



Welcome to the 2022-23



Children & Young People's Third Annual Report

for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership



We, the children and young people of Norfolk say what we think and value the opportunities provided to hear our voice. We like it when you invest in building relationships with us so we feel listened to.



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership




flourish



About us

Welcome to the children and young people's third annual report for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP).

Young people from Norfolk's In Care Council, South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board and Dragons worked with members of the NSCP Business Unit, an Independent Scrutineer and Norfolk County Council's Strategic Lead for Youth and Participation to produce this report. We take our responsibility to represent our peers seriously and are happy to share our understanding and experience of safeguarding so we can help the partners understand what it's like to be child or young person growing up in Norfolk today.



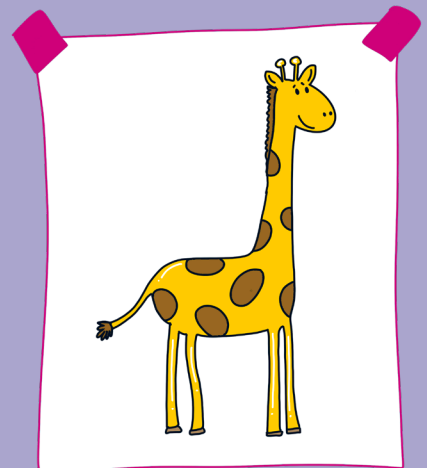
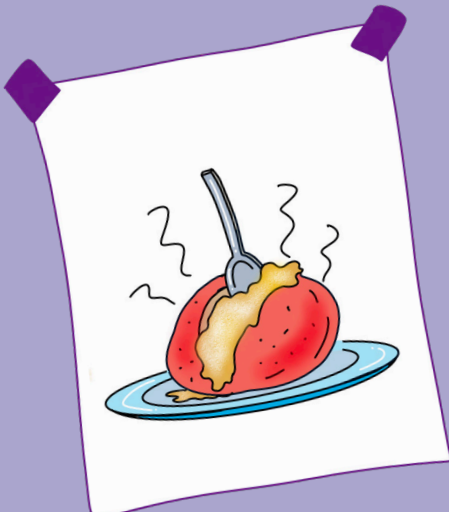
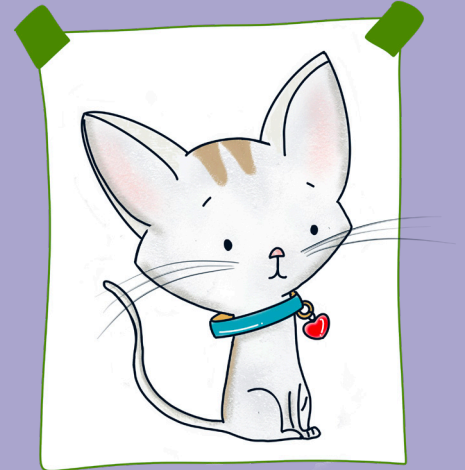
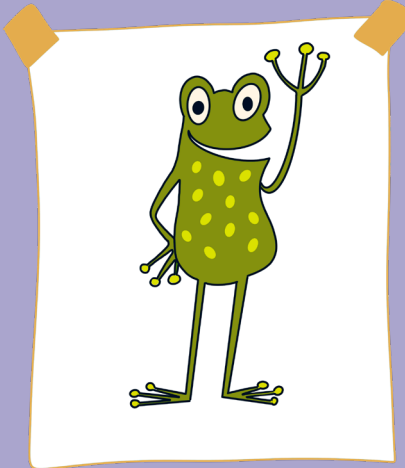
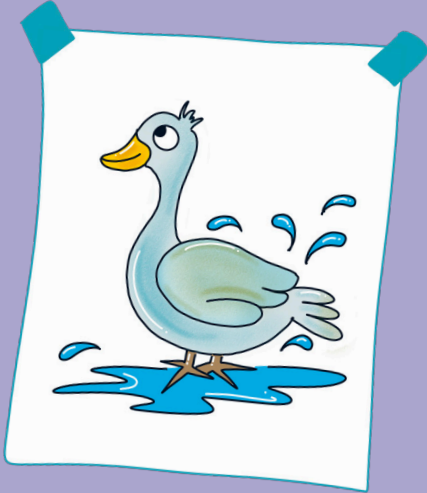
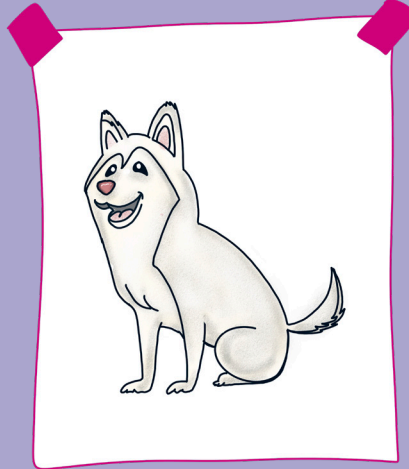
The theme of our report is hearing the voice of children. We approached this task differently from last year, so while this version does serve as an executive summary, professionals should also see the full report for more detail on the achievement and challenges faced by the NSCP in 2022–23.

As in previous versions of our report we chose to represent ourselves using icons or images of people that inspire us – Mo Farah and Ariana Grande! You will see that some of us really love our pets and others just have a good sense of humour. Our icons are here to represent us as individuals so we can put our stamp on this report. We hope you enjoy reading it and can learn from it.



You will see that having fun is very important to us so, throughout this report, we have asked for pictures of wellbeing activities to be included, so you have a visual theme and a reminder of ways to connect with us and build relationships. Sometimes having a conversation about safeguarding can be difficult, so please think about when, where and how you create spaces for us to share our views and be included in the decisions you make about our safety and wellbeing.





The Power of Language



There are lots of words and terms that adults use when talking about safeguarding and it is important to sense check them with us. We know that safeguarding means keeping people safe and that it's everyone's responsibility to protect children from harm. We also know that definitions and personal experiences don't always match up and safeguarding can be a scary word for some people and might mean different things to different people.

These are our thoughts on some of the words we looked at in the NSCP annual report:



Risk

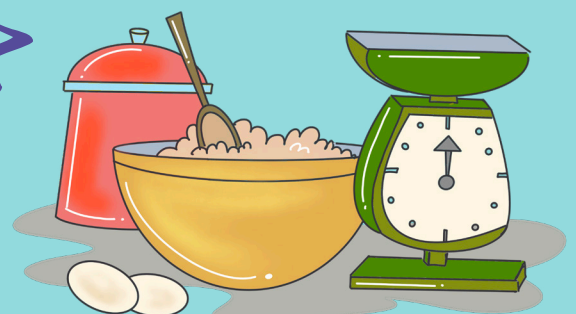
Risk is not always a bad thing. It depends on whether it's a good risk such as pushing yourself to excel at something or a bad risk which may cause you harm.

Resilience

Resilience for us, this is about strength, determination, and not giving up. We build resilience by going through tough times but it can be hard when you are in the middle of it. We build resilience by striving to see the bigger picture and looking for the best in our situation and in other people.

Scrutiny

Scrutiny is a word that comes up a lot in the work of the NSCP. It means looking really closely at something – in this case the safeguarding system. Other words we would use to describe this would be to investigate, examine, or just having a nosey!



Governance

How does the NSCP work?

Arrangements to keep us safe have not changed: they continue to be the responsibility of the Local Authority (Children's Services), Police and Health. They have lots of other partners working with them like schools, nurseries, after school and youth clubs, housing providers and district councils.



Tom McCabe



Sara Tough



Tricia D'Orsi



Tracey Bleakley



Rebecca Hulme



Nick Davison



Paul Sanford



Our key messages for leadership:

Listen, act, advocate!



Show us that you are paying attention to what we are telling you. If you see us experiencing trauma, please do something about it. Focus on listening to us and taking action.

You don't have to be perfect, but show us you are trying: "You said, we are doing" matters just as much as "You said, we did"

Trust us with taking responsibility for ourselves so we can explore and develop independence.

Think about when and where we feel safe; small changes like an adult leaving the room might change our experience of safety, for example, if we are being bullied. Sometimes we may feel unsafe in the community and outside home or school and we need to find solutions for this with your help.



Social media can feel unsafe. We need help and guidance in this space. A lot of social media feels outside of our control. It would be good if adults asked us more about our experiences of our life online so we can talk through how it works and what makes things better or worse. There are things we can control, like how we behave online, and this needs to be a focus for learning.

KEY MESSAGES





We know the challenges of making things better and some things, like the internet, climate change and the economy aren't within our control but adults need to advocate for us and help us build a better future.



As we get older, we need to work with you about how we use our mobile devices and how they can be a helpful tool for sharing our experiences, for example, screenshots of online bullying helps adults take action because we have evidence. It helps if this happens in 'real time' to avoid delays.

Transition and times of change can be tough. Consistency helps us to feel connected and supported. It's really important that adults recognise the impact of new experiences and what we need to help us make sense of significant change.

A special thank you to participation support officers, particularly if we have issues with accessibility. This helps us to use our personal and political influence!



Thank you to the teachers and other adults who get us through the bad times and the good times. They push us to improve and help us to achieve.



The Voice of the Child

This is our report so we wanted to spend a bit of time telling you what this means to us. We have heard a lot of adults using the term 'voice of the child' and, again, it can mean different things to different people.

This is how we define it:



When a child speaks their voice matters and adults should care about what they have to say.



Communication needs to be at the right level with the right tools.

Listening starts with wanting to hear.

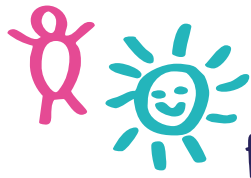
The child's perspective is just as important as an adult's and they have the right to express their emotions without being interrupted or spoken over. Children should be able to speak to a professional one on one without parents/other adults interrupting or being in the room so the child can talk freely. We shouldn't have to worry if it hurts someone else's feelings, like parents or teachers.

Children need to have a say in decisions.

Are the NSCP Partners getting it right?



We think that somethings are getting better but there is still more that you could do. One example is the survey that was done this year, My Norfolk, My Voice which was successful. Listening to children is an area for development and you are getting better at advertising opportunities for getting involved. We also think it would be good if you could do more activities that will stimulate conversations. We listen and interact differently when we are doing things. It helps to make us feel comfortable and get to know each other. This is improving, but still needs to get better. Baby steps are working.



Our Top Tips



for improving ways to hear our voice:

Think carefully and consult with us about the environments for engagement such as room set up, group size and group dynamics.

Provide options and opportunities to talk, but recognise that many teenagers might struggle and prefer to be on phones. People like to communicate in different ways and we need to figure out ways to connect between generations.

Manage our expectations and help prepare young people for participation events and give them opportunities and ways to feedback outside of group discussions.

Give us time to reflect and follow up on conversations after we have had a chance to think about challenging issues.

Small groups work well.

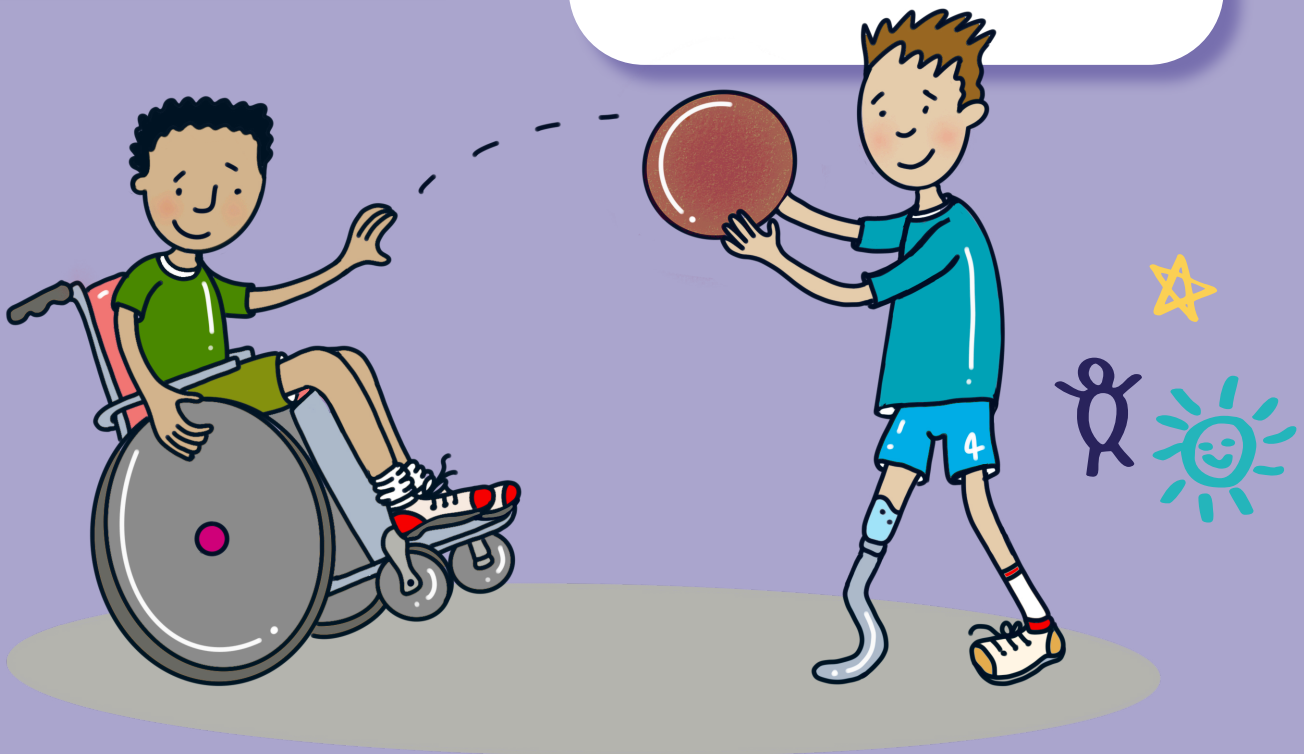
Don't just create special events to listen to young people - make it a regular thing!





As representatives for children and young people who have been looked after or live with disability and as young commissioners, part of our responsibility is to think about inclusion and reaching out to peers. We are fortunate in that we embrace opportunities, have experience of being recognised and winning awards, and can develop roles in mentoring.

We do think that more thought needs to be given to some children and young people who might not have, or might not be able to access these opportunities, for example, siblings of children with disabilities. We also talked about much younger children and we all need to remember not to underestimate what they overhear and their intellectual ability.



Whatever the age or circumstance, make your interactions with us as fun as possible and help us understand, particularly if it's about safeguarding.



Data and Independent Scrutiny

Ways of Understanding Safeguarding.

The chapter on data in the full report is really comprehensive and interesting, for example, the average week for the partners working with children. It is reassuring that we are looking at the numbers and monitoring them over time. The important thing for us is that Norfolk feels like a safe place to live and we know from our participation work with community safety partnership and police that it is the second safest county in England.

While the data is good to have, it is quite broad and we need to understand the stories behind the numbers and what it means for individuals. While we feel like we live in a safe county we recognise that experience will vary depending on age, location and circumstance. More information over time helps to tell partners if they are getting safeguarding right and it is good that it is being monitored and that we know what is going on. We would value more opportunities to see how you use this information, what it means to adults and how that translates to what we actually experience.

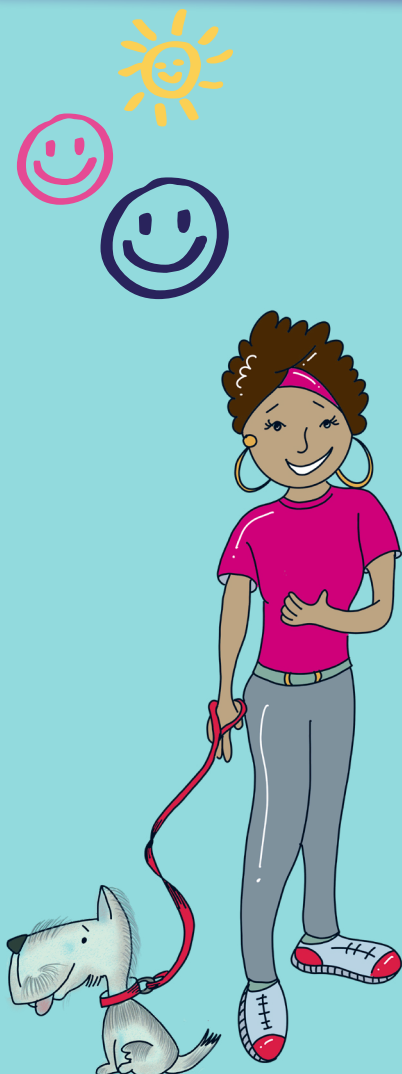
The independent scrutiny systems really supports this storytelling. There are good examples of how Norfolk does this and who supports them in this work in the full report.



The NSCP Priorities and Projects

We talked about the NSCP priorities. In the full report it gives good examples of all the different things that have been done or are planned to get better in certain areas. For one priority, protecting babies, all the work has been completed and is now 'business as usual' so there will be some changes to what the NSCP prioritises next year.

One of the things that is getting better is how the priorities are communicated to us as children and young people. We looked at some short videos on neglect and child exploitation and this is what we thought about that work:



Neglect: we recognised that neglect happens. To us it means that children and young people aren't being taken care of properly. Sometimes this means that children and young people don't get enough attention, or food, or help in their lives. This can be for lots of different reasons, such as parents' mental health or financial hardship.

It is not easy because a lot of children who are neglected might not know that the way they live could be better if that is what they have always known. We think this is a really difficult area and hard to talk about, but it is right that it is prioritised.





Exploitation: we watched a video called Tricky Friends and had a good discussion about friendship and how easy it might be for someone to confuse you if they say they are your friend but then don't act like one.

This is one of the ways exploitation happens. The video was helpful, particularly when thinking about rules for friendship to give people boundaries and the ability to say no.

We thought that it is mostly children or young people who start these conversations and wondered how often adults think to ask without prompting.



The full report also mentions projects such as the Joint Agency Group Supervision (JAGS) practice and how it was nominated for an award.

Another big project that we talked about was how people understand what we need and the risks of harm we face. There was a document called the Threshold Guide to help professionals with this work but this has been revised this year and the new guide, called Continuum of Needs Guidance, will be published soon.

The new document talks about the power of language as well! There is going to be a separate toolbox which will have some tools that are designed to be used with us and we would like to be involved in those developments. The illustrator who worked on this annual report will be helping and clearly we have a lot of good ideas about words and pictures that work for us!



Learning and Training



In the full report there are two chapters that look at learning and training. We didn't go into these in much detail so you need to read the full report to understand more about learning from rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews and what the NSCP training offer was. We focused on what messages we wanted to give you about the skills that we think people need to help us feel safe and protect us from harm. The good news is that this information is something that the NSCP is already thinking about.

Our list of key skills that we think are important:

Listen to what we have gone through. Don't rush to fix us, help us to learn how to fix things ourselves.

Be careful how you word things and how you act. The importance of language and consequences! Please don't say you will do one thing and then do something different, or a little bit or nothing at all!

Build trust by getting to know each other, doing activities together, sharing experiences. This has to be two ways: make sure that children and young people get something out

of the interaction, so think about environment and well-being activities (the visual theme of this report!)



Recognise that different people need different things and note that not everyone feels the same.

Practise Empathy - show us that you have some idea of what life is like for us and if you don't know, ask us. With this:

- Show understanding: you can be strict but not harsh...



Support us. We may need someone to talk to, to help us think about what we have gone through and how it may be affecting us now.

- Be kind to us and tread carefully because you don't know what's happened to us in the past
- Where appropriate share your lived experience

Be flexible! Be with the child or young person where they are, be mindful of how they are in the moment! Try something different if it is not working.



Check your policies: do they focus on the need for good communication skills and ability to work with people?

If we wanted just one skill in a person working with us we would like them to always look for the best in people but sense check their optimism through observation and talking directly with us.



In conclusion...



We hope that you have noticed all the great things the NSCP has done this year and that it has achieved a lot. With safeguarding there is always a lot more to be done as children grow up and society changes. We don't know what lies ahead of us, but there are certain things that the NSCP wants to get better at.

This is what it says in the full report:

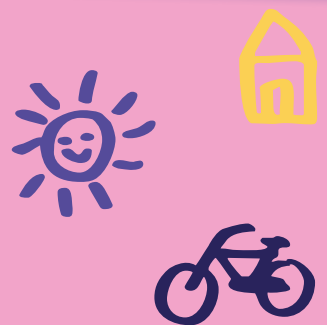
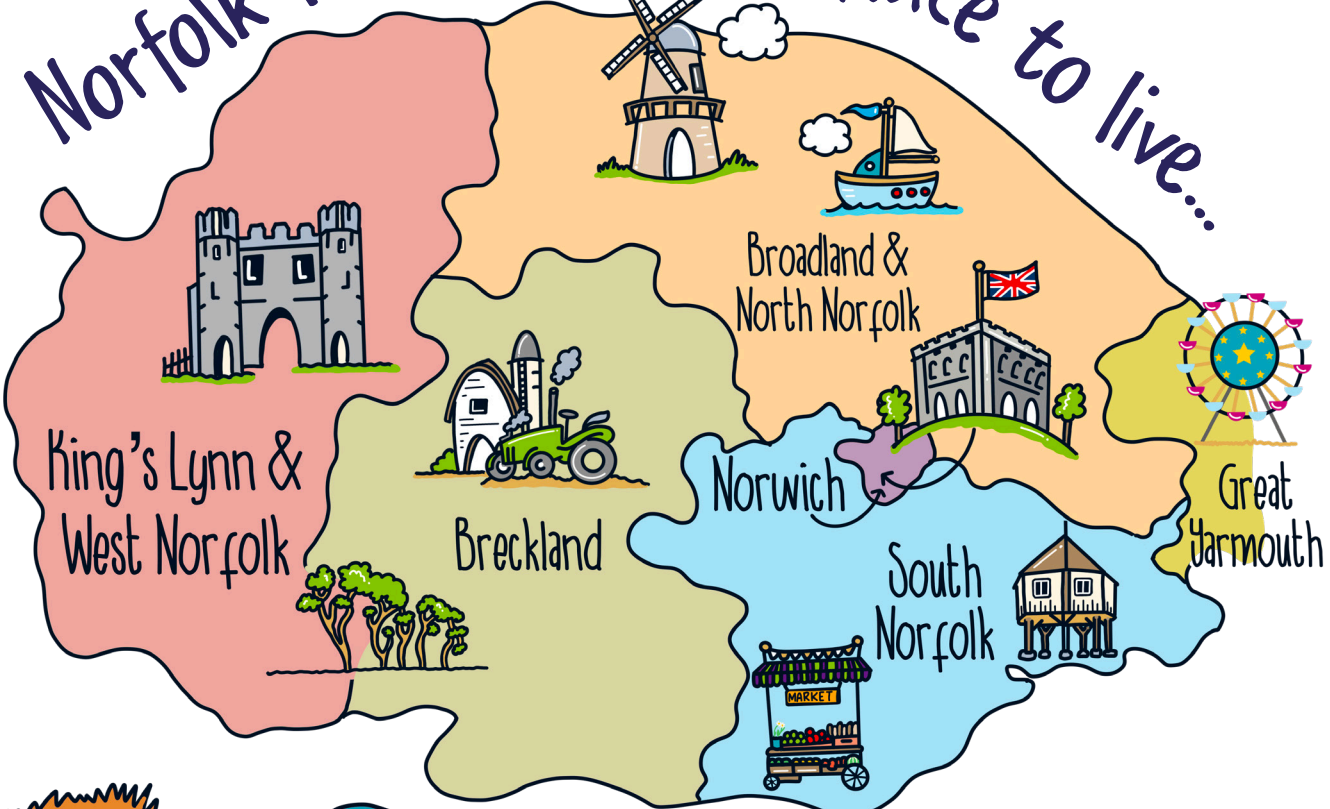
- Addressing the partnership challenges of evolving and adapting to the Independent Review of social care, the national response to the Stable Homes Built on Love agenda, the Independent CSA Inquiry and anticipated changes to Working Together
Independent scrutiny on multi-agency chronologies and transitional safeguarding
- Ongoing evaluation and understanding impact of Joint Agency Group Supervisions and legacy planning for the trauma informed training offer
- Continue to utilise the performance intelligence, data and qualitative feedback to ensure we are targeting our resources correctly and addressing any gaps
- Developing our learning offer and measuring the impact of training on practice
- Increasing the number of multi-agency audits completed
- Finalising and launching the Continuum of Needs Guidance and ensuring all multi-agency policies adhere to national policy change
- Disseminating and implementing learning from local and national Safeguarding Practice Reviews and local Rapid Reviews
- Working directly with the children, young people and families of Norfolk to ensure that their voices are heard and they contribute directly to strengthening the safeguarding system
- Continuing to promote and support the FLOURISH agenda
- Continuing to promote equality and inclusion and celebrate diversity in Norfolk





We hope that we, the children and young people of Norfolk, are fully involved in supporting the NSCP achieve its future goals.

Norfolk feels like a safe place to live...





The full version of the annual report can be found on the NSCP website:

www.norfolklscb.org

There are loads of resources on there for professionals as well as children and families!

If you are worried about a child you can call Norfolk's Children Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the NSPCC's Childline to help you.

Their phone numbers are:

CADS: 0344 800 8020

Childline: 0800 1111

Or you can always phone the NSCP Business Unit on:

01603 223409

and they can signpost you to the best person!



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