

Independent
Reviewing Service for
Children Subject of
Child Protection
Plans



Annual Report
2024-2025



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1. Foreword

This annual report covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. It provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) in relation to child protection.

The report highlights what is working well, areas of concern, and opportunities for improvement, supported by data from the 2024/25 period. It identifies emerging themes, examples of good practice, as well as identified priorities and development objectives for the next twelve months.

Child protection chairs have a central role in ensuring that children subject to child protection plans have their plans progressed, that their needs are effectively considered and that the plans promote improved outcomes for them.

There has continued to be work to ensure that the right children are presented at each initial child protection conference (ICPC) and that thresholds are correct. Alongside this, work has been completed with partner agencies to address the number of children who are subject to a repeat child protection plan, which has helped ensure more effective child protection planning for these children.

In the last quarter of 2023/24, a priority became for all conferences to be either face-to-face or hybrid conferences. This was a move away from conferences being held exclusively on Microsoft Teams. Over the past year, more than 90% of initial case conferences have been held face-to-face. Those conferences held on Microsoft Teams have been at the parents' request, with social workers sitting alongside them to support them during the conference.

Alongside the improvement in ICPC being held face to face, more than 45% of review child protection conferences (RCPC) are being held face to face. There is a focus on increasing this to 80% by the end of 2025; however, it is acknowledged that some parents would prefer their case conference to be held on Microsoft Teams. Observations of case conferences and direct feedback from parents indicate a positive response to face-to-face conferences, with many parents stating that they feel more engaged in the meeting when it is held in person.

During the year 2024-2025, there has been a steady increase in the number of children subject to a child protection plan, and the number of ICPCs convened has increased by 47% from the previous reporting period. However, we continued to see an improvement in the length of time children are subject to a child protection plan, which has been reduced significantly over the past two years.

In the 2023/24 annual report, it was recognised that there was likely to be an increase in children becoming subject to a child protection plan under the category of neglect. Nationally and locally, the cost of living is increasing, resulting in more families experiencing poverty. There is emerging evidence of the negative impact on children living below the poverty line because of parents' capacity to meet their children's fundamental care needs. However, it has been clear for those children who are subject to a child protection plan that the reason is due to wilful parental neglect and not poverty. Prior to children becoming subject to a child protection plan, support has been provided through Child in Need of Services or Early Help.

Throughout 2024/25, there has been work undertaken to improve and sustain ICPC timeliness. Child protection plans have been further developed to ensure that they are not only SMART but also driving forward progress so that children receive appropriate support

and are best placed to achieve good outcomes. It is a priority to evidence the rationale for any family to be escalated beyond child protection and into pre-proceedings.

2. The Service and Legal Context

2.1 The Role of the Child Protection Conference Chair

Child protection conferences are meetings that take place when there are concerns that a child may be, or continue to be, at risk of significant harm. The conferences are chaired by an independent conference chair from the IRS. The first of these meetings is an ICPC, with subsequent meetings being RCPCs. Where concerns relate to an unborn child, consideration is given as to whether to hold an ICPC before the child's birth.

An ICPC brings together people who are essential to the child. This should include parents, family members, the child (where appropriate), as well as advocates and practitioners who are most involved with the child and family. All conference members are those best placed to make decisions about whether a child is at risk of significant harm. Together, the conference members will make a decision about whether a child is to be the subject of a child protection plan and, if so, contribute to the plan to ensure lasting safety for the child.

All case conferences use the same methodology of the local authority practice model, Signs of Safety (SofS). It helps everyone identify the harm to the child, the complicating factors, the strengths within the family, and the existing safety around the child, which can be built upon. The chair will facilitate and help conference members understand what is required to happen to ensure the child's safety, using the SofS Practice model. This ensures that people are asked to use language that everyone understands.

Once conference members understand the concerns (using clear and transparent language) and the goals they are working towards (safety goals), the ICPC members determine whether a child protection plan is required. The child protection chair uses a scaling question to help participants consider this decision. If it is determined that a child protection plan is required, the final part of the ICPC will look at what needs to happen to enable the child to be safe from harm. This involves identifying the actions required, along with the people responsible for completing them, including parents or carers, and establishing a timescale for when the actions will be completed. This is referred to as the 'outline child protection plan.'

When chairing either ICPCs or RCPCs, the role of the child protection chair is to ensure that information is shared appropriately and concerns are discussed, strengths are identified, and solutions are established collectively to ensure that children are kept safe. The chair will speak with the parents or carers in advance to ensure that they understand the purpose and process. The chair will also ensure that parents or carers are clear about any recommendations and plans made involving them or their family.

The child protection chairs are all experienced social workers at a management level, but they do not have operational or line management responsibility for the child or young person. Wherever possible, to maintain continuity for children, the same

independent reviewing officer will chair all subsequent child protection reviews concerning a specific child.

Another key role for the child protection chairs is to provide independent oversight of child protection work and planning and contribute to raising practice standards. They track cases through mid-point reviews and child protection panels, escalating any concerns about practice. Chairs ensure that problems identified in relation to a child's or practice's progress are raised informally with the social worker or the social worker's manager in the first instance. The chair will then document this initial informal resolution process. Should the matter not be resolved promptly, the chair will consider taking formal escalation using the dispute resolution process. This process is built into the system pathway and requires a formal meeting to ensure a resolution is reached.

2.2 Profile of Child Protection Chairs in Hull

There are currently five permanent child protection chair posts: four chairs are full-time; one chair works part-time. At the time of compiling this report, the average caseload of the child protection chairs was 104 children. This represents an increase of 10% from 2023/24, when the caseload was 95 children.

104 - Child Protection Chair Caseloads

All child protection chairs are required to have a minimum of five years post-qualifying experience as a social worker and to be registered as social workers with Social Work England. The child protection chairs have a range of experience, including managerial roles in other services, and they have between 10 and 20 years of experience working in children's social care.

There have been challenges in the team throughout 2024/25 due to sickness absence, alongside the increase in ICPC throughout the year. This has meant that at specific points in the year, the IRS service manager has had to provide additional cover to ensure that conferences are held within the timescale and the service continues to operate effectively. When there have been significant peaks in workload, this has impacted the timely completion of mid-point reviews due to the prioritisation of case conferences. The fragility of a small operational team becomes apparent, and alternative mitigation and contingency plans that had been put in place with other services could not be utilised due to the already increasing demands on those services. The current contingency plan is for the child protection service manager to undertake conferences at points of crisis and ensure that no more than two staff members are off on leave at any one time. Additionally, to ensure adequate cover, no more than one staff member is on leave during periods of peak conference activity, which typically occur in July and September.

2.3 Supervision, growth, and development.

The IRS manager is committed to the learning and development of the child protection chairs within the service, ensuring that all chairs receive monthly supervision and annual reviews of their personal growth and performance. This promotes a culture of continuous practice improvement across the team. Alongside

this, group supervision is offered, and chairs have access to informal supervision as and when required, when they need to reflect on a case or immediate action is required. Peer supervision is encouraged and enables a reflective discussion using SofS regarding individual cases alongside a social worker, the IRS manager and locality group managers.

Where stagnation and complexity have been present in child protection cases, the chairs have participated in group supervision sessions with local teams to progress these cases. Chairs have also supported where there has been professional anxiety when cases are stepped down to a child in need plan. This has been done by attending mapping sessions and evidencing how safety for the child has been ensured over time, thereby reducing the risk.

The IRS manager holds monthly meetings with the child protection chairs. These meetings help the team learn and make changes that have come out of dip samples and audits. As well as encouraging their involvement in broader meetings of the wider leadership group. Chairs also hold bi-monthly development sessions, known as 'Stop the Clock' sessions, which focus on developing specific areas of practice and embedding changes to processes within the service.

Bespoke training has been delivered throughout the year for child protection chairs by Elia (SofS consultants), focusing on the role of chairs in improvement practice across the system. This provided an opportunity to reflect on practice and identify the next steps for chairs in improving outcomes for children and young people. Chairs are also able to access a range of training appropriate to their development needs and the specific areas of knowledge required by the needs of the children and young people via the local authority's learning and development service.

The IRS manager and child protection chairs conduct a monthly case file audit as part of the internal quality assurance audit program. This is integral to the improvement journey and has highlighted strengths and areas for improvement in service delivery, as well as informing learning and development across all those who provide services to support children.

The service is represented at the regional Child Protection Managers Forum by the IRS manager, which provides a valuable opportunity to discuss emerging issues and to learn from best practices.

3. Impact of work undertaken by conference chairs

Below are two anonymised examples of work that child protection chairs have achieved for children, where they have attended and participated in their conference. The examples highlight the impact of hearing the child's voice first-hand and how it assisted professionals in their decision-making.

Florence (12)

Florence has been subject to a child protection plan since December 2024 due to concerns around physical harm to herself, including self-harming. The child protection plan was implemented for Florence when she was an inpatient at a mental health provision.

As a professional group, there have been many challenges in understanding Florence's needs and ensuring that appropriate planning is in place at the correct times, especially around post-discharge and school holidays, when parents have felt more isolated in managing the risk. This is because Florence has not been open about her feelings, and professionals and parents have been unclear about how to support her best.

The family and network have had to face short-notice discharge with no planning, which was challenged by the SW team and child protection chair.

Whilst Florence has not been part of the conference process, her voice has been shared via a flipside worker as they were identified as the most appropriate and with whom Florence had the best relationship so that agencies could understand their views. This was Florence's request. Having Florence's opinions heard at the conference has helped inform professional decision-making and plan development.

Conferences have taken place more frequently to ensure that appropriate plans are in place to increase safety for Florence and support her parents during periods of heightened risk.

Ella (12)

Ella is currently subject to a child protection plan and has been for the past 9 months. She is currently residing with her aunt, under a family arrangement, but with a plan for Ella to return to her mother's care.

The social worker requested that the conference be brought forward early to close the plan. The chair did not agree with the plan ending; however, they did agree to an early review, as they were concerned regarding a lack of permanency for Ella.

Ella attended the case conference and was supported by the school. Ella was able to explain the concerns she had regarding living in her mother's care and what needs to change if she were to return. The social worker did not feel that it was currently safe for Ella to return to her mother's care at this moment in time.

The team manager disagreed that the case should escalate into PLO; therefore, the conference chair decided to put the case into DRP, and with a decision from the Head of Service, to issue care proceedings to ensure Ella has permanency. Aunt agrees to let Ella reside with her permanently. The chair wanted to ensure Ella had stability but also listen to Ella's voice about what life was like when she was living with her mum.

4. Child Protection Data 2024/25

This annual report covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and provides an overview of the key data in relation to child protection.

4.1 Overview of 2024/25 data

Increase in ICPC by 47%

There were 1213 case conferences held this year: 425 ICPCs and 788 RCPCs. Overall, this represents an 8.59% increase in conferences compared to the previous year, which in turn had seen a 22% increase. There has been a slight reduction in RCPCs being held, by 13.1%. However, the dynamic approach is ongoing, and we continue to see fewer instances of drift and delay in cases, with some cases being reviewed every 3 to 4 months rather than the usual every 6 months. In the majority of cases that require stepping down to a child in need, they are being stepped down at the correct time. Cases are being stepped into PLO in a timelier manner; this has been evident from the completion of DIP samples and feedback from the chair of Legal Gateway.

Throughout the reporting year, we have observed a significant increase in ICPCs, with a 47.2% rise during this period. We have seen peaks and troughs in ICPC requests, resulting in a steady increase of children subject to child protection plans, reaching its highest level since 2022/23, with 500 children subject to a child protection plan. There has been regular auditing activity undertaken to monitor and review the application thresholds for ICPCs continually, and it has been found that the case thresholds are consistent, with cases presented at ICPC being appropriate.

During this reporting period there were 18 families, 83 children who were presented at ICPC that did not become subject to a child protection plan, the cases have been reviewed by group manager and child protection service manager and in the majority of these cases it was felt that an ICPC was required, due to the nature of concerns the local authority had at the end of the S.47 enquiry. However, during ICPC, it became apparent that the children were not at continuing risk of significant harm and/or parents were showing motivation and capacity to change. Therefore, support should be provided through a child-in-need plan.

4.2 Themes arising

There have been two key themes arising in terms of children subject to child protection plans: the first is an increase in children subject to child protection plans for neglect, and the second is children being subject to a child protection plan for physical harm. Even though the numbers of children subject to a child protection plan for physical harm continue to remain low, there has been an increase, and the reason for this is a rise in risk of honour-based violence. These numbers remain low compared to the overall child protection population, equating to only 14%.

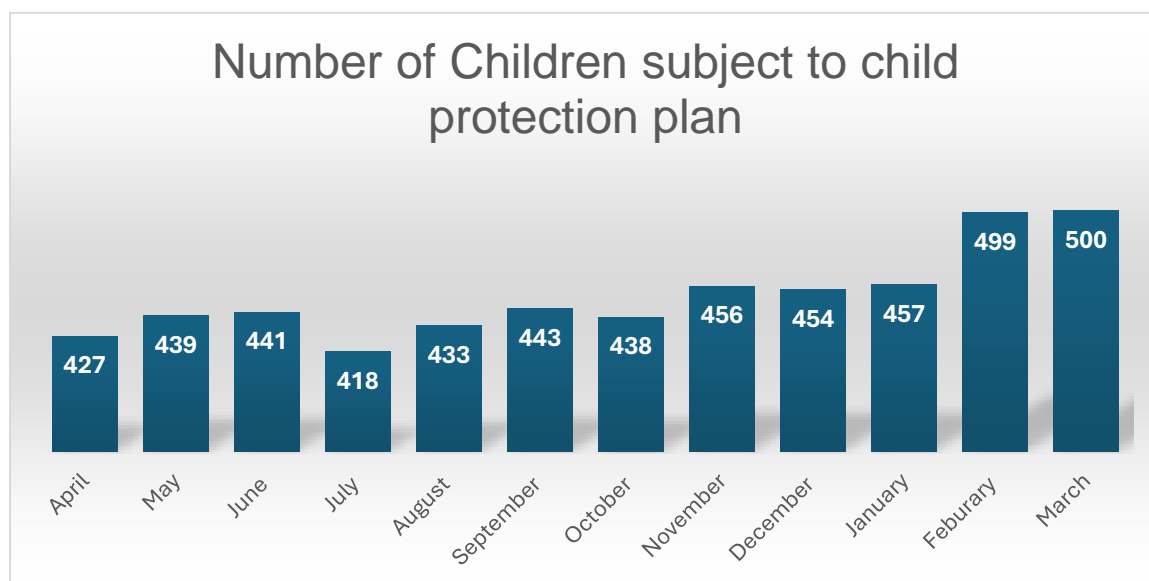
It is noted that maybe a requirement for further training to be provided to social workers and the partnerships on how to work with/ support children and young people who are at risk of honour-based violence as there has been some confusion at the conference regarding next steps and thresholds in relation to children who are not directly at risk of honour-based violence at present and whether they would be at continuing risk of harm as well as what intervention is best to support them. The training need has been highlighted through the principal social worker, both for practitioners, child protection chairs and managers, and she is currently exploring additional training that staff can access through next year to support practice.

In 2023/24, public health decided not to attend all review case conferences in the form of school nurses unless necessary and there was a direct health role that involved them. They are attending ICPC for all children, and if there is a younger sibling, they will provide health information to the Health Visitor. There were concerns that there would be a lack of health information provided to the case conferences, which would impact decision-making, alongside the case conference not being quorate.

However, this has not been the case, and health reports have been provided to case conferences. Other health professionals, including those who know the child/young person and are working with them, such as diabetic nurses and consultants, are now requested to attend conferences. Work between Helen Thackery (named Safeguarding GP) and me, has been conducted to improve the quality of GP reports for the case conference. The new reports ensure that the focus is on both the medical needs of the child and adults, and request that they analyse the risk to the child with the information they have acquired. This is to be embedded at the end of July 2025.

Children who become subject to repeat child protection plans within two years are still predominantly due to domestic abuse, which is a feature in 56% of repeat child protection plans; however, it is noted that in a majority of these cases, it is a different perpetrator. Social work practitioners do have a greater understanding of domestic abuse, and more bespoke training has been provided, which has developed their skills to ensure a better understanding of coercive control; however, there is a greater need for the same level of training to be provided across the partnership. This has been discussed with the HSCP manager to see if training can be widened to the partnership. These themes have also been presented to the domestic abuse strategic group to consider partnership training and community plans for children and young people.

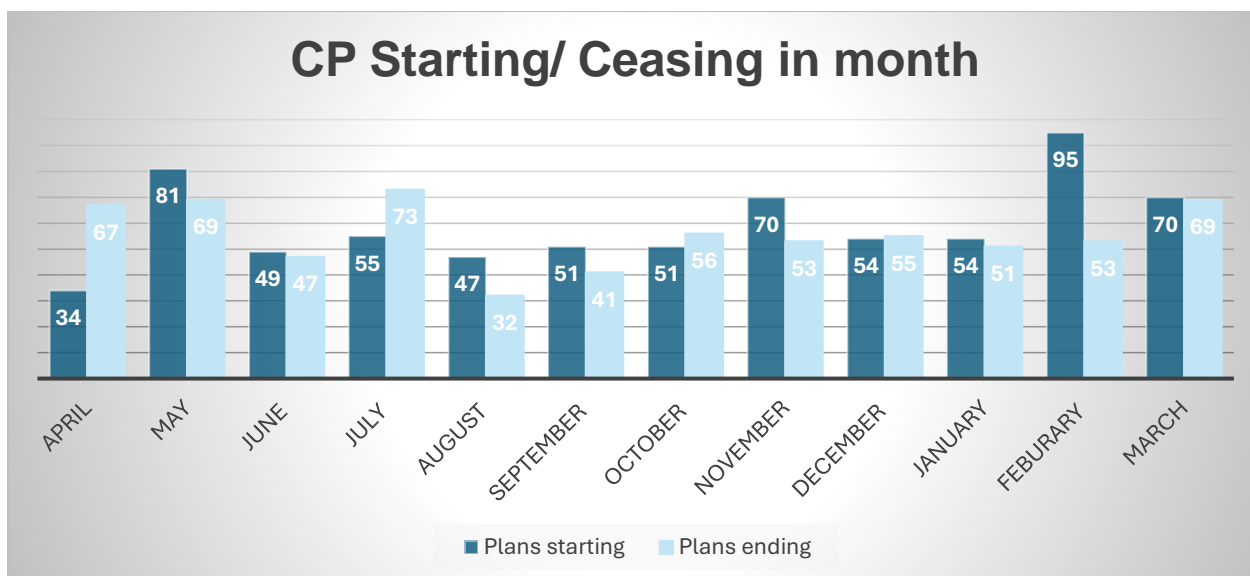
4.3 Child Protection Conference Activity During 2024/25



In 2024/25, a total of 609 children were presented at ICPC, representing an 8.1% decrease in the number of children subject to a plan compared to the previous year. Of those presented to ICPC during the reporting period, 83 children did not become the subject of a child protection plan; instead, they remained on child in need plans. This was usually due to additional safety factors being identified in the meeting. Child protection chairs have ensured that the agreed multi-agency threshold document has been actively used in conferences to promote consistency in decision-making for children. It is recognised that the number of children subject to a child protection plan has increased throughout the year; however, the number of ICPCs by children has decreased dramatically, primarily due to a reduction in larger sibling groups being presented at ICPC.

To ensure that thresholds are well understood across IRS, assessment and locality teams, joint dip sampling auditing has taken place, supported by a deep dive into understanding the emerging trend of an increase in plans that ended at three months, as well as children that did not become the subject of a child protection plan following an ICPC. The joint work highlighted that the cases being presented at ICPC were the correct cases, given the information available to social workers and team managers at the time. It identified areas of practice that can be strengthened, for example, family network meetings, harm matrices, and assessments being completed before the decision to escalate to ICPC. It has further been agreed that if a social worker recommends that a plan ended at three months, there is a discussion between group manager, the IRS manager, the child protection chair, the social worker and the team manager to discuss the threshold for the recommendation and how the risks for the child have changed in such a short period. This ensures that the right children are subject to Child Protection Plans and at the right time.

The challenge for the service is in terms of an increased number of children's child protection plans; the number of plans beginning has surpassed the number of plans ended in the month, as shown in the graph below.



Throughout 2024/25, the total number of plans that ended was 666. Although Child Protection Plans are increasing, more children's plans ended in 2024/25 than in 2023/24. There has been an increase in plans ending by 11.2%, with the majority of plans ending between nine and thirteen months.

There has been an increase in plans ending at three months, rising from 18.4% last year to 21.7% this year. However, this represents a notable change from previous years, with the majority of plans ending because the children became subject to ICOs or CAOs. We have also seen an increase in unborn children subject to a child protection plan, and then the local authority has issued care proceedings at birth. The current pre-birth pathway is that unborn children who have a plan of PLO or removal at birth are made the subject of a child protection plan.

Child protection chair oversight supports the reduction of risk to children and the efficiency of child protection plans by utilising the Signs of Safety to inform these plans, this is through mapping in case conferences and then agreeing on next steps to ensure a clear robust plan is agreed, whilst considering the wider network to ensure safety for children and young people. This has strengthened practice and been supported through the development session completed with ICPC chairs held by Elia, the home of Signs of Safety. The progress is evidenced by a decrease in drift, as well as escalations occurring in a timelier manner, and plans closing much sooner.

There are fewer delays in practice, and where change is not happening quickly enough, or is not sustained, then prompt escalation to the legal gateway panel and PLO takes place. Child protection chairs are also alerting the Head of Service, who is responsible for a child becoming subject to a child protection plan for a subsequent time, allowing them to have oversight and consider whether the case needs to progress into PLO.

There continues to be work done in strengthening the use of family network meetings, which are not consistently occurring before case conferences, to support the achievement of safety for children and young people within their families. However, there has been an increase in wider family members attending the ICPCs,

which has assisted in terms of safety planning and strengthening core groups. Work continues with the social work teams to ensure that network meetings are held at the earliest opportunity.

4.4 Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Case Conferences (ICPC)

An ICPC should be held within fifteen working days of the strategy meeting date, where a child protection investigation has been agreed upon. The table below shows the performance for 2024/25, along with the latest available comparator data.

	Hull 2024/25	Hull 2023/24	Hull 2022/23	Hull 2021/23	Yorkshire & Humber Region 2023/24	Statistical Neighbours 2023/24	England 2023/24
% ICPC held in timescale	87%	89%	63%	63%	82.2%	84.7%	80%

In the last year, 87% of ICPCs were held on time, which represents a 2% decrease in ICPC timeliness compared to the previous year. The service is completing ICPCs at a rate above the national and regional averages and continues to be higher than statistical neighbours. For those children for whom ICPCs were not held within the timescale, there have been clearly agreed interim safety plans. For 2024/25, it will be expected that delayed or rescheduled ICPCs will be alerted to the appropriate head of service by the IRS manager, and information on the cause of the delay will be disseminated to reduce the likelihood of future delays.

The reasons for those ICPCs held out of timescale are detailed in the table below, with late notifications and availability of staff being the main reasons for the majority of ICPCs held beyond fifteen working days.

Reason	Number of ICPCs Held out of Timescale in 2024/25	Number of ICPCs Held out of Timescale in 2023/24	Number of ICPCs Held out of Timescale in 2022/23
Late Notification / Team unavailable to attend	22	28	93
IRS Availability	16	45	17
Non-Attendance by Significant Person (social worker/Parent)	27	16	20
Non-Attendance by Other Professionals	7	9	7
Missing Information / Reports	0	4	
ICPC booked – stepped down	60	31	25
Administration Error	9	2	0

There have been various reasons for the timeliness of ICPCs this year; however, we continue to see improvement in the number of late notifications. However, spikes in demand significantly impact the team's ability to respond within 15 working days due to capacity.

Work has been completed over the last 3 months, both internally and with partners, to address late bookings and attendance at case conferences. There are clear expectations that all meetings will be booked within 8 working days of the strategy discussion, allowing time for partner agencies to complete reports and ensure parents can read these before the conference. There is weekly monitoring of the ICPC booking process provided to both the group manager and the Head of Service, allowing for any practice themes to be addressed with individual teams.

4.5 Child Protection Categories

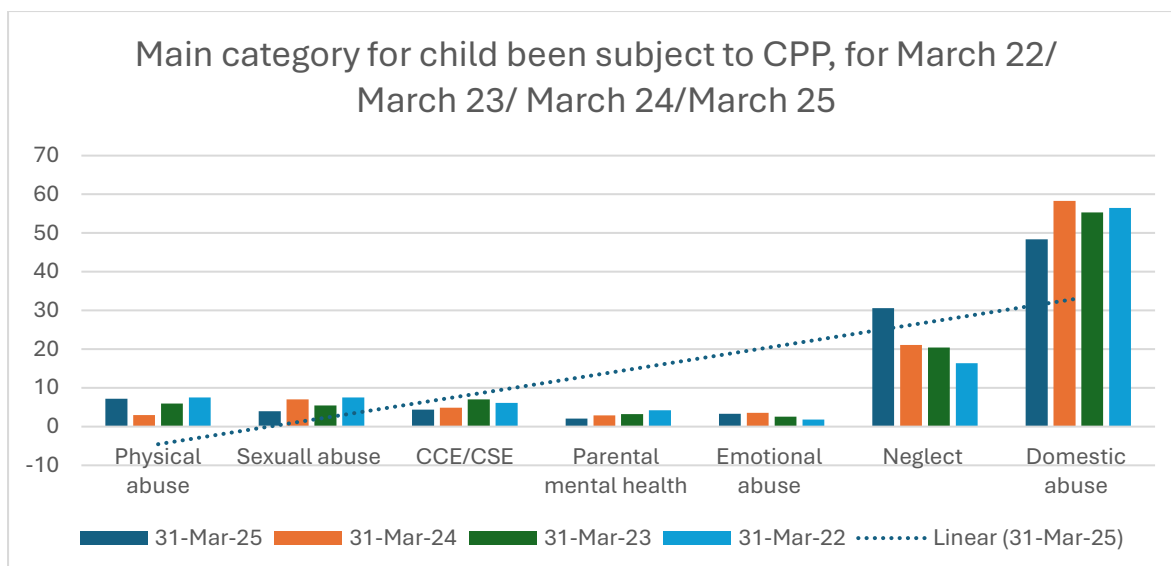
The following table shows a breakdown of the categories for children subject to child protection plans, with a comparison to the 2023/24 categorisation.

Child Protection Categories	2023/24		2024/25		% Variance
	No. Children	% Children	No. Children	% Children	
Neglect	172	36%	195	39%	+3
Emotional Abuse	201	44%	210	42%	-2
Physical Abuse	47	10%	70	14%	+4
Sexual Abuse	22	5%	15	3%	-2
Multiple	25	5%	10	2%	-3
Total	467	100%	500	100%	

The category of emotional abuse continues to be the main category of why children are subject to child protection plans; however, this has decreased by 2% from 2023/24, and for the second year running, we have seen an increase in neglect. Last year, this increased by 4%, and this year it has continued to grow by another 3%. Physical abuse remains relatively low compared to neglect and emotional abuse, but has increased by 4%.

A key theme remains for those children subject to a child protection plan. In more than half, domestic abuse is prevalent. This has been a continued theme over the past four years; however, social workers and managers are working closely with domestic abuse services and are responding promptly and working closely together to reduce the risk. Also, alongside the use of DALP practitioners within the locality services, we have seen a reduction in the length of time cases are open for domestic abuse as parents engage in more meaningful work. They can reduce the risk in a timely manner, which has seen a reduction in cases where domestic abuse is prevalent, escalating into PLO.

There has been further analysis to understand the key factor that results in children being made the subject of a child protection plan across the city:



Over the past four years, domestic abuse has continued to be a feature however, over the past four years there has been a significant increase (14.4%) in neglect, with a 9% increase in the past year; the current forecast is that neglect will surpass domestic abuse within the next 18 months.

Several dip samples have been completed, and a number of these cases have had non-statutory intervention as the case has been managed through a lead professional, i.e. health visitor or school and escalated to child protection quickly due to the children being at significant risk of harm.

There is minimal evidence of the neglect tool kit being used to support social work practice; this is a substantial piece of work the 2025/26 and should assist in multi-agency practice in helping parents understand the impact of neglect on their children but also the required changes to ensure that professionals are not so concerned about the welfare of their children. There is further work to be completed with child protection chairs and social worker practitioners alongside the partnership to ensure the tool has been used. Feedback received from parents is that when the tools have been used, this has assisted their understanding of the local authorities and professionals' concerns and what steps are required to make changes for their children.

In the last quarter of 2024/25, work was completed to understand the direction of travel of those children who are subject to a child protection order with a category of neglect that progresses into PLO and of those, 79% progressing into public law proceedings. The concern is that children are neglected, and a change cannot be achieved or sustained through a child protection plan; those children are likely to be looked after.

The IRS service manager became co-chair of the neglect sub-group, the sustainable aim of which is to reduce the number of children in the city suffering neglect. There is a key need to ensure that, as a partnership, we fully understand and take a coordinated response to children living in neglectful situations at an earlier stage. It has been stated that at times neglect can be seen as a secondary factor due to the focus being on the domestic abuse, physical harm, etc. There is a key need for us to

take a holistic approach to assessing children and young people, starting from early intervention through to PLO.

5. Mid-point Reviews, Informal and Formal Disputes

The midpoint review aims to track the progress of the child protection plan and address any practice issues to minimise drift and delay for the child. This is to ensure that high-quality service is delivered to children and young people subject to a child protection plan in Hull. Mid-point reviews have not always been robustly used throughout the service, primarily due to the staffing challenges detailed within this report.

In the last quarter of the year, the IRS service manager and Head of Safeguarding Standards have also added additional tracking meetings on cases that are 9 months or more, every 6 weeks, to ensure progress in cases where there is drift and delay. It is hoped that through added oversight, there will continue to be an increase and consistency in midpoint reviews taking place through tracking and oversight by the service manager and head of service. Any key themes from these meetings have been discussed with child protection chairs. Where necessary, conversations have taken place, either between GM and child protection service manager or a discussion between the head of services to address any key practice themes.

Since the introduction of mid-point reviews, there have been numerous examples of child protection chairs, social work practitioners, and team managers coming together to critically appraise the next steps. This has strengthened relationships, increased case oversight, and reduced drift. It has provided conference chairs with the opportunity to pose critical challenges in terms of practice, ensuring that social workers offer the proper support to children. Since the introduction of midpoint reviews at the end of 2023, there has been an increase in informal disputes, which are usually resolved between the conference chairs and team managers.

In 2023/24, there was an increase in informal disputes, with the majority of cases not requiring escalation to a formal dispute, as they are typically resolved between the team manager and the child protection chair. This trend has continued throughout 2024/25, with an increase of 54% from the previous year, as last year 34 DRPs were completed and this has increased to 74. There are three key factors for DRPs, which include drift and delay in case progression, delayed progress on recommendations, and inadequate preparation for the conference and support for parents before the conference. Themes of disputes are discussed monthly between the IRS service manager and the group managers for assessment and locality, and any key themes have also been raised within biweekly improvement meetings.

Additionally, formal disputes continue to be addressed and resolved in a timely manner. Key themes in the formal disputes have been the lack of progress in the case, the absence of evidence of core groups, and inadequate regular supervision. In several instances in which disputes have arisen, this has led to children being involved in public law proceedings (PLO). This further underscores the significance of the child protection chair's impact on the child's pathway in ensuring that timely interventions to address risk are implemented.

Quarterly child protection meetings have taken place throughout 2024/25, with attendance from the head of service and all group managers who have cases of child protection within their service area. Key practice themes have been highlighted, and areas of improvement. These have led to opportunities for senior leaders to challenge each other to achieve the best outcomes for those children subject to a child protection plan. This ensures that the experiences of children and young people in Hull are positive, enabling them to remain at home safely with their parents or carers. The service will use its expertise to ensure that all children and young people's plans are smart and focused on achieving positive outcomes.

6. Priorities for 2025/26

The development plan, detailed on the following pages, outlines the work that is planned.

Development Plan 2025/26	
Practice	What will we do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service will continue to focus on improving child protection plans, ensuring these are child-focused and include network meetings to ensure children can remain at home with parents/carers by providing oversight and scrutiny to plans. • The service will continue to provide support and challenge to improve practice for children, the subject of child protection plans. • To embed a face-to-face conference and a hybrid model, so more conferences are held in person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service will ensure that all children have an assessment and plans that are relevant and consider their individual needs. When this is not evident or timely, the service will provide appropriate support and challenge using the expertise of the conference chair to drive practice improvement. • The service will continue to provide scrutiny of child protection plans and provide oversight at midpoint reviews. • The service will ensure that network meetings are embedded into all child protection plans. • The service will continue to ensure mid-point reviews are taking place and are completed in partnership with social workers, so there is a clear record of the conference chair monitoring the progress of the plan. Every case will have regular mid-point review. • Work to be completed with child protection chairs about ensuring the neglect tool kit is being used. • All initial case conferences are to be booked in face-to-face unless the circumstances require the conference to be held on MS Teams, and increase to over 80% of review conferences

	<p>held face-to-face has increased to over 80%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As we move forward into 2024/26 the role Child Protection Chairs will plan in be part of Children's Social care reforms and shaping practice.
<p>How will we evidence success/impact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout 2025-2026 there will be an improvement in the quality of plans. They will be SMART and have precise trajectory planning and families understand the short- and longer-term goals to social work intervention is no longer required. Evidence of net meetings to be held which will drive plans forward for children and young people. 	
<p>Learning & Development</p>	<p>What we will do</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service will continue to embed a learning culture as part of the improvement journey. Feedback into the service is limited from both parents, children and young people and professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service will understand more of the impact of conference chairs raising informal disputes and DRPs upon children and young people. The service will develop feedback forms for parents, children and young people and professionals to understand the impact of case conferences and areas of development. The service will develop feedback from audits to support reflection, learning and development for service delivery. DIP sampling to continue to assess the impact of practice throughout the year. Child protection service manager to attend the multi-agency subgroup. Learning from the neglect subgroup to be fed into team meetings.
<p>How will we evidence success/impact?</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP chairs will have completed additional training, improving their confidence to be able to support them further in their role. • The child protection chair Service Manager will dip sample individual DRPs raised to review impact for a child to develop a deeper understanding of the impact and timeliness of raising DRPs and resolution for the child, and how this will be used in learning and development of the chairs and wider service. • Themes arising from feedback from parents, children, young people, and professionals will help us better understand practice in the service and shape any future learning/ training needs. • Domestic abuse and neglect subgroup, key themes to be feed into team meetings. 	
Voice & Influence	What we will do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service will continue to engage children and look at more creative ways to encourage them to participate and/or chair their own conferences. This includes ensuring children feel they are being listened to and their voices is acted upon. • The opt-out advocacy for children and young people to become embedded and for children’s voices to be more visibly heard in case conferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference chairs will contact where appropriate in line with the allocated social worker and ascertain if it is appropriate to gain their views prior to the case conference to understand their lived experiences. • Conference chairs will ensure that children and young people are routinely offered an advocate. • The service will continue ensure that children’s direct work is discussed throughout the conference. • Do ensure that the children voice is heard with the plan and next steps
How will we evidence success/impact?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service will be able to evidence an increase in the number of children and young people who attend or have their views shared within the child protection conferences. • The service will see an increase in NYAS advocacy for children, the subject of child protection conferences. Seek to look at a change in the contract so children can have an advocate at ICPC and RCPC. 	
Workforce	What we will do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service will continue to support the wider service pathway and additional investment in social work staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workforce strategy will assist to stabilise social work teams. • The service will have a team of permanent conference chairs and business support to enable service

	<p>delivery to children and be able to meet the statutory timescales of reviews and the distribution of recommendations and record of meeting following a review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP service manager is the joint chair for family decision making, which part of the social work reforms. Alongside CP chairs plan an instrumental role in the MACPT and LCPP.
<p>How will we evidence success/impact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have fewer changes in social workers. • There will be a reduction in adjourned child protection case conferences. • Conference chairs will continue to have a manageable case load and allow them better to understand children and young peoples' lived experiences to ensure an outstanding service is provided to them. • Conference chairs will be able to meet statutory timescales more consistently. 	
<p>Sufficiency</p>	<p>What we will do</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7-month child protection reviews to have a clear tracker in place in order to better evidence impact. • Achieve greater consistency across the service with regard to holding meaningful mid-way reviews to track and review recommendations and the impact of these upon children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP Chair Service Manager and the locality group manager to develop a clear attraction track and track actions at monthly meetings. • Multi-agency audit work to be completed and analysis, this to include key agencies, e.g., DAP, Women Aid and Probation Service. • CP Chair Service Manager to continue to attend children's domestic abuse operational group bi-monthly to feed in any practice themes. • This form will be developed in partnership with the locality head of service, to be clear on expectations of mid-point reviews and clear standards of practice.
<p>How will we evidence success/impact?</p>	

- There will be greater consistency in practice across the city and greater scrutiny and challenge where there are gaps in practice, resulting in better outcomes for children.
- Multi-agency learning and development, which can be fed back into the HSCP to address any wider training needs.