024–2025 School Safeguarding Audit achieved a response rate of 96% compared to 94% the previous year, reflecting schools' continued commitment to safeguarding.



**Table 1 – School Safeguarding Audit Responses for 2024 – 2025<sup>5</sup>**

Schools were supported to complete the audit via:

- A dedicated online support hub: This is a new feature for this year's audit on a dedicated page on the NYSCP website, [NYSCP SSA](#). This was launched to centralise resources and guidance and includes:
  - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
  - Process maps to guide schools through each stage of the audit
  - A step-by-step video walkthrough
- Drop-in Support Sessions with the NYSCP Business Unit and School Improvement Service.

<sup>5</sup> Table 1 below identifies that 6% of Special Schools in North Yorkshire have not completed the audit; however, due to the small number of special schools, this 6% represents only one school. This is similar for the Independent Schools, where 4% no return also equates to one school. Table 2 provides information on audit response rates for the 2022-2023 school safeguarding audit.

## 5. Audit Composition

The audit comprises 11 key areas, each designed to reflect core safeguarding responsibilities. These areas were shaped in collaboration with colleagues across the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The audit tool is also aligned with key statutory guidance, including:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023<sup>6</sup>)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024<sup>7</sup>)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework<sup>8</sup>
- Health and Safety legislation

Notably, this year's audit also includes:

- A new "Culture of Safeguarding" section, developed with the Education Task and Finish Group.
- A Policies Checklist section to support schools in ensuring statutory and recommended policies are in place.

## 6. Audit Analysis Methodology

Schools were asked to self-assess their safeguarding arrangements using a five-point scale. When identifying a score, each school is asked to consider whether the minimum standards for addressing safeguarding needs have been achieved. The grading system supports consistency across settings and enables the identification of both strengths and areas for development.

1	2	3	4	5
This line of enquiry is not applicable to the school. There are no safeguarding concerns.	Not in operation. No action plan has been identified to address this at present.	Safeguarding areas for development have been identified and the school aims to create an action plan at senior level to focus on these areas.	Safeguarding areas for development have been identified and the school has an action plan agreed by senior management to focus on these areas.	Safeguarding has been addressed and the school is compliant with statutory requirements. There are no safeguarding concerns.

The analysis methodology involved a multi-step, mixed-methods approach to ensure comprehensive evaluation and representation:

- Quantitative Analysis: Analysis of self-assessment gradings across all audit areas, to identify trends, patterns, and outliers.
- Qualitative Analysis: Interrogating free text narrative responses and evidence provided by schools.

<sup>6</sup> [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#)

- Comparative review with previous audit cycles to identify trends.  
Integration of feedback from audit panels and school representatives.
- Triangulation of all evidence to validate self-assessment scores and overarching themes.

## 7. Good Practice

When safeguarding is strong, it is woven as a golden thread throughout the school, evident in the culture, extending from the senior leadership team through to both teaching and non-teaching staff and to pupils. This whole-school approach ensures safeguarding is not just a policy but a lived value, visible in daily practice and strategic decision-making. Conversely, when safeguarding isn't viewed as "everyone's responsibility", there is evidence that different parts of the system are working in silo, resulting in a lack of strategic direction and joined-up practice.

The audit returns and panel sessions identified multiple areas of good practice which it is felt should be captured in this report. It is the aim that this good practice will be circulated across the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership networks in order that practitioners across the Partnership can consider how they may wish to implement some of the excellent practices identified.

### 7.1 Safeguarding Culture

In schools with established safeguarding processes, the mantra, "safeguarding is everyone's responsibility" and "it could happen here" is embedded across staff and leadership with rigorous safeguarding oversight. For example, some schools were able to evidence weekly DSL meetings, safeguarding display boards, daily briefings for senior leaders and DSLs to discuss immediate safeguarding concerns, clear escalation policies and systems to clearly record safeguarding information.

Embedding a culture of safeguarding within large school communities is recognised as being significantly challenging; however, there is evidence throughout the audit of some schools making considerable cultural shifts, winning the hearts and minds of staff and students alike.

*"School rhetoric of it could be happening here, and it is happening here."*

Across schools in North Yorkshire, self-assessments show that Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units grade themselves as a 5 in their approach to safeguarding. School panel visits and scrutiny of quantitative data demonstrate that schools whose departments work together and are not siloed, show a more robust safeguarding culture that runs through all staff, irrespective of their primary role.

Where safeguarding practice is strong, there is evidence that all staff are aware of their responsibilities, there is strong and visible leadership and safeguarding features as a standing agenda item on senior leadership team and local governing body agendas. There is evidence provided of a culture of openness to challenge, with Governors and leaders encouraging reflection and professional curiosity, with instances of Governors applying appropriate challenge to senior leadership teams and acting as a “critical friend”. Where practice is strongest, schools are proactive in addressing local safeguarding issues, conduct annual reviews, collaborate across federations or trusts, produce and share “Key Local Themes” or “Safeguarding on a Page” documents, and ensure safeguarding leads remain up to date with both local and national practice changes.

Safeguarding is recognised as needing to be understood across the school workforce. One school provided an example of having developed a staff-led initiative in order to improve the behavioural culture within the school, and the impact of this was evident in the school’s panel visit and through their audit return. In other schools, it is clear that reception staff understand the requirements for the safety and monitoring of visitors in the reception area, which sets the tone for both visitors' and children’s safety on the school premises. Panel visits also showed that schools were often adaptive in their safeguarding messages to pupils, considering their geography, cohort and when it is appropriate for messages to be relayed and absorbed. For example, one rural primary school demonstrated this by reinforcing tractor and farm machinery/vehicular safety to younger pupils.

Across all school types, there is strong evidence of compliance in core safeguarding structures. All schools have appointed a governor for safeguarding and a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with a clearly defined role. Safeguarding records are securely managed, and nearly all schools demonstrate sound knowledge of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and have clear procedures for reporting concerns about staff. Schools where this practice is most strong have recording mechanisms for low level concerns about staff, that while not reaching a threshold for a referral to the LADO, do require monitoring and recording, demonstrating robust data recording processes.

Across all school types, responses to questions show that safeguarding is strongly embedded in the curriculum, with most schools providing age-appropriate, differentiated content on topics such as online safety, healthy relationships, and recognising risk. For example, the audit found good evidence that school staff understand that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence could happen in their schools and that there is a whole school approach to addressing this. The audit found 91% of primary maintained, 98% of primary academy, 100% of secondary maintained and 96% of secondary academy achieving compliance in this area. Many schools are also developing their response to child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour, with increasing use of the “Sexualised Behaviours

in Children,” North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Toolkit.<sup>9</sup> This demonstrates increasing join-up between schools and the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership via the Education Sub-Group and the Practitioner Forum, which had oversight of the delivery of the toolkit. Information is also provided to children regarding sexual violence through PSHE lessons and more consistently across the curriculum.

*“...advice from external agencies is sought as required and education on harmful sexual behaviours is given to pupils in PSHE lessons and through tutorial sessions.”*

Across schools in North Yorkshire, self-assessments show that Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units grade themselves largely compliant in their approach to safeguarding culture and pupil involvement and awareness, with areas of development identified for some schools in relation to pupil disclosure, as well as building on methods of professional curiosity. School panel visits and scrutiny of quantitative data demonstrate that schools whose departments work together, are not siloed, show a more robust safeguarding culture that runs through all staff, irrespective of their primary role.

## **7.2 Pupil Voice**

Where safeguarding is prioritised, schools report that children have a “voice” in their school community where they feel heard and can see evidence that their views can make a difference. Peer-led, student voice sessions, supported by staff, provide children with a safe space to share their views and any safeguarding concerns are addressed with children outside of the session as required. Evidence from another school for children with additional needs made use of technology to ensure their non-verbal children had parity with the other children in their setting.

*“SEND students are given a voice on student panels. Teaching assistant champions are also allocated to SEND students who monitor and do regular check-ins or mentoring.”*

The audit findings identify that nearly all primary schools, both maintained and academy (99%), report having systems in place to ensure all pupils, including those with SEND, know who they can talk to if they have concerns or wish to report incidents. Children are also given guidance on how to share their positive views about the school community via their school council representatives.

Most schools have identified and addressed some barriers to children making disclosures, using a variety of strategies to promote multiple routes for raising concerns. Good practice includes regular safeguarding assemblies and PSHE sessions, visible safeguarding posters, and the use of worry boxes and anonymous reporting options. Schools also promote external help, such as Childline, and provide

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<sup>9</sup> [Online Flipbook](#)



child-appropriate information in accessible formats. Parents are also encouraged to provide feedback to the school via a variety of routes, with some schools implementing a “parent class champion” role to act as the point of contact for parents to feedback their views on safeguarding in the school community.

In schools that report a well-embedded safeguarding culture, leaders share that they understand that bullying happens in and around schools. Schools report having detailed mechanisms, including anonymous email addresses to report worries, as well as some special schools having alternative methods of capturing worries and the child’s voice by use of technology for non-verbal students. Audit responses and panel sessions showed that schools include topics on bullying in their PSHE lessons and the majority of schools state that they have processes in place to deal with this. Schools also provided evidence to demonstrate that they have or are developing a restorative approach to incidents of bullying and harassment, ensuring the safety of all parties during this process.

The Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey found that two thirds of children in years 8 and 10 think that school deals with bullying ‘quite’ or ‘very’ well with 49% of children in the same year groups indicating they have found school lessons about prejudice, discrimination and bullying 'quite' or 'very' useful. However, the survey data also found that there has been a statistically significant increase in bullying at or near school with a similarly statistically significant increase in pupils who did not share their experiences of this with trusted adults.

Both sets of information can be true in that, schools can have processes in place to address bullying at the same time as bullying incidents increasing. Similarly, schools can be providing children with methods to share their worries at the same time as children not feeling able to disclose their worries to trusted adults.

It is outside the scope of this audit report to understand whether or not there is a causal effect between these variables, however, it is suggested that the audit findings and Growing Up in North Yorkshire data is shared with the Growing Up in North Yorkshire steering group and the Working with Education Sub-Group for further examination. It is key that children’s views in this area are clearly articulated with school leaders who may wish to consider a review of their processes in respect of creating open and safe spaces for children to share their worries.

### 7.3 Training and Supervision

Supervision provides an effective means to support staff with safeguarding and with the broader emotional demands of their work. Visits to schools during the panel sessions saw some evidence of good induction training with appropriate references to practice guidance and policy as well as learning from local and national serious cases. Schools evidenced using a variety of ways to deliver that induction training, including the use of videos, quizzes and staff bulletins and had clear recording systems to ensure all staff had received and understood the training.

Those schools with the strongest compliance in this area were able to evidence accessing multi-agency training via NYES<sup>10</sup> and the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Training Page<sup>11</sup>. Staff training is delivered in a variety of formats, and this training extends to Governors and volunteers. Training records for Governors are maintained via various database systems, such as “Governor Hub” and, where practice is strong, and there is a dedicated role, the Director of HR takes responsibility for ensuring all staff training is up to date. A number of schools provided evidence on scenario-based learning activities, using AI in order to create scenarios that support staff’s understanding and implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff are encouraged to challenge their assumptions and to be professionally curious and where safeguarding is strongest, there are robust systems in place to record and monitor concerns at all levels. Schools are proactive in addressing local safeguarding issues, conduct annual reviews, collaborate across federations or trusts, produce and share “Key Local Themes” or “Safeguarding on a Page” documents, and ensure safeguarding leads remain up to date with local and national learning.

Many schools recognise the value of enhancing the supervision offer for staff involved in safeguarding. Special schools and Pupil Referral Units consistently demonstrate exemplary, structured support. For example, one primary academy has established supervision sessions for the Headteacher and SENCO with an Educational Psychologist. Other strong examples of practice include using structured group reflection tools such as Circle of Adults and Solution Circles to facilitate collaborative problem-solving and professional reflection.

Various schools provided evidence of weekly and monthly bulletins being circulated to staff and parents and those schools with robust safeguarding measures used the information in these bulletins to structure weekly, in-person safeguarding briefings where the information in the bulletin was discussed.

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<sup>10</sup> [NYES | North Yorkshire Council](#)

<sup>11</sup> [NYSCP](#)

*“InTouch Magazine has a monthly Safeguarding bulletin included for all staff, parents, carers and young people.”*

Schools widely recognise the importance of supporting staff who deal with safeguarding issues or disclosures, with 86% of primary maintained and 90% of primary academies stating they are confident in supporting staff managing safeguarding issues.

#### **7.4 Partnership Working**

All schools that were able to demonstrate strong Partnership working relationships evidenced their engagement with their local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and engagement in the local Multi-Agency Child Exploitation<sup>12</sup> arrangements.

*“Contextual safeguarding maps are created and are an expectation that they are shared at all Governors' meetings. Staff are part of the process of creating these maps.”*

Special schools and Pupil Referral Units were able to demonstrate exemplary practice, with 100% compliance in the area of contextual safeguarding, these schools are regular attendees at their local MACE 2 meetings and have taken part in mapping meetings when there are high-risk children attending their setting. This ensures that staff are informed about the contextual risks for their children and have a good overview of what concerns are arising in their local area. Schools that attend MACE meetings show evidence of disseminating information on themes and trends across their organisation and there is evidence that intelligence related to exploitation shared by school staff with police and the local authority has resulted in immediate, Partnership safeguarding responses. This demonstrates the true value of working in Partnership, particularly for our most vulnerable children.

*“The DSL and deputy DSL attend MACE, Youth Maps and Community safeguarding network and information sharing meetings.”*

There is evidence that staff use both the MAST (Multi-Agency Screening Team) Consultation Line to talk through safeguarding concerns and their Early Help Consultants for discussions to support providing the right support at the right time for children. The audit found that the majority of schools believe that children and their families can access the right support at the right time, (98% of DSLs from maintained primary schools and 95% from primary academies,) and where schools do not feel this is the case, they provided evidence of an understanding of how to escalate their concerns. Most staff record worries for children in their CPOMs system, and then action is taken by their safeguarding teams, which meet on a regular basis in order to review cases and discuss concerns and outstanding

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<sup>12</sup> [NYSCP](#)

actions. Schools have considered who should have access to what information, with certain access being appropriately restricted to senior managers, with systems also providing an audit trail of who and when a particular record has been accessed.

Schools that were able to evidence robust Partnership engagement were well engaged with the Safeguarding Children Partnership's various forums and networks and identified the use of the Partnership's "Information for Schools and Early Years Providers," webpage.<sup>13</sup> This clearly demonstrates the importance of developing relationships across the safeguarding Partnership and the positive impact this has on safeguarding in school communities.

## **7.5 Looked After Children and Private Fostering**

An identified area for development in the 2022/2023 audit was for schools to ensure they have a Designated Teacher for children in care, who has received the necessary training for the role. At present, all special schools and the majority of primary maintained and academy schools now meet this requirement, having appointed a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) and demonstrating strong collaboration with the Virtual School Head. Schools provided evidence that these individuals possess the relevant training, qualifications, and experience needed for this important position.

Of the 22 independent schools in North Yorkshire that submitted safeguarding audit returns, 4 did not meet the expectation to appoint a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) or demonstrate effective collaboration with the Virtual School Head. While independent schools are not legally required to appoint a Designated Teacher, the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnerships would recommend this as best practice. Qualitative information from the audits indicates that, in these cases, staff members have been informally assigned to fulfil this role, aligning with the recommendation.

Private Fostering<sup>14</sup> is a legal arrangement where a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a "close relative" for 28 days or more. A close relative is defined as a grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle (by blood or marriage), or step-parent. This does not include unmarried partners of the parent. Significant efforts have been made to share information across the Partnership to enhance understanding of Private Fostering<sup>15</sup> arrangements and the corresponding responsibilities which require school staff to notify the local authority when a child is living in a Private

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<sup>13</sup> [NYSCP](#)

<sup>14</sup> [NYSCP](#)

<sup>15</sup> [NYSCP](#)

Fostering arrangement. Nearly all schools now report being aware of children residing in private fostering arrangements with the question being asked and recorded on admission to the school.

*“All records around children's living arrangements, such as private fostering arrangements, are recorded on admission to the school and are kept on the school MIS system so that the DSL team can see who is LAC/PLAC or has an arrangement in place.”*

Given the resources put into the Private Fostering campaigns, it is heartening to see that there has been a significant improvement in the understanding of, and actions taken by school staff in this area.

## **7.6 Early Years**

Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in the early years have a major impact on their future life chances. The EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)<sup>16</sup> sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The Early Years section of the audit demonstrates that North Yorkshire schools have robust safeguarding arrangements in place, with high levels of compliance across all key areas. The majority of schools rated themselves as fully compliant with the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024,) including policies and procedures, supervision and staffing ratios, paediatric first aid, sleeping arrangements, and safer eating practices. In the very small numbers of cases of non-compliance, settings were able to provide a clear action plan in respect of how to address this.

Early Years settings have access to the Safeguarding Children Partnership's Schools and Early Years<sup>17</sup> webpage and twilight learning events delivered by the Partnership usually have approximately 120 people in attendance. These learning events are specifically for early years providers and provide updates on key safeguarding themes and an overview of local learning from reviews. Early Years settings were also involved in the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), where excellent practice was identified in the safeguarding of children who experienced domestic abuse. The join-up between early years providers and the Partnership is evidenced through the audit returns and demonstrates the key work they do in keeping children safe and helping them to become "school ready."

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<sup>16</sup> [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

<sup>17</sup> [NYSCP](#)

*“Our EYFS team all have their first aid, are aware of the risks of choking and are trained. Our school cook and our lunchtime staff team are also highly trained.”*

## 8. Areas for Development

Alongside significant evidence of good practice identified through the audit, a number of learning themes have been identified. These themes will be expanded upon below and recommendations will be made in order to improve the future of safeguarding practice across schools and early years settings. These recommendations will be approved by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive and actions will be monitored via the Practice and Learning and Education Sub-Groups.

### 8.1 Contextual Safeguarding and Prevent

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to children’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that children form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online have the potential to feature violence and abuse. In North Yorkshire, there are robust arrangements in place to support children at risk of, or who are experiencing exploitation and the BeAware<sup>18</sup> Child Exploitation Hub contains a wealth of information to support partners in this area of safeguarding. While many schools are proactive and reflective, a notable proportion are still developing consistent approaches to engaging with external safeguarding forums such as MACE and fully integrating contextual learning into whole-school practice.

There are several possible reasons for these challenges. It is hypothesised that some schools may perceive contextual safeguarding as less relevant to younger pupils or may not have direct experience with certain emerging risks. In primary settings, especially, staff availability and the need to prioritise immediate classroom and leadership responsibilities can make it difficult for DSLs to attend external meetings or cascade learning as systematically as they would like. Additionally, not all MACE locality meetings may feel directly relevant to every school, and time constraints can be a real barrier. Encouragingly, the majority of schools that have identified this as an area of development have clear action plans to address the gaps.

The Prevent Duty, set out in the Prevent Duty Guidance,<sup>19</sup> requires specified authorities such as education, health, local authorities, police and criminal justice agencies (prisons and probation) to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Schools must incorporate

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<sup>18</sup> [NYSCP](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales](#)

Prevent into their existing safeguarding policies, and a person's susceptibility to radicalisation may be linked to other vulnerabilities, such as those children who have Autism.

Most schools have clear leadership and accountability structures in place for the Prevent duty, with some schools adopting a Prevent lead or "champion." However, compliance varies widely across all phases, with some schools demonstrating strong practice, while many others have incomplete assessments or fail to share them effectively with staff and Governors. In the 2022/2023 school audit, the majority of schools reported that both staff and leaders had received appropriate training in terms of Prevent and radicalisation, with approximately 11% of schools indicating this is an area for development. Information from this year's audit indicates that, while staff are aware of and have read the policy, it is not always shared with Governors or trustees, indicating there may be a gap in their knowledge in this area. This is a priority area for improvement as robust Prevent arrangements are essential for safeguarding pupils from radicalisation and extremism and there remains significant inconsistency in the completion and sharing of risk assessments.

[See 9.1 – Recommendations 1 & 2 Contextual Safeguarding and Prevent](#)

## **8.2 Substance Use**

While most schools have substance use and smoke/vape-free policies in place, there is some variability in detail, particularly in primary settings, where only 63% of maintained and 67% of academy primaries fully meet the criteria. Free-text responses indicate that this is often because substance use is addressed within broader documents, such as behaviour policies, rather than as a standalone policy. Although there is no statutory requirement for a separate drugs policy under Keeping Children Safe in Education,<sup>20</sup> many schools choose to adopt one to clarify procedures, define responsibilities, and ensure consistent staff responses. The lack of a statutory requirement does not diminish the importance of having clear policies and robust education, especially given the social impacts, availability, and peer pressure associated with vaping.

In recent years, there have been several challenges reported by schools concerning vaping, and with vaping becoming increasingly prevalent, even among primary pupils, with 5% of Year 6 children reporting having tried vaping<sup>21</sup> (according to Growing Up in North Yorkshire 2024 data). There is a clear need for schools to educate children about the risks, and there has been a significant amount of work undertaken across the Safeguarding Children Partnership and by Public Health and MACE colleagues, including the development of the Horizons [Drink Drug Hub](#)<sup>22</sup>. It is recognised that curiosity

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<sup>20</sup> [Keeping children safe in education 2024: part one](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Growing up in North Yorkshire 2024 survey > Healthy Schools North Yorkshire](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Providing Information & Support for Drink & Drugs - Drink Drug Hub](#)

is a normal part of child development, and as such, some children will experiment with substances during this stage. It is important that children are provided with as much information as possible in respect of the potential risks associated with substance use, as identified in North Yorkshire's Substance Use Strategy, which outlines the importance of prevention and early intervention.<sup>23</sup>

While many schools are proactively planning to develop or update their policies, reflecting a commitment to improvement, this audit, as with the 2022/2023 audit, has identified the importance of having clear policies, raising awareness and reinforcing practices related to vaping and substance use in schools.

[See 9.2 - Recommendation 3 - Strengthening Substance Use and Vaping Policies in Schools](#)

### 8.3 Supervision

Supervision is part of standard practice in professions such as social work, health, psychology and across many third sector organisations and is well recognised as helping to reduce burnout and compassion fatigue. It helps in improving professional practice through self-reflection and evaluation, increases self-awareness and understanding and enables practitioners to better support children and their families. However, despite the recognition of the value of supervision, this audit found that a number of schools still rely on informal supervision structures. For example, 86% of primary maintained and 90% of primary academies report implementing formal supervision structures. For secondary schools, 86% of academies (an improvement from 68% in the 2022/2023 audit), but only 69% of maintained secondary schools report formal support systems for staff dealing with safeguarding issues. While it is positive that there have been improvements over time and that many schools report having plans to improve this, progress is often limited by resources and time. It is recognised that staff shortages, workload, finding a safe space, and cost can all impact on schools' capacity to provide supervision to staff members.

*"Budgets do not enable all staff to continue to access externally-led reflective practice or supervision (other than HT and SENCO)."*

The benefits of formal supervision structures being implemented in schools cannot be overstated. In research conducted by Barnardo's,<sup>24</sup> education staff explained the benefits they experienced from having supervision, stating, "It helped me tease out how the Child Protection cases I was involved in

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<sup>23</sup> [North Yorkshire Substance Use strategy 2024-2028](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Supervision in Education - Healthier Schools For All - Main report 0.pdf](#)



were affecting my life....made me more efficient in work as it gave me more headspace....reduced stress and increased my confidence. I had greater self-awareness and understanding, and it improved home and work life. It also helped me to see victims in my school, of child abuse, as survivors and gave me skills to deal more effectively with the children and their parents.” From this testimony, it is clear that the benefits for staff receiving good quality supervision are multi-factorial, aligning with the Strength in Relationships<sup>25</sup> practice model and supports North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s drive to become both trauma-informed and trauma responsive.<sup>26</sup>

[See 9.3 Recommendation 4 - Supporting Effective Safeguarding Supervision and Reflective Practice in Schools](#)

## **8.4 Governors**

A school Governor is a volunteer who plays a vital role in the strategic leadership and oversight of a school. Governors form part of the local governing body, which is responsible for ensuring the school delivers high-quality education and operates effectively and safely. A positive working relationship between staff, safeguarding leads, Governors and Trustees is crucial, as it fosters accountability, shared understanding, and a proactive safeguarding ethos across the school community.

Governors take on “link” roles, taking responsibility for various areas of school life. For example, one Governor will take responsibility for Health and Safety and another for Safeguarding. This audit found there to be inconsistent delivery of safeguarding training for all Governors, as, while Governors may have a key area of responsibility, they all need to be cognisant of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. As such, it is vital that Governors read and understand key safeguarding policies both during their induction and throughout their time on the board and that any gaps in policy understanding are identified and addressed. Alongside an induction programme, School Governors also have access to twilight sessions delivered by the Local Authority, about which information will be referenced in the recommendations section of this report. Some schools have identified they have plans to improve how their policies are communicated with Governors, and it may be helpful for these schools to learn from their colleagues in respect of how others have addressed this.

“There has been a culture shift for Governors too. Governors have become a more critical friend with effective challenge and support.”

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<sup>25</sup> [NYSCP](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK](#)

[See 9.4 Recommendation 5 - Ensuring School Trustees, Governors, Leaders, and Staff are sighted to NYSCP Safeguarding Information, and this is cascaded to all school staff.](#)

## **8.5 Information Sharing**

Effective safeguarding depends on timely and detailed information sharing between professionals within and between organisations. Alongside senior leaders, Governors are also responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of and have due regard to the principles and processes of The Data Protection Act 2018<sup>27</sup> and GDPR.<sup>28</sup> It is important that practitioners understand both national and local information sharing arrangements and that they feel confident in when to share information, when not to, and what circumstances require information to be shared without a family's consent.

Successive child safeguarding practice reviews have found there can be barriers to sharing information, which include a lack of clear processes, reticence to share information for fear of breaching confidentiality laws, and inefficient IT systems. This can be exacerbated by siloed working and a lack of understanding of different agencies' roles and responsibilities. In order to overcome these barriers, senior leaders in schools are encouraged to develop clear information sharing processes and to promote a culture of being professionally curious.

The audit asks schools to identify, "Are the principles from 'Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners'<sup>29</sup> being followed? 94% of maintained primary, 99% of academy primary, 92% of maintained secondary, 100% of academy secondary reported that they are being followed. However, information shared at the audit panel debrief session highlighted a recurring issue regarding the lack of timely and comprehensive information transfer from mainstream schools to Pupil Referral Units. This communication gap has, in some cases, left students vulnerable to risk, especially when safeguarding histories, behavioural patterns, or support needs are not adequately shared. Pupil Referral Units educate some of the most vulnerable students, and transitions between mainstream education and Pupil Referral Units represent a critical juncture in a child's educational journey, and one that demands robust safeguarding and continuity of support.

This absence of sharing information at this critical time can hinder the ability to provide appropriate interventions, potentially exacerbating vulnerabilities during a period of significant change. This also

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<sup>27</sup> [Data Protection Act 2018 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>28</sup> [REGULATION \(EU\) 2016/679 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL - of 27 April 2016 - on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC \(General Data Protection Regulation\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK](#)

has the potential to negatively impact on both children's safety and their perception of safety, and as such, it is felt there is need for further work in this area.

It should also be noted that the Alternative Provision Policy had low cross-phase compliance. While not statutory, it is important for schools to have a clear policy in case pupils are transferred to such provision.

[See 9.5 Recommendation 6 – Information Sharing and Strengthening Transition Protocols Between School Settings](#)

## **8.6 Training**

Strong relationships between and within organisations foster trust and collaboration. Safeguarding Directors in academies, Governors and Trustees play a vital role in assuring themselves that robust safeguarding measures are in place. When key information, such as updates from Designated Safeguarding Lead conferences, training opportunities, or learning from serious case reviews is delayed or fails to reach Heads and Designated Safeguarding Leads, it can hinder the implementation of effective safeguarding practices and risks creating gaps in knowledge and missed opportunities for learning.

While some schools demonstrated strong engagement with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, as with the audit conducted in 2022-2023, this audit has found that, in some schools, there is limited awareness of the Partnership's training and resources offer. It is recognised that senior leaders in both maintained and academy schools play a vital role in disseminating safeguarding information across their school community and as such it is of vital importance that they understand what training, newsletters and digital content is available to access. This audit also found evidence that information that was known to senior leaders was not consistently shared across the school community which has the potential to lead to gaps in knowledge regarding both local and national safeguarding arrangements and practice updates.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not just those in designated roles. Safety is based on trusted relationships which means children may not always share their worries to "designated" safeguarding staff. Schools overwhelmingly report that mechanisms and systems are in place for pupils to disclose concerns and evidence of this was provided in the panel visits and through audit returns. The information from the audit has been triangulated with Growing Up in North Yorkshire data which largely indicates that primary age children both feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have a worry, supporting the information provided in the audit. However, Growing Up in North Yorkshire data also suggests that secondary age children are less likely to feel safe in school (69% of

maintained secondary and 79% academy secondary) and are less likely to approach adults in school or make use of other disclosure systems schools have in place. This triangulation of information thus highlights a gap between policy and lived experience.

Evidence in the audit indicated that largely, schools are taking positive steps to make trusted adults more visible, such as wearing high-visibility clothing during break times and in promoting the use of “worry boxes” in the school. Panel visits also provided evidence that non-teaching staff, such as drivers and lunchtime supervisors, have accessed appropriate safeguarding training and are encouraged to participate in training sessions alongside teaching staff and designated safeguarding roles which is recognised as best practice. In order to further promote safeguarding being everyone’s responsibility, it is felt that all staff, in all schools, regardless of their job title, should receive accessible, up-to-date, and easy-to-understand safeguarding training that can be delivered “off the shelf.” Students should also be taught how to identify trusted adults both in and out of school and should continue to be made aware of other sources of support, including charities and partner agencies.

PRUs educate some of the most vulnerable students and, while the figures are low, some PRUs and some mainstream schools report gaps in information sharing during pupil transitions. This has the potential to negatively impact on both children’s safety and their perception of safety and as such, it is felt there is need for further work in this area. For example, only 69% of children in maintained secondary and 79% in secondary academy schools report feeling safe in school. The audit does not gather child level data, however this information can be triangulated with the Growing Up in North Yorkshire Survey which identifies that children transitioning between schools can feel less safe than other children with established links to their school.

[See 9.6 Recommendation 7 - Enhance whole-school staff understanding and visibility of safeguarding support routes.](#)

## **8.7 Children’s Mental Health**

According to the Children’s Commissioner 2025 Report,<sup>30</sup> the UK is facing a growing mental health crisis among children. The UK government’s Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision Programme<sup>31</sup> aims to expand Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools and colleges, and it is clear from the audit that the majority of North Yorkshire schools now have a designated lead for mental health and wellbeing, reflecting a strong commitment to supporting pupils

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<sup>30</sup> [The Children’s Commissioner 2025 Report](#)

<sup>31</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686d3640a08d3a3ca3b678de/Transforming\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_mental\\_health\\_programme\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686d3640a08d3a3ca3b678de/Transforming_children_and_young_people_mental_health_programme_2025.pdf)

in this area. In the audit, schools are asked, “Has a lead for mental health and wellbeing been chosen to oversee how the school supports children and young people?”

In terms of best practice in this area, the audit found that all independent schools and all Pupil Referral Units report 100% compliance. 95% of maintained primary schools and 93% of academy primary have an appointed mental health lead, with some still in the process of formalising the role or ensuring staff complete the necessary training.

In secondary academy schools, 90% have a mental health lead, and in maintained secondary schools, only 85% do, although there are plans in some schools to address the gaps. Those without a lead report facing challenges such as resourcing and capacity issues, meaning they are unable to appoint a suitable person to this role.

The audit data has been triangulated with information from the Growing Up in North Yorkshire Survey, which found there is a continued need in North Yorkshire for a focus on children’s mental health. Those children with additional vulnerabilities have significantly poorer wellbeing and resilience when compared with the rest of the population and girls from Year 6 onwards are reporting lower resilience than boys. Overall wellbeing among secondary pupils has declined over time, suggesting that emotional pressures may increase as children get older. It is well recognised that the benefits of taking part in physical activity support emotional health and wellbeing, and it is of note that the Growing Up in North Yorkshire Survey data also found a noticeable decline in girls taking part in physical activity as they get older.

Best practice evidence provided in the audit detailed initiatives such as myHappyMind,<sup>32</sup> and Project Marigold,<sup>33</sup> amongst others that are being implemented in some schools. These initiatives offer a preventative, bespoke, whole-school approach to supporting children’s mental health, exemplifying the importance of early intervention and prevention in this area. Where this is working well, schools report having both a dedicated staff member and a Wellbeing Governor alongside a distinct mental health policy, all of which ensures the delivery of a whole school approach to mental health. While not a statutory requirement, those schools in the process of developing a dedicated mental health policy may also want to consider how their curriculum supports children’s engagement with physical activities with a view to approaching mental health from an early intervention and prevention perspective, alongside having a pathway of support for children with established mental health challenges.

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<sup>32</sup> [myHappyMind - Empowering Children's Mental Health & Wellbeing](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Malton woman's project helping children with mental health | York Press](#)

*“Leaders in education should strive to create a whole school, college and university culture that promotes positive mental health for both pupils and staff. Parents, carers and the wider community should be engaged as part of this.”<sup>34</sup>*

[See 9.7 Recommendation 8 – Children’s Mental Health](#)

## **8.8 Safer Recruitment**

Safer recruitment is integral to effective safeguarding in schools, ensuring that schools can verify the suitability of staff and volunteers. It supports compliance with statutory guidance (such as KCSIE), which mandates that schools maintain a Single Central Record of all recruitment checks. Effective Safe Recruitment protocols contribute to a culture of vigilance and accountability, protecting children and reinforcing public trust in educational institutions.

The NYSCP School Safeguarding Audit highlights consistently strong safer recruitment practices across North Yorkshire schools, with high levels of statutory compliance and nearly all schools maintaining a live Single Central Record (SCR). Schools routinely complete required checks and demonstrate good practice in areas such as volunteer risk assessments and Governor DBS verification. However, the audit identified minor gaps, particularly in the recording of agency/third-party checks and non-statutory information. Currently, 91.1% of schools include additional details such as online searches, qualification records, and code of conduct sign-off, elements that, while not mandatory, are widely recognised as best practice. Expanding this practice across all schools will enhance safeguarding culture, improve inspection readiness, and support clearer accountability and risk management.

[See 9.8 Recommendation 9- Safer Recruitment](#)

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<sup>34</sup> [CentreforMH\\_CYPMHC\\_MakingTheGrade\\_PDF\\_1.pdf](#)

## 9. Recommendations

### 9.1 Recommendations 1 & 2 - Contextual Safeguarding and Prevent

Recommendation 1: Strengthening Local and Contextual Safeguarding in Schools	
To help schools embed local and contextual safeguarding learning more effectively, ensuring children are protected from risks specific to outside the home.	
Actions Required - NYSCP	Actions Required - Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and distribute a regular MACE contextual safeguarding newsletter to all schools, to summarise key local themes, trends, and learning from multi-agency child exploitation (MACE) discussions.</li><li>• Signpost schools to the 'Be Aware' section of the NYSCP website, containing guidance, tools, and resources to support contextual safeguarding.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actively engage with the MACE newsletter, using the information to inform safeguarding practice and staff awareness. Contributing to the MACE agenda and sharing information where appropriate.</li><li>• Regularly accessing resources from the 'Be Aware' section of the NYSCP website for all staff.</li><li>• Collaborate with key partners, including North Yorkshire Police (NYP), School Liaison Officers, and PCSOs, to strengthen contextual safeguarding responses.</li></ul>
<b>Success Criteria</b>  Schools report increased awareness and understanding of contextual safeguarding themes.  Evidence of schools using the MACE newsletter and 'Be Aware' resources in safeguarding audits, practice and data analysis.	

## Recommendation 2: Embedding and Sharing the PREVENT Risk Assessment Across All Schools in North Yorkshire

To ensure all schools in North Yorkshire actively support safeguarding children from radicalisation and extremism by understanding, completing, and sharing the PREVENT risk assessment with all staff, including governors and trustees.

### Actions Required - NYSCP

- Develop the PREVENT area on the NYSCP website, where schools can access:
  - Additional resources to support implementation and understanding of the relevance and application of the assessment.
  - An example of a completed PREVENT risk assessment.

### Actions Required - Schools

- Understand the purpose of the PREVENT risk assessment and how it applies to their setting.
- Complete the assessment accurately and in full.
- Share the completed assessment with all staff to ensure collective awareness and responsibility.

### Success Criteria

100% of schools in North Yorkshire have completed and shared their PREVENT risk assessment, as evidenced by full compliance in the next School Safeguarding Audit (SSA).

Feedback from schools indicates improved understanding and confidence in applying the PREVENT framework.



### Recommendation 3: Strengthening Substance Use and Vaping Policies in Schools

The implementation of clear, standalone substance use and vaping policies to improve consistency and address rising vaping rates among pupils, with a specific focus on primary phases.

#### Actions Required - NYSCP

- Promote the adoption of standalone substance use and vaping policies across all school types, especially primaries.
- Share best practice examples and templates to support policy development.
- Continue collaboration with Public Health and MACE colleagues to expand resources like the Drink Drug Hub.
- Integrate findings from the Growing Up in North Yorkshire 2024 data into training and awareness campaigns.
- Reinforce the importance of prevention and early intervention as outlined in North Yorkshire's Substance Use Strategy<sup>35</sup>.

#### Actions Required - Schools

- Review existing behaviour and safeguarding policies to ensure substance use and vaping are addressed.
- Develop or update standalone policies where needed to define procedures, responsibilities, and staff responses.
- Use age-appropriate education to inform pupils about the risks of substance use, including vaping.
- Engage with resources provided by NYSCP, Public Health, and MACE to support curriculum and staff training.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and education programmes regularly.

#### Success Criteria

100% of schools, including primary schools, have clear and standalone policies addressing substance use and vaping, supported by well-defined procedures. Growing up in North Yorkshire data will show a measurable reduction in reported experimentation with vaping among primary-aged children.

<sup>35</sup> [North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy 2024 to 2028](#)

### 9.3 Recommendation 4 - Supervision

#### Recommendation 4: Supporting Effective Safeguarding Supervision and Reflective Practice in Schools

To ensure all school staff across North Yorkshire have access to high-quality safeguarding supervision, with opportunity for reflective practice, enhancing their ability to protect children and respond to complex safeguarding concerns.

##### Actions Required - NYSCP

- Develop and share practical guidance and resources to support effective supervision and reflective practice in schools.
- Create and promote a supervision toolkit tailored for education settings.
- Promote the use of peer networks to enable schools to share good practice and support each other.
- Offer training and webinars to build staff confidence and competence in delivering and participating in safeguarding supervision.

##### Actions Required - Schools

- Engage with the supervision toolkit and resources provided by NYSCP.
- Implement regular safeguarding supervision for all staff, appropriate to their role and level of responsibility.
- Encourage reflective practice through team discussions, peer support, or structured supervision sessions.
- Collaborate with NYSCP and key partners to access training and participate in peer networks.

##### Success Criteria

Schools report increased confidence and consistency in delivering safeguarding supervision.

Evidence from School Safeguarding Audits (SSA) shows that supervision and reflective practice are embedded in school safeguarding culture.

### Recommendation 5: Ensuring School Trustees, Governors, Leaders, and Staff are sighted to NYSCP Safeguarding Information, and this is cascaded to all school staff

To strengthen safeguarding practice and leadership across schools by ensuring that school leaders, staff, governors, and trustees are consistently aware of, and engaged with, key safeguarding information, resources, and learning provided by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP).

Actions Required - NYSCP	Actions Required - Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to promote awareness of the NYSCP website as the central hub for safeguarding guidance, training, and learning, as well as additional resources - monthly e bulletin, forums and networks, as well as news and learning from local and national reviews. <a href="#">NYSCP Resource Overview</a>, <a href="#">NYSCP Training &amp; Learning Overview</a></li> <li>NYSCP updates at NYC governor meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a dedicated generic DSL contact point, and ensure it is registered with the NYSCP to receive safeguarding updates reliably.</li> <li>Embed NYSCP resources into staff induction and ongoing CPD, using accessible formats.</li> <li>Use internal communication channels to regularly share NYSCP updates and require staff to acknowledge key safeguarding documents.</li> <li>Ensure governance oversight by having safeguarding as a standing agenda item in leadership and governor meetings, and using the NYSCP audit tool to monitor staff engagement and policy effectiveness.</li> <li>Establish processes to ascertain staff and Governor knowledge, understanding, and implementation of learning.</li> </ul>

#### Success Criteria

School leaders must assure themselves that all relevant staff, including governors and trustees, are sighted to NYSCP safeguarding information and understand how to access it, and ensure that records of learning are kept current.

### Recommendation: 6 Information Sharing, and Strengthening Transition Protocols Between School Settings

Create and maintain a positive information sharing culture. Ensure that pupils transitioning between settings (Primary to Secondary, Mainstream to PRU, etc.) are safeguarded effectively and supported holistically, through timely and comprehensive information sharing that reduces risk and promotes continuity of care.

#### Actions Required - NYSCP

- Promotion of information-sharing pages on the NYSCP website via the usual channels of communication.
- NYSCP to co-produce with education settings a transitions process, using best practice examples.

#### Actions Required - Schools

- Senior leaders are encouraged to develop clear information sharing processes, to improve staff confidence and information sharing, and to promote a culture of being professionally curious.
- Schools to be aware of information sharing guidance as per the NYSCP website.
- Contribute to the creation of and adopt the NYSCP transitions process.
- Consideration of creating a “transitions coordinator” role within the staff team, to take responsibility for safeguarding information exchange before the pupil's start date.

#### Success Criteria

Schools will be able to provide evidence of standalone information sharing processes. Audit responses will reflect greater compliance with information sharing. Staff will report greater confidence in how and when to share information.

**Recommendation 7: Enhance whole-school staff understanding and visibility of safeguarding support routes, so all staff can identify and respond to pupil worries, even if their role is not directly related to safeguarding**

To close the gap between policy and pupil experience by ensuring every staff member can recognise safeguarding concerns, know how to respond, and can signpost both internal and external support options to pupils.

Actions Required - NYSCP	Actions Required - Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal safeguarding training packages to be developed and promoted for all school staff, regardless of role or responsibility.</li> <li>• Encourage and support schools to regularly review and evidence the effectiveness of their disclosure systems using pupil voice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all staff (teaching and non-teaching) are briefed on how to recognise safeguarding concerns and the full range of internal and external support routes available to pupils.</li> <li>• Make disclosure options highly visible and accessible throughout the school, including in wraparound care and for the youngest pupils.</li> <li>• Routinely gather and act on pupil feedback about their awareness and confidence in seeking help.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Success Criteria</b></p> <p>Success will be demonstrated when all staff, regardless of role, can confidently identify and respond to safeguarding concerns; pupils report greater awareness of and confidence in accessing support both within and outside school; and pupil voice confirms that disclosure routes are visible, accessible, and trusted across all age groups.</p>	

**Recommendation: Ensure every school has a trained and active mental health lead to strengthen leadership and support for children's emotional wellbeing**

To ensure that pupils understand who they can go to both in and out of school should they need support with their mental health or wellbeing, and that schools have a whole school approach, and a mental health lead to help support this.

Actions Required - NYSCP	Actions Required - Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote access to training and development opportunities for mental health leads.</li> <li>Learning from this audit will be communicated to the Growing Up in North Yorkshire Strategic Task Group.</li> <li>The NYSCP to share best practice examples via the usual routes.</li> <li>Ensure that settings are aware of specialist and commissioned services accessible via The Go-To website.<sup>36</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a designated mental health lead is appointed, trained, with dedicated time to support pupil wellbeing.</li> <li>Embed mental health and wellbeing into whole-school approaches, including safeguarding and curriculum planning.</li> <li>Monitor pupil wellbeing trends and adapt support strategies accordingly.</li> <li>Promote inclusive practices that support vulnerable groups, including LGBTQ+ pupils and girls.</li> <li>Promote "trusted adults" in and out of school, as well as alternative options of support for pupils and their families.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Success Criteria</b></p> <p>Evidence from School Safeguarding Audits (SSA) shows that all schools have a trained and active mental health lead in place, with clear responsibilities</p> <p>School pupil wellbeing surveys, and <i>Growing Up in North Yorkshire</i> data, to see improvements in mental health, resilience and wellbeing scores, particularly among, SEN, LGBTQ+ pupils and girls.</p>	

<sup>36</sup> [The Go-To - Emotional wellbeing and mental health](#)

## 9.8 Recommendation 9 - Safer Recruitment

Recommendation 9: Schools to record non-statutory information on the Single Central Record	
To support schools in strengthening safeguarding, supporting inspection readiness, clarifying responsibilities, managing risk and improving record keeping.	
Actions Required - NYSCP	Actions Required - Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Business Unit to share best practice regarding schools recording non-statutory information on the Single Central Record, and templates to assist schools.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To record non-statutory information on the Single Central Record as per the NYSCP-supplied template, to help enhance safeguarding culture and monitoring.</li></ul>
<b>Success Criteria</b>  Evidence of schools recording non-statutory information as per the NYSCP supplied template guidance, demonstrated by findings from the next Schools Safeguarding Audit (SSA).	

## Conclusion

The 2024–2025 Schools Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit reflects a strong safeguarding culture across North Yorkshire’s schools, with high levels of engagement and commitment evident in both the audit returns and the observations of panel members. Exemplary areas of practice are evident, particularly in safeguarding culture, pupil voice, and partnership working and schools should be commended for their constant drive to not only teaching but in safeguarding our children.

The areas of improvement that have been identified through the audit process will be monitored through the partnership’s Practice and Learning Sub-Group and the Working with Education Sub-Group. Information from this report will be shared with schools via the usual communication channels and the NYSCP website which will host a full version of this report and a summary document.

The NYSCP would like to sincerely thank schools for their continued engagement with the partnership and looks forward to continuing to work alongside schools in promoting the safety and wellbeing of all our wonderful children in North Yorkshire.