



Swindon
Safeguarding
Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026

Executive Summary



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This Annual Report highlights the progress made by Swindon Safeguarding Partnership during 2025-26 in strengthening safeguarding arrangements for children, young people, and adults with care and support needs. Throughout the year, the Partnership has focused on developing a stronger culture of accountability, improving the use of data and performance information, embedding learning from reviews and audits, and increasing the influence of lived experience on strategic decision-making.

A key achievement has been the strengthening of governance, assurance, and performance oversight. The Partnership introduced a refreshed Quality Assurance Framework, enhanced performance dashboards, and appointed a dedicated Data Performance Analyst. These developments have enabled a shift from reporting activity towards better understanding the impact safeguarding services are having on outcomes for residents. Independent scrutiny has further strengthened accountability, challenge, and strategic focus across the safeguarding system.

Significant progress has been made within adult safeguarding. Swindon Borough Council's Adult Social Care services achieved an improved Care Quality Commission rating of "Good", reflecting strengthened governance, effective partnership working, and strong safeguarding arrangements. The Adult Safeguarding Service introduced a redesigned operating model, improved managerial oversight through dashboards, and implemented more responsive safeguarding processes. The Rough Sleeping Service also demonstrated positive outcomes through strengthened partnership working, with rough sleeping numbers reducing significantly during the year.

For children, the improvement journey has continued positively. Ofsted recognised stronger permanence arrangements for children in care, improved placement stability, and increased investment in leadership and service improvement. However, challenges remain regarding consistency of practice, placement sufficiency, and ensuring children's voices are fully embedded within service design and decision-making. Neglect continues to be the most prevalent safeguarding concern and has been identified as a priority area for further partnership improvement.

The Partnership has also made important progress in preparing for the Families First Partnership Programme, establishing governance arrangements, workforce planning, Family Help workstreams, and the development of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams. This work positions Swindon well for the phased implementation of national reforms through to 2027.

The Partnership refreshed its strategic priorities around four core themes: Child Sexual Abuse, Neglect, Self-Neglect, and All-Age Exploitation. These priorities reflect a clear commitment to strengthening the partnership response to some of the most significant safeguarding risks facing children, young people, and adults. They reinforce a shared responsibility for prevention, identification, and intervention, ensuring that safeguarding remains everyone's business and that children and adults continue to be at the centre of decision-making.

Across these priority safeguarding themes, notable progress has been made. Strategies have been updated, training and practitioner resources expanded, and a range of audits and assurance activities completed. While these activities have strengthened awareness, learning, and governance, evidence continues to show variability in frontline practice and the need to improve how learning translates into measurable improvements for children and adults.

The Partnership has continued to strengthen learning and development through a blended learning programme, themed safeguarding campaigns, practitioner forums, and the launch of the Safeguarding Partnership Learning Hub. Evaluation demonstrates improved practitioner knowledge and confidence, particularly in relation to exploitation and child sexual abuse, although further work is needed to evidence long-term impact on practice and outcomes.

A recurring theme throughout safeguarding reviews, audits, and assurance activity has been the importance of early intervention, professional curiosity, effective challenge, information sharing, and stronger responses to neglect, self-neglect, exploitation, and complex vulnerability. The Partnership has responded by developing clear improvement plans and strengthening oversight arrangements to ensure learning leads to meaningful change.

Looking ahead to 2026-27, the Partnership's primary focus will be on embedding improvements into everyday practice, strengthening accountability, increasing the use of data to evidence impact, and ensuring that the voices of children, young people, adults, and families shape both strategic priorities and service delivery. While challenges remain, the Partnership is in a stronger position than at the start of the year, demonstrating greater maturity, stronger collaboration, and a clearer focus on improving outcomes for the people of Swindon.