



B&NES Community Safety & Safeguarding
Partnership

Strategic Plan 2024-2027



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B&NES Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership

The Bath & Northeast Somerset Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership ([BCSSP](#)) is a multi-agency partnership which has been established to fulfil the statutory functions of the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Safeguarding Adult's Board and Community Safety Partnership. Our core function is to work effectively with our partner organisations with joint purpose to protect children, adults and communities who most need our help.

Community safety and safeguarding measures are fundamental to creating safe environments for vulnerable individuals, protecting their health and wellbeing and enabling them to live free from harm and the fear of harm, abuse and neglect.

This tri-part model has provided an excellent foundation to provide holistic responses to practice, reducing duplication and encouraging a life-course approach of 'Think Family, Think Community'.

This strategic plan sets out the priorities of the BCSSP for 2024-2027. It will be reviewed annually.

Statutory Partners	
Safeguarding Children & Adults	B&NES Local Authority
	B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire Integrated Care Board*
	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
Community Safety	B&NES Local Authority
	B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire Integrated Care Board
	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
	Avon Fire & Rescue Service
	Probation Service
Other Partner Agencies	
Curo Housing	HCRG Care Group
Royal United Hospital Foundation Trust	Department for Works & Pensions
POhWER Advocacy	Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust
Youth Connect Southwest	Developing Health & Independence
Oxford Health	Palladian Academy Trust
Healthwatch Bath&nes	Julian House
Southside	Voices
B&NES Carers Centre	Bath College
Salvation Army	Carewatch Bath
Action for Children	Bath Spa University

* The Health and Care Act 2022 established Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), moving them onto a statutory footing with the establishment of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs). ICSs are partnerships that bring together NHS organisations, local authorities and others to take responsibility for planning services, improving health and reducing inequalities across geographical areas. Each ICS has an ICB, a statutory organisation bringing the NHS together locally to improve population health and establish shared strategic priorities with the NHS. When ICBs were legally established, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were abolished.

BCSSP Vision

In B&NES, our vision for community safety and safeguarding is that we:

“work in partnership to develop a person-centred culture across organisations where the child, adult and community are at the heart of the work we do in ensuring people are safe in their homes, educational settings and communities.”

To make this vision a reality, we will address strategic community safety and safeguarding issues and work in partnership to safeguard children and adults at risk, ensuring that effective systems are in place to promote individual wellbeing. We will create confidence in practitioners to be professionally curious and strive to improve practice. We will support this through shared learning, from good practice and identified areas for development, so agencies can work together effectively to deliver high quality support and care.

We will ensure our community safety and safeguarding systems support our journey of continuous improvement and will robustly challenge activities, maintaining a strategic approach to verifying system effectiveness.

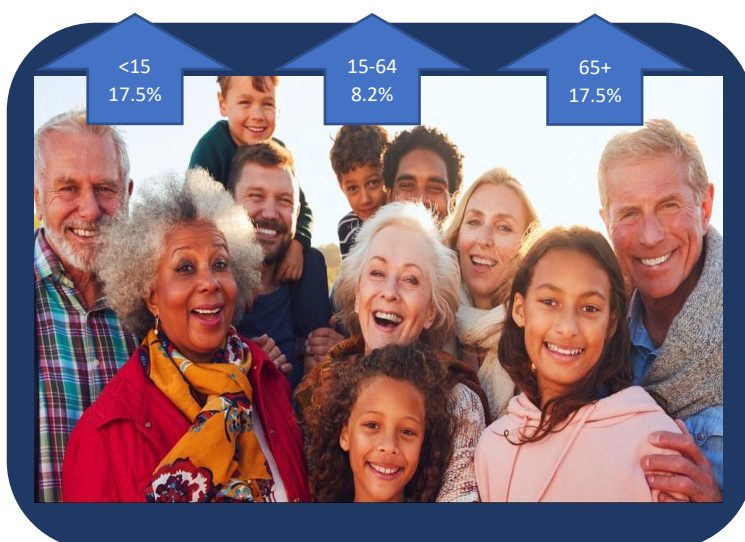
About Bath & Northeast Somerset

The 2021 census estimated that 193,400 people live in B&NES and approximately half live in the City of Bath making it 12 times more densely populated than the rest of the area.

According to the same statistics, the district is overwhelmingly populated by people of a white ethnic background with 85.6% identifying as White British – significantly higher than the national average of 74.4%. However, increases are observed across all other ethnic backgrounds and the area has become more diverse since the 2011 census.

Age

The 2021 census showed an increase in the majority of age groups population, the increase is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%) and the Southwest (7.8%). This growth has come from a combination of increasing student numbers at the two Universities and an increasing number of new housing developments.



Since 2011, there has been an increase in people aged 65 years and over, which is lower than the national increase. There has also been an increase in people aged 15-64 years and an increase in children under 15 years. The shape of the population is largely driven by the high number of university students.

Both the working age population (15-64) and the 65+ population is projected to increase by 2028 and within the 65+ group, the largest increase is projected to be in the 75-84 age range, followed by the 85+ age group.

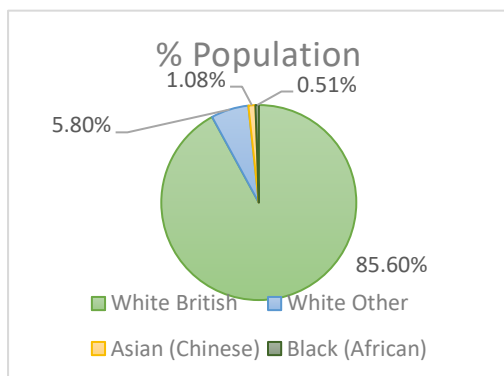
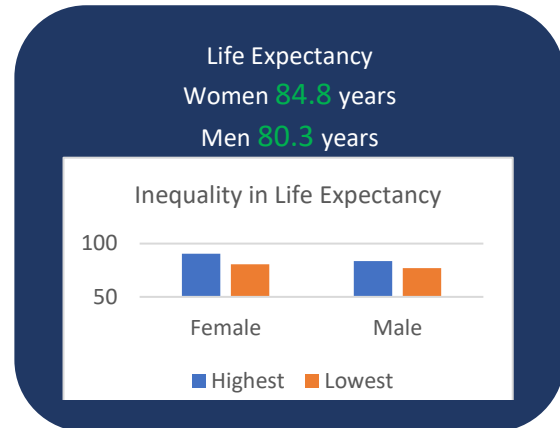
Nationally, although the proportion of older people living with a social care need has fallen, the projected increase in numbers of older persons still represents a potential demand increase for health

care. The State of Ageing 2022 ¹report suggests that 'the experience of being older in England is getting considerably worse for many' across a number of domains including financial security, life expectancy, disability and loneliness.

Health

Male and female life expectancy in B&NES has been significantly above England for almost the entire time since 2011 and the longer-term trend of a slowing improvement over time, as seen nationally, has also generally been evident in B&NES. The gap in female life expectancy in B&NES between the ward with the highest and lowest life expectancy is 10.1 years. The gap in male life expectancy in B&NES between the ward with the highest and lowest life expectancy is 6.5 years. As is the case nationally, although females live longer than males in B&NES, most of that additional time is spent in poor health.

Trends affecting future life expectancy, which are influenced by inequalities, include childhood obesity rates amongst those living in more deprived areas, smoking prevalence and drug misuse. Worsening mental health is also likely to have an impact on life expectancy.



Diversity

In the 2021 Census, 85.6% of people in B&NES identified their ethnic background within the White British category, compared with 90.1% in 2011. In contrast, across the whole of England and Wales in 2021, 74.4% of people identified their ethnic background within the White British category. Increases can be observed across other ethnic backgrounds and the area has become more diverse since 2011. The largest ethnic group (detailed) in B&NES other than White British is

'White: Other White', which excludes White British, Irish, Travellers and Roma.

Polish was the second most spoken language followed by Romanian. In addition to spoken languages, British Sign Language was identified as being used by 0.01% of residents.

Deprivation

B&NES ranked 269 out of 317 local authorities for overall deprivation in 2019, compared to a rank of 247 in 2015 (where 1 is the most deprived). B&NES remains one of the least deprived local authorities in the country and continues to become relatively less deprived over time. However, within some areas, inequality is widening, and deprivation remains significant. There are now two small areas within the most deprived 10% nationally.

Crime

The most common crime types in B&NES remain robbery/violence and sexual offences; ASB and public order offences; and theft & burglary. Overall, B&NES has seen a small reduction in total recorded crime since January 2019 across most types of crime. However, robbery & violence and sexual offences have increased over the same period, more rapidly following the re-opening of the night-time economy. This is in-line with national crime trend estimates, which indicate a decrease in

¹ <https://ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-04/The-State-of-Ageing-2022-online.pdf>

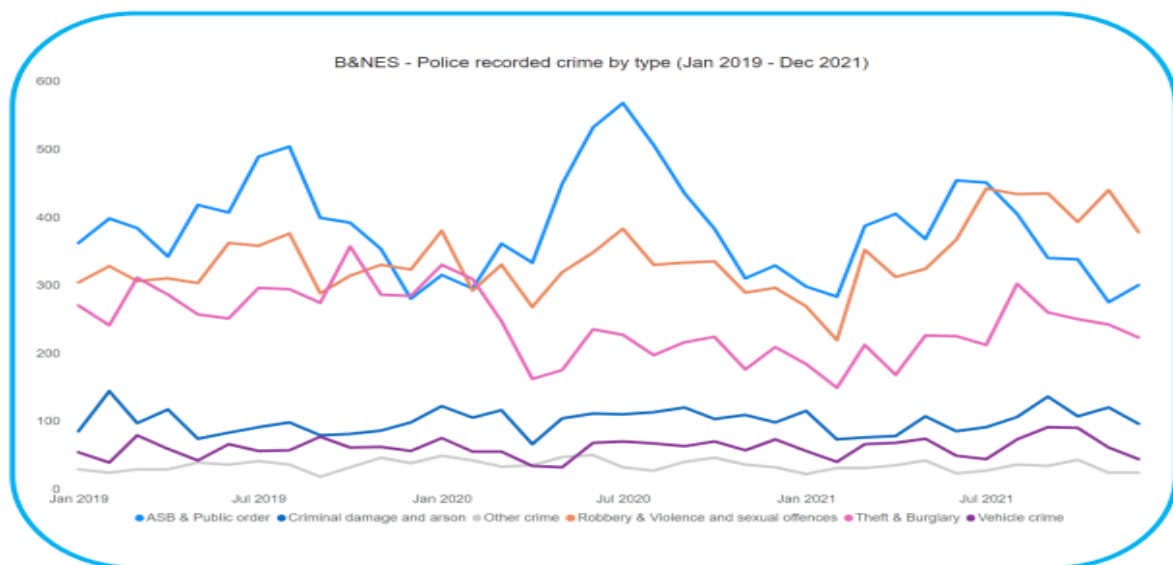
the incidence of many types of crime during the Covid-19 pandemic (excluding fraud and computer misuse), but with violence and sexual offences now exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

From July to December 2021, Anti-social behaviour and violent crime was concentrated in Bath City Centre. This is likely closely linked with the Night-Time Economy. Complex crimes with high levels of associated risk, such as Child Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), modern slavery and human trafficking are increasing, and this rise is expected to continue. County lines are becoming more prevalent in the Avon and Somerset region.

Nationally, B&NES ranks 22 out of 152 in all English single tier and county councils for total recorded crime. In the Southwest, B&NES ranks 11 out of 33 (lower ranks represent fewer crimes).

The crime types for which B&NES ranks highest are shoplifting (ranked 95 of 152) and public order offences (ranked 68 of 152) as well as bicycle theft and non-residential burglary (63 of 152 for both).

B&NES ranks particularly low for drug offences and possession of weapons (5 of 152 and 6 of 152 respectively).



Statutory Responsibilities of the BCSSP

As the BCSSP was formed from merging three different statutory areas of work, we must ensure that our practice is compliant with the responsibilities set out in the frameworks for each of these areas.

Community Safety

Community Safety Partnerships were introduced by Section 6 of the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#) and bring together local partners to formulate and deliver strategies to tackle crime and disorder in their communities. Responsible authorities that make up a Community Safety Partnership are the Police, Fire and Rescue Authority, Local Authorities, Health Partners, and Probation Services.

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) aim to reduce crime and the fear of crime, address risk, threat and harm to victims and local communities and facilitate the empowerment and strengthening of communities through the delivery of local initiatives.

The CSP has a statutory duty to:

- Reduce re-offending
- Tackle crime and disorder
- Tackle anti-social behaviour

- Tackle alcohol and substance misuse
- Tackle any other behaviour which has a negative effect on the local environment, and
- To prevent people from becoming involved in, and to reduce instances of, serious violence

To achieve this, a CSP is obligated to:

- Set up a strategic group to direct the work of the partnership
- Regularly engage and consult with the community about their priorities and progress achieving them
- Set up protocols and arrangements for sharing information
- Analyse a wide range of data, including recorded crime levels and patterns, in order to identify priorities in an annual strategic assessment to set out a CSP plan and monitor progress, and
- Commission domestic homicide reviews

and must formulate and implement:

- a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
- a strategy for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and
- a strategy for the reduction of re-offending in the area; and under the Serious Violence Duty (2022)
- a strategy for—
 - preventing people from becoming involved in serious violence in the area, and
 - reducing instances of serious violence in the area.

Where the reference to violence includes, in particular

- domestic abuse within the meaning of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- sexual offences
- violence against property, and
- threats of violence, but
 - does not include terrorism (within the meaning of the Terrorism Act 2000)

In exercising these functions, the CSP must have regard to the police and crime objectives set out in the police and crime plan.

Subsequent legislation built on the Crime & Disorder Act, including:

[Police & Justice Act \(2006\)](#) places a duty on responsible authorities to share evidence-based data and carry out strategic assessments.

[Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan \(2023\)](#) builds on Governments safer streets work and investment in communities to 'stamp out' anti-social behaviour

[Serious Violence Duty 2022](#) makes councils and local services work together to share information and target interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence. It also makes CSP's accountable for ensuring that a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence is in place even if they are not the partnership chosen to deliver the duty. In B&NES, the duty is delivered locally by the B&NES Violence Reduction Partnership who identify local needs and the most appropriate response and oversee the implementation of the Plan to Prevent and Reduce Serious Violence. The B&NES VRP is accountable to the Community Safety Partnership and the Avon & Somerset Force Wide Strategic Partnership.

Governance

In line with the Police & Justice Act (2006), the CSP must report to the Crime & Disorder Panel. In B&NES, this function sits with the Policy & Development Scrutiny Panel. The BCSSP Annual Report sets out what the partnership has done and how effective the arrangements have been. This report is presented to the Policy & Development Scrutiny Panel annually, once ratified by the BCSSP Strategic Board.

The CSP is one of the tri-parts of the BCSSP Strategic Board. The Board provide executive and strategic leadership for the partnership and are responsible for ensuring CSP compliance with statutory duties.

The oversight and delivery of the CSP priorities is through the Community Safety Delivery Group, task and finish groups and multi-agency partnership groups as required. Assurance of effectiveness is through the Scrutiny and Assurance Group.

Safeguarding Children

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) sets out that the three safeguarding partners (B&NES Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, the B&NES Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board) have a joint and equal duty to work together as a team to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in the local area and to include and develop the role of wider local organisations and agencies in the process.

Strong, collaborative leadership and timely decision-making are crucial to the effectiveness of multi-agency working and to identify and address system issues. The three safeguarding partners are responsible and accountable for this in their local areas.

Children's Safeguarding arrangements must include:

- Arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area
- Arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews
- Arrangements for independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the arrangement.

The purpose of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements is to ensure that, at a local level, organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

This means

- There is a clear, shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally across all levels of need and all types of harm
- When a child is identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm there is a prompt, appropriate and effective response to ensure the protection and support of the child
- Organisations and agencies are challenged appropriately, effectively holding one another to account
- The voice of children and families combined with the knowledge of experienced practitioners and insights from data, provides a greater understanding of the areas of strength and/or improvement within arrangements and practice
- Information is sought, analysed, shared, and broken down by protected characteristics to facilitate more accurate and timely decision-making for children and families, and to understand outcomes for different communities of children
- Effective collection, sharing and analysis of data, enables early identification of new safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats, and joined-up responses across relevant agencies
- Senior leaders promote and embed a learning culture which supports local services to become more reflective and implement changes to practice

- Senior leaders have a good knowledge and understanding about the quality of local practice and its impact on children and families.

Other relevant legislation:

[The Children Act \(1989\) \(as amended\)](#) main aims are to allow children to be healthy, allow children to remain safe in their environments, help children enjoy life, assist children in their quest to succeed, help make a positive contribution to the lives of children, and help achieve economic stability for our children's futures.

[The Children and Social Work Act \(2017\)](#) is aimed at improving the support for looked after children and care leavers as well as promoting the welfare and safeguarding of children.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) outlines statutory guidance for keeping children safe in schools and colleges.

Governance

Safeguarding partners should be transparent in how they co-ordinate, deliver and fund services for children and families and for others to hold the safeguarding partners to account, there are two mechanisms for reporting on service delivery and leadership: the publication of partnership arrangements and an annual report.

The BCSSP Annual Report sets out what the partnership has done and how effective the arrangements have been. This report is presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Policy & Development Scrutiny Panel annually, once ratified by the BCSSP Strategic Board.

The safeguarding children's partnership is one of the tri-parts of the BCSSP Strategic Board. The Board provide executive and strategic leadership for the partnership and are responsible for ensuring safeguarding children compliance with statutory duties.

The oversight and delivery of the safeguarding children's partnership priorities is through the various thematic delivery groups, task and finish groups and multi-agency partnership groups as required. Assurance of effectiveness is through the Scrutiny and Assurance Group.

Safeguarding Adults:

[The Care Act 2014](#) requires every local authority to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) for its area. The SAB operates at a strategic level, helping and protecting adults in its area from abuse and neglect through co-ordinating and reviewing a multi-agency approach across all member organisations. The approach the SAB takes directly influences how frontline safeguarding operations are undertaken in member organisations. Under the Care Act, the local authority, B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board and Avon & Somerset Constabulary are statutory partners of the SAB.

The main objective of the SAB is to assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect adults in its area who:

- Have needs for care and support
- Are experiencing or at risk of abuse and/or neglect
- As a result of their care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse and/or neglect

The SAB has 3 core duties:

- It must publish an evidence based strategic plan for each financial year that sets out how it will meet the above objective and what each member will do to achieve this

- It must publish an annual report detailing what the SAB and each member has done during the year to achieve the above objective and implement the strategic plan, and detail the findings of any Safeguarding Adults Reviews that have taken place
- It must conduct any Safeguarding Adults Reviews under Section 44 of the Care Act.

Other functions to fulfil its duties:

- Develop strategies for the prevention of abuse and neglect
- Assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance
- Assure itself that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused, working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- Ensure agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
- Assure itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area.

Other relevant legislation:

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act \(2006\)](#) enables employers to check the suitability of employees or volunteers to work with children or vulnerable adults.

[Health and Social Care Act \(2022\)](#) introduced measures to make it easier for health and care organisations to deliver joined up care for people who rely on multiple different services. It also introduced a new duty that extended the role of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) into integrated care systems and local authority adult social care, meaning it will review, assess and report on these functions.

[Mental Capacity Act \(2005\)](#) promotes and safeguards decision making within a legal framework by empowering people to make decisions for themselves wherever possible and by protecting people who lack capacity by providing a flexible framework that places individuals at the centre of the decision-making process.

Governance

The BCSSP Annual Report sets out what the partnership has done and how effective the arrangements have been. This report is presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Policy & Development Scrutiny Panel annually, once ratified by the BCSSP Strategic Board.

The SAB is one of the tri-parts of the BCSSP Strategic Board. The Board provide executive and strategic leadership for the partnership and are responsible for ensuring safeguarding adult compliance with statutory duties.

The oversight and delivery of the SABs priorities is through the various thematic delivery groups, task and finish groups and multi-agency partnership groups as required. Assurance of effectiveness is through the Scrutiny and Assurance Group.

Core Functions

To ensure compliance with its statutory responsibilities, the BCSSP has identified the following core functions.

Inter-agency Policies and Procedures

Developing interagency policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults. Implementing actions and interventions concerning crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Planning and Reporting

Develop and publish a strategic plan setting out how we will meet our objectives and how partner agencies will contribute. Publish an annual report detailing how effective our work as a partnership has been.

Monitoring Safeguarding Activity and Performance

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of preventative strategies and the actions of partners and agreeing standards for continuous learning and improvement.

Scrutiny and Quality Assurance

Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of actions taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, adults and communities, evidencing the outcomes and developing best practice.

Communication and Engagement

Promoting awareness of safeguarding and community safety and communicating the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, adults and communities so that professionals, organisations and the public can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to concerns.

Reviews of Practice

Undertaking and commissioning Domestic Homicide Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews. We also can consider and undertake discretionary reviews where it is felt there is learning to be gained.

Training and Staff Development

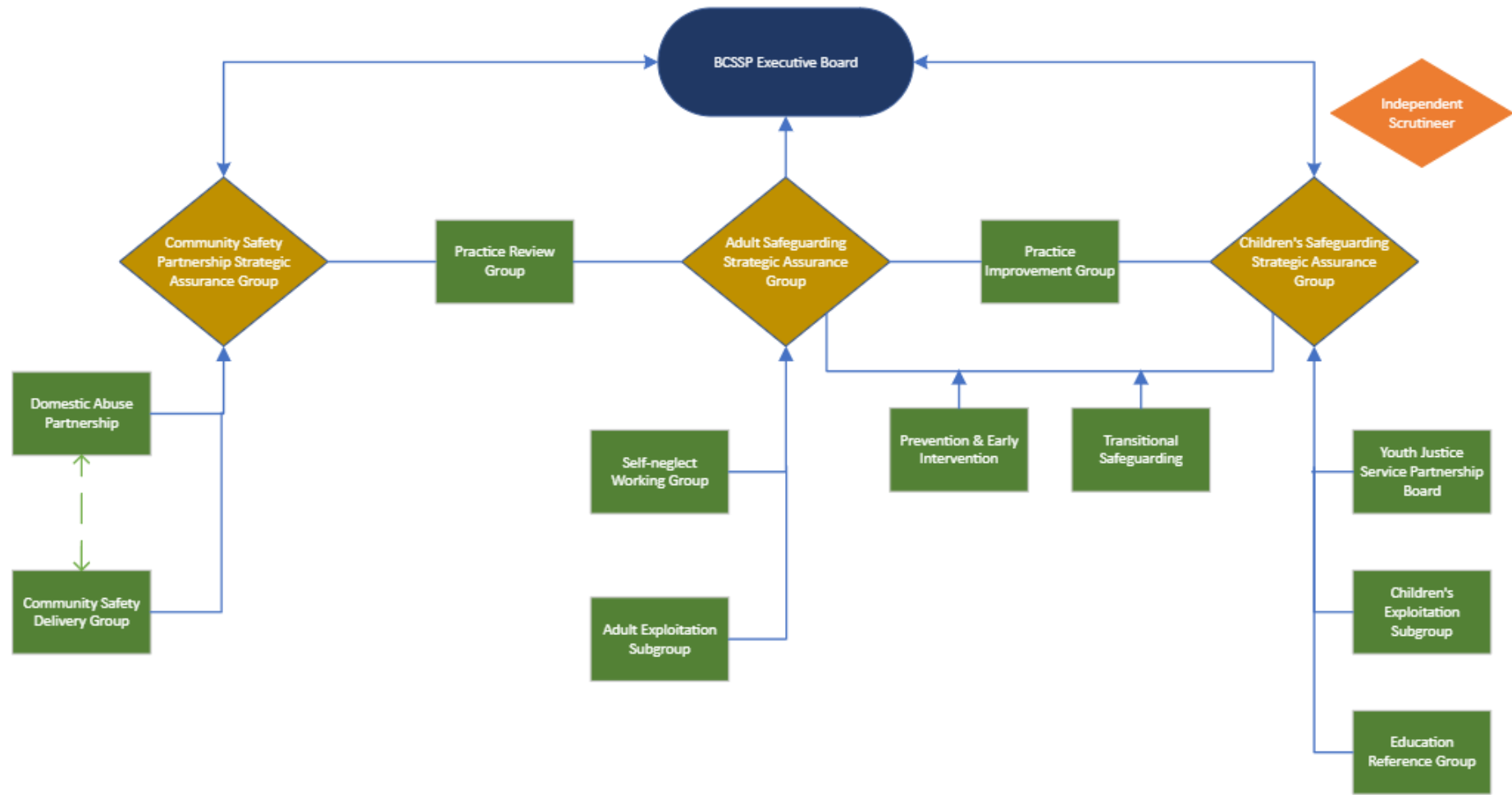
Develop, deliver and evaluate high quality, multi-agency training programmes that meet the training requirements of the local workforce to ensure confidence and competence in carrying out their roles.

Governance Structure

We commissioned the LGA to undertake an independent review of our partnership arrangements in 2022, which highlighted many strengths and some recommendations for change. In response to the recommendations, we reviewed the composition of the partnership to ensure effective involvement at an appropriate level. It was also noted that the structure of the partnership was creating some challenges regarding clarity for accountability and focus, and in consultation with our partners we have developed a new structure, as set out below. (Fig.1)

We know that to continue to improve we need committed, consistent senior leadership; the right level of engagement and resources from partner organisations; and the right governance structure and arrangements. This includes a precise approach to the sharing of relevant qualitative and quantitative information, enabling us to improve our proactive approach to holding agencies to account. We also need to be cited on related risks agencies are responding to that may impact upon community safety and safeguarding.

Fig.1 BCSSP Governance Structure



Our Priorities for 2024-2027

Our priorities in this strategic plan have been identified through a range of evidence. This includes learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews, bringing executive partners together for two development days and consulting with wider partners. We have also considered current legislation, national, regional and local plans, local strategic needs assessment, including crime and disorder, public health and housing.

Community Safety Priorities

The Avon & Somerset Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) produces a Police and Crime Plan for Avon & Somerset. The [B&NES joint community safety plan](#), in line with statutory requirements, identifies evidence driven priorities for B&NES whilst being mindful of supporting the OPCC priorities. B&NES joint community safety plan is produced with the Avon & Somerset Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and our local priorities are:

- Protecting the most vulnerable from harm
- Strengthen and improve local communities to improve outcomes for local people

The overarching community safety priorities of the BCSSP are:

Priority 1: To develop the strategic oversight and scrutiny of the CSP arrangements

Priority 2: We will further develop our work with partners to prevent people from becoming involved in and reduce instances of serious violence.

Priority 3: Continue to identify opportunities for longer term funding to reduce domestic abuse incidents and improve outcomes for survivors.

Safeguarding Children Priorities

Priority 1: We will strengthen the role of education in the partnership.

Priority 2: Ensure a child-centred approach with a whole family focus.

Priority 3: Keeping children and young people safe from harm from exploitation.

Safeguarding Adults Priorities

Priority 1: Improve understanding of and support professionals to work with those individuals who self-neglect.

Priority 2: We will create confidence in practitioners in the application of the Mental Capacity Act and understanding of the interplay with the Mental health Act.

Priority 3: We will connect with our communities and hear their voice within the partnership.

Overarching Priorities

Priority 1: Have policies and procedures that are current and in line with best practice.

Priority 2: We will create confidence in practitioners to be professionally curious and improve this practice.

Priority 3: We will ensure effective collection, sharing and analysis of data, enabling early identification of community safety and safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats, and joined-up responses across relevant agencies.

Priority 4: Ensure clear transitional arrangements are in place between children's and young adults services.

Scrutiny & Assurance

Our scrutiny and quality assurance framework is based on six key principles that guide our approach to understanding how well our community safety and safeguarding systems are delivering for children, adults in need of care support and our wider communities.

Strategic Governance: Partners are actively involved in strategic planning.

Collaborative: the wider partners are actively involved and represented across the partnership.

Holistic: Children, young people, families and adults at risk are listened to and help shape services.

Challenging: Tools are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing. Evidence informed challenge is welcome.

Learning & Improvement: There is a process for identifying, investigating and sharing learning from reviews.

Training & Development: there is a programme of multi-agency training that is reflective of partners requirements and responsive to arising risks.