



CSCP
CROYDON SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

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**ANNUAL REPORT
2021-22**



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FORWARD FROM CSCP EXECUTIVE



The CSCP is tasked with ensuring partnership working delivers an effective safeguarding system which protects children in Croydon from harm. We aim to raise safeguarding standards across all agencies working with children. We do this by supporting professionals to have access to quality learning resources, focussing on specific themes like vulnerable adolescents and mental health outcomes, regularly reviewing and being up to date with both local and national safeguarding advice and using data to understand the landscape and challenge performance.

Performance data is important as an indicator of safeguarding activity, but the quality of our work is not necessarily evident by shifts in data. For example, our work to raise awareness of neglect is important to ensure early identification and is likely to lead to a rise in numbers rather than a reduction. Training and development are key to developing our staff and improving how they work together. Our multi-agency forums are a vibrant and respected space for professionals to collaborate, be challenged and have access to excellent presentations from a wide range of partners supporting better outcomes for children. This intangible benefit is hard to quantify but is always cited by professionals attending CSCP meetings and events as highly valuable.

The CSCP Executive leads by example, meeting monthly to ensure a cohesive understanding of the challenges facing the 3 key agencies charged with safeguarding children in Croydon and a joint approach to agreeing the plans and work required to discharge its duty.

This report provides evidence of that work. In July 2022 we also commissioned an independent report into the effectiveness of the CSCP. The preliminary findings echo what is in this annual report and will help to shape the work for 2023.

Eleanor Brazil
Independent
Scutineer

Elaine Clancy
Joint Chief Nurse Croydon
CCG/CHS (CSCP Executive)

Fiona Martin
Detective
Superintendent
(CSCP Executive)

Debbie Jones
LBC Corporate
Director, Children
Families & Education
(CSCP Executive)



MESSAGE FROM THE INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER



The role of the Independent Scrutineer is to provide oversight and challenge, and to support the partnership in its work. I do not see myself as independent of Croydon, but independent from any operational or management role in Croydon. Like others involved in the partnership I am passionate about the work we do to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people in Croydon. This report is a testament to that work.

During the year I have had the opportunity to work with dedicated, committed, and knowledgeable practitioners and managers from across social care, early help, health, police, schools, education and the voluntary sector. It is important to reflect on what has worked well. However, we also learn from the sad and tragic events where children have suffered from harm. This report includes details on both aspects of our work.

As I said last year, Croydon is a vibrant, diverse and complex borough. It is an exciting but challenging environment in which to work. The partnership is committed and strong, and the report reflects that.

Eleanor Brazil
Independent Scrutineer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eleanor Brazil".



INTRODUCTION

This annual report covers the period April 2021- March 2022. It seeks to address the question of **how effective** this partnership is, in accordance with the requirements of **Working Together 2018** ↩, specifically:

PART 1: THE WHAT? ➔

What have we done as a result of the arrangements, (including following Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) - and how effective have these arrangements been in practice?

PART 2: THE SO WHAT? ➔

Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to children looked after and care leavers.

PART 3: THE WHY NOT? ➔

An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities.

PART 4: THE WHAT NEXT? ➔

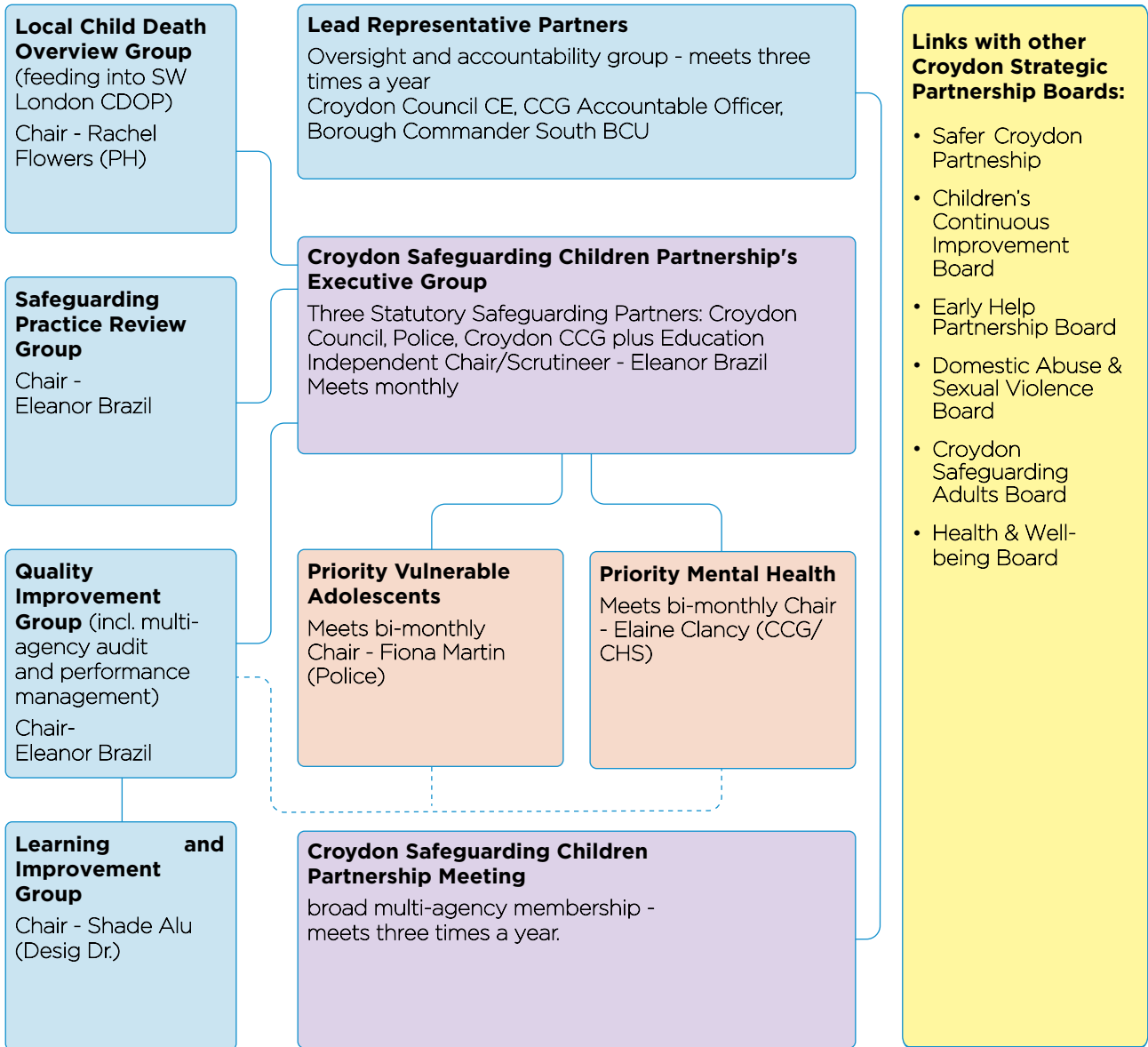
A record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the reporting period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements.

PART 5: WHAT CHILDREN & FAMILIES SAY ➔

Ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision



CSCP ARRANGEMENTS 2021-22



CSCP BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2021/22



INCOME

SOUTH LONDON & MAUDSLEY NHS UNIT	£13,540
MET POLICE	£5,000
CROYDON CCG	£33,850
CROYDON HEALTH SERVICE	£33,850
NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE	£2,000
TOTAL INCOME	£88,240
LB CROYDON	£215,212
TOTAL INCOME	

£303,452

EXPENDITURE

STAFF & RELATED COSTS	£242,457
SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS	£41,267
CSCP TRAINING PROVIDED	£8,471
SERVICES RECHARGE	£9,025
MISCELLANEOUS	£825
MAILROOM, STATIONERY, SUPPLIES	£407
WEBSITE	£1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	

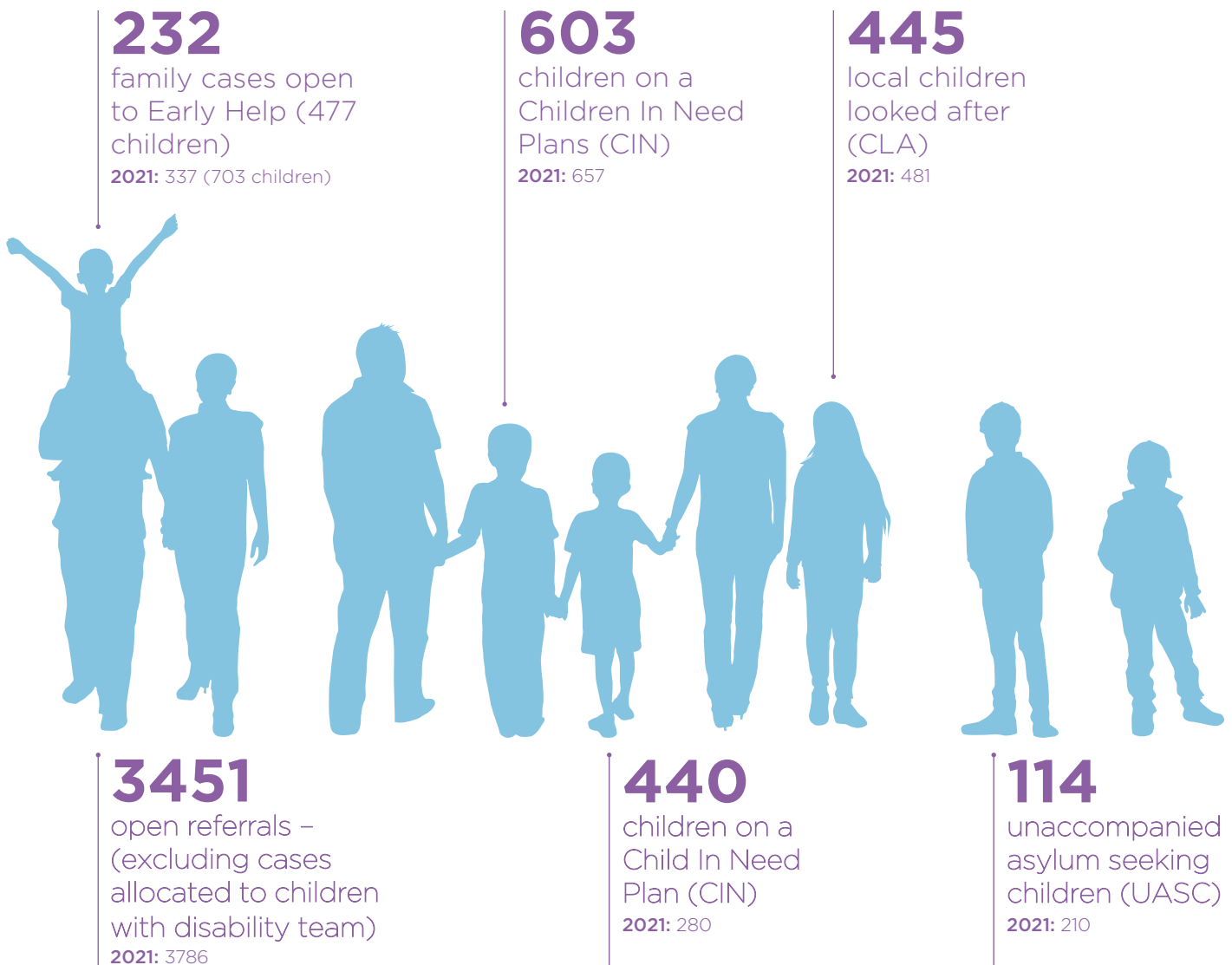
£303,452

SAFEGUARDING STATISTICS 2021-22



The CSCP regularly reviews statistics and performance data via a specific dataset group which informs the data taken to the Quality Improvement Group and Executive. Some data is monitored throughout the year, other is periodical or themed. For example, we now have data about the number of young people attending A&E experiencing a deterioration in mental health in addition to those attending due to self-harm. This has given us a greater understanding of the increase in poor mental health generally and has influenced the work of the Mental Health Priority Group.

As of 31st March 2022, there were:



The following statistics help describe the landscape for children in Croydon during the year 2021-22:



Number of children in Croydon aged under 18:

95,309

almost 25% of the Croydon Population

Rate of open cases, per 10,000 of the under 18 population was

362.1

This is lower than 2020-21 (398.3)

For comparison in 2020-21 London was: 338.9 and our statistical neighbour was 352.8

9455

Number of contacts to the 'front door' where the reason was a referral to CSC (18,947 SPOC forms)

There were

2067

missing episodes recorded in the year across 89 children.



A very small percentage are children where there are very serious child protection concerns.

The rate of children who were subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 of the under 18 population was

46.2

This is significantly higher than 2020/21 where it was 28.6.

(London 2020-21 was 36.3 and our statistical neighbour was 38.1)

Number of referrals into Early Help 2021-22

1980

1384

of those episodes related to Children who were looked after.

18

Children were reviewed at The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)*.

The CDCP Annual Report can be accessed [here](#)



*Note these do not necessarily reflect deaths in the same year

PART 1: THE WHAT?



What have we done as a result of the arrangements, (including following Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) - and how effective have these arrangements been in practice?

Despite the ongoing significant challenges due to Covid-19 we continued to see good multi-agency attendance at all meetings. We have worked hard to ensure available technology has assisted our work. Almost all meetings occurred on MS Teams. We also started to make use of break out rooms, survey software and other technical innovations to enable us to have more engagement with our partner agencies. This has continued into 2022-23 with the use of Menti-Meter which enables live feedback to be captured during learning events and meetings.

We have continued with our published arrangements where the 3 Safeguarding Partners form the CSCP Executive Group with the addition of the Director for Education and the Independent Scrutineer.

SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS (SPRS)

During the year we completed 7 rapid reviews (where a child is seriously harmed or died; and neglect or abuse was known or suspected).

3 of these were taken forward to a thematic safeguarding practice review, looking at young people alleged to have been involved in serious youth violence where another child has been killed. This is likely to be concluded in November 2022.

We completed 5 Safeguarding Practice Review Reports which were started during the previous year.

Ben was published in March 2022 following the conclusion of the criminal case. **Read the report here** [↩](#)

Carl & Max was also published in March 2022. **Read the report here** [↩](#)

We agreed not to publish one case to protect the anonymity and wellbeing of surviving subjects and family members.

We are unable to publish 2 more pending the outcome of coroner or criminal proceedings.



This is a significant work rate for the year (in 2020-21 we had 3 Rapid Reviews and published/completed 1 case). This is testament to the expertise and commitment of the Safeguarding Practice Review Group members who are largely longstanding members who are frequently commended for their compassion and commitment by Independent Reviewers.

Despite the restrictions on publishing (and to mitigate the amount of time it takes to conclude an SPR) alongside the process we have been conducting briefings and learning events to share the learning and gather feedback/evidence of good practice from professionals working with similar cases.

We have also used National Learning, such as the **“Myth of Invisible Men”** report on children under one injured by their male carers; as well as asked partner agencies to provide briefing materials specific to their experience to enhance the materials on offer to support professionals. For example, the Police produced a briefing on **Clare’s Law** which has been widely circulated and has led to increased confidence for professionals to either make an application themselves, or to empower potential victims of domestic abuse to make one.

The themes identified in our SPRs have influenced the priorities of partner agencies.

Key Themes for 2021/22:

- Importance of Fathers/Male Carers
- Professional Curiosity
- Information Sharing
- Safeguarding Supervision
- Extra-Familial Harm

For example:

- Children’s Social Care has “work with fathers” and “professional curiosity” as practice improvement areas.
- Health colleagues at Croydon University Hospital are promoting the use of “was not brought” instead of “did not attend” to keep the focus on it being the parent’s responsibility to ensure their child comes to medical appointments – and not bringing them is potentially a sign of neglect.
- Early Help Family Solutions Service share the briefings amongst their teams and use them as the basis for reflective discussions around practice, challenges and approaches. They have promoted the use of the Child Wellbeing Tool via the locality meetings (multi-agency).
- Education Services regularly use our material and have also contributed to the content on the website. They have promoted the use of the Child Wellbeing Tool and the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 Tool (GCP2), leading to the first education based professionals to be licenced to use the GCP2 Tool.



Not all cases progress to SPRs. Rapid review learning has also influenced the work of the Partnership, particularly around suicide. These cases are influencing the Suicide & Self Harm Strategy refresh as well as providing case study examples for a learning event which took place in September 2022. This should lead to a better partnership/professional understanding of the triggers for suicide or self-harm and therefore improve the ability to reduce the incidence.

THE MENTAL HEALTH PRIORITY GROUP

The CSCP Executive identified this priority in recognition of the increasing pressures and poor outcomes for children and young people who had poor mental health. The first meeting took place in June 2021. The Group was chaired by Elaine Clancy, (joint Chief Nurse Croydon CCG/CHS) and has always been a well-attended, vibrant multi-agency meeting.

Its aims were to:

- Identify opportunities and resources to generate change activity and outcomes which positively impact front line practice, making a difference to mental health outcomes for all children under 18 (including those with a disability 0-24).
- Identify risks and obstacles and work collaboratively to mitigate or address these.
- Contribute to the safeguarding children partnership practice learning and improvement program.

This work could not cover every aspect of mental health, the 3 agreed areas are shown overleaf.



1. COMMISSIONING & ACCOUNTABILITY

Young people's mental health needs are met because there are systems and procedures in place to hold commissioners and providers of relevant services to account.

OUTCOMES:

- a. We have assurance from commissioners that mental health is very much on the current agenda. The Commissioning Team will be developing the THRIVE model which is also linked to the ICS (Integrated Care Systems) which has brought together and replaced CCGs and provider organisations (Jul 2022).
- b. Suggested questions to be considered at every audit to evidence outcomes for mental health has been developed and circulated for partnership use.
- c. Influenced and co-produced the Local Self-Harm & Suicide Prevention Strategy & Action Plan

2. HOLDING THE RISK

Professionals know where to access resources to support young people and their families.

There is a clear pathway for professionals and families to access and escalate concerns

OUTCOMES:

- a. Co-production of the Early Help Directory
- b. Joint Working Protocol refresh
- c. Presentations have helped professionals understand where and how services are accessed
- d. Influenced the need for the new Risk & Vulnerabilities panel which will consider 11-25s where professionals are concerned their needs are not being met.
- e. Staff wellbeing/service delivery pressures. Raised to Exec (Aug 2022)

3. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Professionals have access to quality training to recognise and respond to mental health concerns when working with young people.

OUTCOMES:

- a. Trauma Awareness online course is live on CSCP website
- b. Co-production of the trauma awareness training offer
- c. Developed and commissioned new training: Expanding Cultural Competences for professionals working with LGBGTQ+ young people where self-harm/suicide is a risk
- d. Improved take up/visibility of other training on offer across the partnership




VULNERABLE ADOLESCENT PRIORITY GROUP

The CSCP Vulnerable Adolescent Priority Group (VAPG) commenced in April 2019 and has met bi-monthly since. In 2021-22 it has been chaired by Detective Superintendent Fiona Martin.

The TORs describe the group aims as:

- To provide oversight of the recommendations of the Vulnerable Adolescent Review
- To identify and report on the prevalence of vulnerable adolescents in Croydon
- To contribute to the Local Strategic Partnership Youth Plan
- To drive wider partnership understanding of vulnerability in adolescents and how it translates into need for service
- To provide strategic advice and oversight in the effective delivery of services for vulnerable adolescents
- To promote and drive wider understanding of community-based resources available to Croydon children.

As of July 2022, these aims were achieved, some were embedded better than others. However, this group has had significant impact on increasing professionals' knowledge and understanding of the specific risks to vulnerable adolescents.

There have been several presentations and learning events that have raised awareness of this cohort, which has led to a change in how agencies deliver services to protect them. For example using the National Panel report **[It Was Hard to Escape: Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation](#)** 

Although the timeframe for this report is April 2021 – March 2022, we know that Jan-Dec 2021 was the worst year on record for teenage murders in London. There were 30 in total, and five occurred in Croydon - more than any other borough in the capital. The thematic review is reflecting on both the victims who died and the other young people associated with the incidents leading to their unconnected deaths.



The VAPG carried out an insightful piece of work to examine the questions raised in the report which evidenced Croydon knows its cohort and the challenges facing both young people and the workforce trying to support them.

This work continued by reflecting on critical reachable moments - this report was used in multiple briefings across the partnership as well as within the Mental Health Priority Group.

Members identified the achievements of the VAPG in the last year as:

- Worked hard to identify, discuss & consider responses to emerging need of vulnerable CYP
- Extra-Familial Harm – raised awareness, address & respond to vulnerabilities (via Missing Protocol/RHIs etc)
- Helped partners review strategic responses/services
- Good partnership understanding of this cohort
- First steps addressing disproportionality
- Data Accelerator bid – useful although not successful
- Highlighted the need for early intervention

In relation to the question: What are you doing differently (in your organisation) as a result of the VAR60 or the work you have heard about in the VAPG? Responses included:

- Collaboration – joint work/planning around TAS
- Early Help Offer – interface with Youth Engagement/Young Croydon
- Supported early help keyworkers to feel confident to deliver
- Will inform Family Hubs work
- All Staff Trauma Trained/Culture Competent/Extra Familial Harm (YOS)
- Integrated Offender Management Panel (co-ordinated with Police)
- Disproportionality dashboard (YOS) – shared as best practice. YOS embed into their work culture
- Emphasis on contextual safeguarding training
- Our action plans are more robust
- Achieving Health Equity Core 20 Plus (SWL CCG)
- Has informed the PCREF (Patient & Carer Race Equality Framework)
- Service design (chill zone in Paediatric Hub)

SAFER CROYDON PARTNERSHIP

The CSCP has supported work to inform the new Community Safety Strategy and the CSCP benefits from regular membership and engagement from the Violence Reduction Network including ongoing performance data to evidence the impact of partnership work to reduce crime.

The CSCP is advocating to ensure sexual exploitation is more extensively referenced in the new VAWG Strategy. The CSCP regularly attends the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (DASV) Board where this work is held.

Croydon adopted a public health approach to reducing violence in June 2019 and has since started work to create a violence reduction network to implement it. The following themes and principles were developed:

THEME ONE USING DATA TO DRIVE OUR APPROACH

Building a strong evidence base and a common screening tool that can be used across organisations to predict who, where and why individuals and families are more likely to be involved in violent or aggressive behaviours and identifying the interventions that will have the maximum impact.

THEME TWO PREVENTING VIOLENCE BEFORE IT OCCURS

Looks at the periods and key influences in a person's life journey, from pre-birth to adulthood which can increase the risks of becoming involved in violent behaviour and the opportunities when interventions can be most effective.

THEME THREE COMMUNITY BASED SUPPORT

Recognises the strength of the community and voluntary sector in Croydon and places them at the heart of Croydon's public health approach to violence reduction. It promotes combining skills and enabling voluntary and community organisations to support people and families collaboratively.

THEME FOUR TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

It uses the principles of a family centred approach aimed at addressing violence, by looking at the wider family and connected family dynamics, based on clear safeguarding, case management approaches.

THEME FIVE INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Sets out an intention to offer personalised support for those who are motivated to step away from a life of violence, whilst using the full range of enforcement across all agencies, against those whose behaviour places themselves, those around them, or the wider community at risk of harm.





The CSCP has collaborated with the Safer Croydon Partnership (SCP) to influence the Community Safety Strategy. Priority 2 relates to exploitation and specifically references how the CSCP will work alongside the SCP particularly to raise awareness of risk and supporting the wider partnership to recognise and respond appropriately. The CSCP also provides training. The newly commissioned “Challenging Disproportionality” – Risk assessments for Black boys and their families affected by extra familial harm is an example. Safeguarding partners sit on the SCP and share relevant information with the CSCP.

The CSCP recognises the Mayors commitment to make Croydon safer for young people – the work with the SCP will support this aim. For 2022-23 the CSCP are also providing awareness sessions for Councillors to appraise them of the current work of the CSCP, the key themes from Safeguarding Practice Reviews and to share links to the Safeguarding Awareness Training, Trauma Informed Awareness (and others) which would be beneficial for anyone working in the community.

The local authority led (but partnership encompassing) work to move to Family Hubs in Croydon is actively influenced and supported by the CSCP.



OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT- THE FRONT DOOR (JULY 2021)

A focused visit took place in July 2021 where Ofsted Inspectors found that despite the challenges of Covid-19, the significant changes to the permanent senior leadership and the considerable and ongoing financial challenges – staff at the “front door” were making safe and appropriate decisions on most referrals.

“Contacts and referrals for children in need or at risk of harm are managed effectively in the single point of contact (SPOC). Social workers routinely seek information from partner agencies and take account of family history when making decisions about levels of risk. SPOC managers are taking appropriate action to improve the consistency and quality of multi-agency information-sharing”.

The CSCP has been routinely engaged with MASH meetings to ensure information sharing – especially where fathers are concerned is being given due consideration and this continues to be a feature of CSCP Briefings from lessons learned from Safeguarding Practice reviews.

LOCAL AREA SEND - OCTOBER 2021

Ofsted and the CQC conducted a joint inspection to judge the effectiveness of Croydon in implementing SEND reforms as set out in the C&F Act 2014.

The findings were largely very positive including:

“Current leaders understand the context of the area well and, especially since 2018, have used their knowledge to develop a coherent and ambitious SEND strategy. This has improved the pace of improvement and means that leaders are tackling the right things in the right order. Leaders in Croydon evaluate the effectiveness of their response to the 2014 reforms accurately. They know what is serving children and young people with SEND well and where there is still more to do.”

Similar to findings from the CSCP, Inspectors found that developmental checks on two-year-olds are not happening often enough. This is a historical underfunding issue, alongside challenges with recruitment and retention of staff. The CSCP continue to track and challenge all the mandated checks for babies and infants and have ensured this risk is being tackled by health visiting services and the agencies which commission them.



COMMUNITY BASED SUPPORT

We continued to see our community-based organisations providing significant support for families, especially during Covid. The BME Forum worked collaboratively with several schools and the council, backed by the Young Londoner's Fund, to offer targeted support at the transitional phases between primary and secondary school and school/college.

This saw 81 young people take up places, 121 young people complete between 7-14 mentoring sessions and a further 38 complete diversionary activities. This work had a direct impact to safeguard some of the children most at risk of harm and at risk of exclusion from school.

Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) delivered a number of networking opportunities for voluntary sector organisations working with children and young people. They capitalised on the interest expressed by groups working with autistic children, to bring them together with representatives from other partner organisations to share expertise. These events have led to better engagement with various voluntary sector groups and other local initiatives such as The Young Londoner's Fund Network and a LGBTQ+ network meeting for young people and those who work with them.

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER CONVERSATIONS

Our Independent Scrutineer introduced conversations with front line practitioners sessions, as a means to gather feedback about the effectiveness of the partnership. The first one was with staff from Children's Social Care and Early Help and took place in March 2022 as part of the practice week themes on neglect. The second session was later in the year with a group of front-line health practitioners. Key points included:

- Most staff positive about working relationships with external partners
- Importance of good relationships with schools
- Covid had made working with families more challenging, but staff had kept face to face working throughout
- Reflective supervision is valued
- The information on the CSCP website and the training offered is really valued

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PARTNERSHIP

Fiona Martin

Detective Superintendent (CSCP Executive)

“The last year has been a challenge coming out of Covid, but lessons learned from 2020-21 have been embedded and improved liaison with partners and our service to children. Some of these have been in the way we work, and some have been about maintaining better practices.

One example of this is the “Every Child Every Time” (ECET) programme which continues in the custody suite at Croydon. This has been running since June 2020, to improve awareness of officers who are dealing with children in custody as a reminder that we need to understand their vulnerabilities as children and to encourage “the voice of the child”. Performance of this programme is monitored at the weekly ECET meetings. The meeting also reviews incidents where children have been placed in police protection ensuring that safeguarding and multi-agency working has been effective. This has improved our use of police protection and involved the children more in the process. We hope that we can welcome social care into this meeting in the near future to help us share concerns and identify learning.

The “one front door” team was set up in February 2021 in response to the increased demand for multi-agency meetings regarding contextual safeguarding issues that affect children who may be drawn into criminality, risk of exploitation, gangs, missing episodes or living with domestic violence within their home setting. Working with our partners we have now implemented a booking process that allows social care to directly book appointments with the relevant teams. The CAIT team, who have expertise in child safeguarding referrals, manage the booking process and continue to triage the requests from social care and then allocate to the best placed police team to take part in the strategy discussions. The implementation of the booking process is improving police attendance at these meetings. Additional strategy discussion training is being delivered to Police teams and supervisors across Croydon. A weekly escalation meeting is in place with social care and health to review any issues and to share learning.

The Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation team continues to hold regular operations with the British Transport Police and Safer Neighbourhood team, other agencies, and surrounding forces particularly around transport hubs. These multi-agency operations will continue regularly in the coming year. They engage closely with children, understanding the risks they face and helping them to escape from that pathway. As a result we have diverted a number of children from high risk activities and ensured their safety.

The Child Abuse Investigation Team continues to investigate familial offences against children. Despite dealing with the highest number of offences in London the team have focused on improving the outcomes for victims, whether that is





through taking offenders to court or working with our partners on child protection plans. Whilst they mainly investigate current offences, the team also work with non-recent cases bringing predatory sexual offenders to justice by obtaining significant custodial sentences. These include a case where a member of the public contacted police after seeing a newspaper article about a male being convicted for sexual offences. She had been a victim of his when she was a little girl. The team worked with the victim to gather evidence and present a case. Despite initially pleading not guilty, the evidence against him was so strong that he changed his plea and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Il have chaired the Vulnerable Adolescent Priority Group for the past year. The meeting has been really effective in bringing colleagues together from across the statutory and voluntary sector. It has carried out significant activity to enrich, influence and inform partnership work around vulnerable adolescents. It knows the size and scope of the challenges in Croydon and can evidence traction against the original recommendations from the Vulnerable Adolescent Review carried out in 2019, however it is difficult to quantify this against outcomes for children.

Recognising the need to constantly learn, the police have an active role in Safeguarding Practice Reviews. We have all taken learning from the cases that have been reviewed and shared in joint learning events. We have also been pleased to welcome some Croydon social workers to a CAIT training day so we could exchange learning. It was a great success and started some great working relationships.”

Elaine Clancy
Joint Chief Nurse Croydon CCG/CHS (CSCP Executive)

While the health economy across Croydon has begun to emerge from the intensity and pressures of the pandemic, Covid19 continues to impact on all services and our communities. There has been a wealth of learning in terms of identifying ways of managing crisis situations and being creative and innovative in the delivery of care. We have also witnessed the resilience and kindness of the workforce who have gone above and beyond in their continuing support of clients and patients.

The last year has been a time of reflecting and gathering ourselves, responding to the frequently complex nature of this virus, including the affect it has had on the emotional, physical and mental health and well-being of our community, and on occasions staff and colleagues.

A number of initiatives were put in place as the crisis eased. In response to the increase in domestic abuse and sexual violence during the pandemic, CHS were able to secure charity funding for a short-term Domestic Abuse Support Worker to work alongside the safeguarding team. The aim was not only to provide an additional resource for the service and clients but to also support staff who themselves are victims of abuse and violence.



We are all aware of the concerns relating to the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our children and young people and the impact of the last few years. As the Chair of the Mental Health Priority Group, I had the privilege of working with colleagues from the voluntary and statutory sectors all of whom are driven by their determination to support those in need and troubled by the life challenges and lived experiences. This group helped each other to understand the complexities young people face and the impact of issues such as neurodiversity, gender identity and adverse childhood experiences. We are all now better informed and, as a result of these discussions, have been provided with opportunities to access further training to improve our practice and deliver better care.

From a CHS perspective, the Emergency Department has seen a number of young people attending on a regular basis in a state of distress and need. It was clear that although health was frequently the point of contact in a crisis, no one agency could work in isolation when trying to provide a better and more efficiently co-ordinated response to each young person's needs. Over the last year, specialist services have come together to develop pathways of care and provision for young people. In addition, there has been recognition of the impact of the period of transition between being a young person and becoming a young adult. The many changes and, in some circumstances, the reduction in support and statutory frameworks surrounding them, cause significant distress and anxiety. There is still a long way to go to develop the right partnership support for this cohort of young people, but the discussions have started and will continue at both a Croydon and South West London level.

In health, we recognise the need to support our staff in order for them to safeguard our children and young people effectively. CHS reviewed its safeguarding provision in 2021, and as a result, restructured to increase the resource across the operational team. Safeguarding supervision processes have been reviewed and developed to increase the reach and quality. Our Primary Care Services have been supported in their safeguarding practice by our team of Designate Professionals and Named GP for Safeguarding.

The CCG Safeguarding Team worked with colleagues across SWL in planning for the implementation of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Integrated Care System (ICS). Although this will not have implications for the statutory safeguarding duties at place level, it will provide an opportunity for collaborative working across the ICB, and we look forward to future developments as the ICS.

Debbie Jones

LBC Corporate Director, Children Families & Education (CSCP Executive)

The year 2021 - 22 brought major national developments across Children's Services through the Education White Paper, SEND Green Paper and the National Care Review, all drawing on the knowledge, experience and aspirations of children, young people, parents, carers and the key partners of Health, Police, Education and Children's Social Care.



The Education paper asks us to strive for every child to achieve their highest potential supporting attendance and inclusive provision which means all education provision continues to be safe supportive caring place for children and young people.

The SEND Green paper has enabled all partners to contribute proposals for cementing co-production into national standards for children with SEND whose safeguarding needs are augmented by additional and disability needs.

The Care Review makes recommendations for significant change in the delivery of child protection and child in need work, a clear emphasis on early help to provide the best opportunities for children's lives improving as soon as challenges are recognised and prompts the sector to improve the outcomes for children who need Local Authority care, again a partnership endeavour. We await the DfE Implementation plan however the development of practice in Croydon is ahead of the game with our transformation in the Front Door services and relentless focus on supporting practitioners across social care to have the time and tools to respond to children's needs.

In our Education Division we have organised our Access to Education Services to focus on attendance, inclusion and behaviour support developing our 'Team around the School' approach working collaboratively with Schools to address safeguarding issues. Our education lead based in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub provides a key link with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and our specific social care projects for supervision of DSLs and Social Work in Schools teams.

All agencies are in recovery from the pandemic arrangements and the Council has a hybrid working policy in place to enable return to office working as teamwork will never be the same through virtual communication as it is in person.

During this year of review a major focus for Children's Social Care was to adapt resources to deliver within significant budget reduction and the Ofsted Focused Visit in June 2021 confirmed the commitment of Croydon staff. Enhancing partnership working at the Front Door has continued alongside Early Help transformation which will be aided by our success in obtaining DfE Funding for our Family Hub project in Croydon.

Recruitment and retention are key challenges in social care and Special Educational Need/Disability (SEND) specialisms, so I am pleased that we have recently welcomed qualified social workers from South Africa and Zimbabwe, our ASYE Programme continues to attract high applicants and our Social Care Academy offers a wide range of training through in house resources. Croydon is an excellent place to train and remain in social care practice, it is challenging of course, given the deprivation in the community and the rising cost of living all presenting pressures on family life.

Safeguarding is the business of us all, our responsibilities are to act to prevent, reduce and respond to children in need and in need of protection. We do this best when we listening to children, families, partners, informing continuous development through participation and co-production. It is an honour to chair the CSCP Executive Group, working alongside compassionate experienced strategic leaders, all focused on Croydon's children leading safe fulfilled lives.

CSC - 'children' QA

In response to audit findings, we are providing workshops to support:

- Chronologies/Genograms
- Direct Work
- Contextual Safeguarding

MENT4

We worked with Education and PRU colleagues to design a simple language brochure for parents to help them understand why their children might be at risk from exclusion

EDUCATION

We collated data and provided schools with support/training following unconnected child deaths in Dec 2021

BME FORUM

Secured a Tesco grant to deliver culture relevant food for 40 families

EARLY HELP

We prioritised ensuring Managers worked with practitioners & families to amplify the "child's voice"

MASH AUDITS

Audits to test the quality of referrals has led to training for referrers and process change for MASH

EDUCATION

We provided support to schools in response to the Everyone's Invited Campaign including a handbook, tools & a review

BME FORUM

We facilitated over 20 zoom meetings to provide families with info to help them help themselves. (Covid)

EDUCATION

In response to Hackney child Q (Adultification) we developed a flowchart for schools

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

We introduced a manager coaching programme - to improve managers' supervision skills and oversight of work with children, young people and families

PART 2: THE SO WHAT?



Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers

IMPACT OF OUR BRIEFING MATERIALS

Much of our work is to provide the conduit for safeguarding professionals to access the relevant briefing materials around safeguarding learning in Croydon. The safeguarding leads then take the learning and resources back to their own agencies and share in reflective sessions or update policy as required.

Examples include:

- CAMHS holds regular “Time to Talk Sessions” and as a result of our recommendation, are planning to introduce specific safeguarding supervision for 2022/23. We have also refreshed our Safeguarding Supervision Guidance for multi-agency professionals to support this.
- Croydon College used the Sexual Violence Resources to deliver all staff training in January 2022 and have implemented a whole college approach to sexual violence & abuse.
- Croydon College/Police worked together to deliver student awareness sessions on healthy relationships & consent.
- Junior doctors had 2 sessions delivered to them to promote the need for appropriate multi-agency discussion around head injuries for non-mobile children and unexplained injuries in children in general.
- During Covid-19 we promoted a “working in peoples homes” resource as part of a campaign to support trades working in people’s homes during covid. This was widely published – including sending to all builder’s merchants in the borough.





We hold regular briefing sessions for any multi-agency professional working in Croydon. These sessions are usually themed and have good multi-agency representation.

IMPACT FROM DATA EXAMINATION

We hold a quarterly meeting to review multi-agency data ahead of the Quality Improvement Group (QIG). We have continued to press the need for more intelligent data, especially around ethnicity. A survey conducted to test the impact of our drive for correct data capture revealed that 56% of agencies believed they were *confident in most cases* that their ethnicity data accurately reflects the ethnicity of persons using their service, and 33% believing that it *mostly reflected it, but could do better*. This is an improvement on last year when most agencies were unable to comment as the quality of data was too poor in this area.

When asked what improvements had been made as a result of the CSCP drive, respondents said:

Our quarterly report now has a section on ethnicity. We've had discussions with staff about disproportionality and how it impacts on work & what can we do differently. Staff team are researching information on contextual safeguarding and ethnicity

We now split out the quarterly data so that it is more meaningful in terms of ways to change to impact on young people. It led to us doing an initial Speech And Language Therapy (SALT) screening assessment for all young people as a matter of course.

55% of respondents said their agency includes the Unconscious Bias Training as mandatory training. The CSCP provide this free on the website for anyone working or living in Croydon courtesy of Crystal Palace Football Club who continue to fund this course as well as use our training resources for their staff.

The number of young people on a child protection plan (CP plan) and the number on a plan for more than 18 months has been scrutinised by both QIG and the CSCP Executive. This has led to the creation of a panel to review children subject to a plan for longer than 9 months, which offer greater scrutiny and learning from repeat CP plans. As a result, children are now on a CP plan for shorter periods, Croydon also is lower (better) than statutory neighbours for this indicator.

Contributing to the dataset has helped partner agencies to be more proactive about their own data as well as scrutinising multi-agency data. Early Help colleagues have commented on how the challenge about the data has required them to draw inferences about step up activity and whether threshold application may need further exploration. This happens because our dataset requires some commentary to support the data request, and this encourages each partner to be more curious about the why and not just list the numbers.

IMPACT OF OUR ACTIVITY

CSCP members are seen as experts in safeguarding and the value of the ad-hoc conversations, across the partnership to influence workstreams, provide assurance about the appropriateness of escalations or just make arrangements to attend team meetings to provide safeguarding expertise cannot be underestimated.

CSCP members have been on working groups to influence commissioning such as the Best Start Children's Centre (Aug 2021) and Family Hubs Bid Work (Feb 2022).

In addition to the outcomes detailed in Part 1, the following can also be attributed to our work in the past year.

- Young people's mental health - we have raised the profile and are keeping it visible by using what has been learnt to influence partnership work across the borough.
- Culture of partnership working around mental health has improved which will impact on confidence and the ability of professionals.
- SEND Board - provided SEND specific briefings and CSCP membership at SEND Board/Forums
- New Training:
 - Expanding Cultural Competencies for Safeguarding Professionals working with LGBGTQ+ Young People
 - Challenging Disproportionality - Assessing the Extra-Familial Risk for Black Male Children & their Families
 - Trauma Informed Approach - e-learning module and additional face to face/MS Teams courses

TRAINING

We continued to deliver online training via MS Teams and have re-introduced some face-to-face training more recently. Our e-learning training offer continues to be popular with over 9000 courses completed across child and adult safeguarding content, however this was significantly lower than the previous year. This is somewhat due to the effect of covid on staff availability to commit to training, but is also due to the vacant learning and development post for most of the year.



PART 3: THE WHY NOT?



An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Whilst Working Together 2018 requires the 3 Lead Agencies to be equally responsible for discharging their duty, there continues to be an imbalance in both the level of funding applied and the proactivity of each of the partners. This is largely due to historical expectations and is in keeping with other LSCPs.

There are key (and often longstanding), experienced members of the Police and CCG/Health actively engaged at relevant CSCP meetings. However, the drive and direction of the core work more often comes from the Local Authority. This doesn't specifically impact on the effectiveness of the Partnership as when directed, other agencies are responsive, but it does limit the scope and reach of the Partnership. The Independent Review of the CSCP also recognises this. One of the purposes of the review is to make recommendations about how this might be challenged for 2023. An identified risk is that if those key members were to leave, it could significantly impact on the effectiveness of the Partnership.

AUDITS

Ordinarily we would hope to carry out 3 multi-agency audits a year to assess the competency of multi-agency professionals as well as evidence the impact of previous learning or briefings.

Whilst we have not carried out as many as usual, the way we worked instead has led to better co-ordination and drawing on the Partnerships own quality assurance activities.

This year we have utilised the learning from single agency audits where possible. We have also linked up with CSC Practice Week and bi-monthly 'Windows into Practice' events, to open it to multi-agency staff and share the findings via CSCP meetings such as the Learning and Improvement Group. This has led to more front-line professionals accessing briefings and materials usually only open to CSC staff and single agency learning which may have ordinarily stayed within one agency, being shared more widely.



Neglect – this multi-agency audit took place in 2021-22 and was supplemented by the neglect thematic practice Week in March 2022. Activities included Windows into Practice audits, multi-agency appreciative inquiry events, practice observations and multi-agency learning events, including raising the profile of the Graded Care Profile Tool (GCP2 Tool). A strength included *“Professionals are contributing to decision making and oversight of progress. Schools were particularly identified as key players and contributors to planning and progress monitoring”* An area for improvement concluded *“Interventions tend to focus too much on the adult, particularly where adults have significant vulnerabilities, and less on experiences of children.”*

Domestic Violence – CSC and the Police have both undertaken audit work in this area. CSC involved partnership agencies and the Independent Scrutineer in Appreciative Inquiry sessions, the CSCP delivered sessions on themes from safeguarding practice reviews as part of the lunch and learn sessions co-ordinated by CSC Practice Consultants. Partnership working was found to be a strength with *“effective communication & partnership working among agencies are promoting good assessments and support to children and families”*. CSC have shared their findings in detail with the wider partnership via Quality Improvement Group Meetings. The Police have been asked to adopt a similar approach for 2022/23.

In addition, we had the opportunity to be assured of, and challenge the safeguarding arrangements of key agencies, which was very useful for the wider partnership to appreciate the scope and activity of partner agencies which is largely hidden in day-to-day multi-agency work.

- [Police Safeguarding Standards](#)
- [Health Safeguarding Standards](#)
- [Education Safeguarding Standards](#)

PART 4: THE WHAT NEXT?



A record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the reports period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements

SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEW (SPR) LEARNING

Given the number of Croydon SPRs, we have introduced a spreadsheet which tracks the most re-occurring themes for babies & toddlers, children and adolescents.

These themes are used in bi-monthly briefings to both senior leaders and the wider multi-agency workforce. This has helped us to be more SMART when deciding how to implement recommendations across several reviews and has ensured we have more pace to not only complete the recommendations, but share the learning at an earlier stage. Our single page briefings have been commended by professionals as a really helpful way to distil the learning in a more accessible format, especially when they are already stretched for time.

There is an example of the one-page briefing from the Ben SPR overleaf.



1. CRITICAL EVENTS

Ben died from significant injuries, aged two years and one month.

His mother (Ms A) and her new partner (Mr D) have been charged with Ben's murder and causing or allowing the death of a child. Their trial began January 2022.

Ms A was offered a range of services due to her vulnerabilities but did not engage.

Opportunities were missed to identify a new male partner (Mr D) who was known to be a potential risk.

2. KEY INFORMATION AND SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

- Absence of information sharing between agencies.
- Unsuitable housing and homelessness.
- Coercive control.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (Ms A).
- Offending behaviour (Mr D).
- Domestic abuse (discussed twice at MARAC whilst pregnant).
- Suspected parental substance misuse.
- Parental mental health.
- Victim of unexplained injuries.
- No engagement with father (separated from Ms A).
- Ms A engaged with services when she perceived a 'need'. Disengaged when 'need' was met.

3. LEARNING

- The need for an understanding of how parenting education is provided for new and inexperienced parents.
- It is important that Health record as 'was not brought' (to medical appointments or checks) rather than 'did not attend' in mind as a possible indicator of neglect of young children. Health now have a 'Was not Brought' policy in place.
- Keeping the child in mind and the child's experience central, to ensure the voice of the child.
- Assessments, engagement and non-engagement, where parental consent is required – the challenges of seeking to engage vulnerable parents who are not able to work with professionals.
- Assessing the risk of domestic abuse and supporting women who have experienced domestic abuse.
- The importance of tracking known violent adults and identifying them when there are concerns about children with whom they are in contact.
- Practitioners need to understand how professional curiosity can be beneficial to their practice.
- When a referral does not meet the criteria of one service it is important to find another agency to refer the client to e.g counselling.
- Agencies must ensure that practitioners are responsible for making and recording on their system that a referral has been made to another service and do not think that someone else has completed a referral.
- The importance of assessing the whole family, social care assessed brother with disabilities but did not assess Ms A missed opportunity re unborn Ben's needs and to explore Ms A suspected substance misuse.
- Multiple agencies involved with Ms A with one agency across 2 boroughs, important to share information and record information shared.
- Good contact with first health visitor.
- Good practice that Health contacted MASH to discuss and agree an assessment. However the referral did not reflect the discussion and the child protection concerns, refers to social care need to ensure referrals reflect safeguarding concerns and meet thresholds.

4. ACHIEVING CHANGE

Reflect on the findings and discuss the implications for your practice/team.
Outline steps you/team will take going forward.

The full SPR Report can be downloaded at: www.croydoniscb.org.uk



We are measuring the attendance at multi-agency learning events and capturing what they knew before the session and what they know after the session. It is harder to quantify how the learning impacts on front line outcomes for children. Audit activity gives us a snapshot at that time. The move to a more joined up dataset should help the CSCP to better understand its impact.

SAFEGUARDING ASYLUM SEEKERS

Government policy is changing and we are ensuring we are sighted on the multi-agency work within the Asylum Seekers/Homes For Ukraine space as well as offering training support for those public and professional people supporting asylum seekers. Croydon has over 1000 asylum seekers placed in hotels as well as Ukrainian refugees, some of these are families. The CSCP will need assurance of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for these potentially vulnerable people.

EARLY HELP TRANSFORMATION

The wider partnership are sighted on, and involved in, the Early Help Transformation work. This is an area where CSCP safeguarding leads and other multi-agency professionals can work closer and smarter to ensure less overlap whilst retaining maximum impact and impetus on the themes already identified:

- Greater professional curiosity
- Understanding who the significant adults are in children's lives
- Better information sharing

PARTNERSHIP COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

It is time to consider refreshing the terms of reference for the Partnership to ensure continued understanding of the roles and responsibilities as well provide a framework for partners and their organisations to work within.

The methodology for sharing briefings/learning materials and measuring the effectiveness of the messaging as and well as work to strengthen data sharing will also be included.

Information sharing, within systems and services/agencies is too varied. New work is underway to 'explain on a page' the different organisations and processes that sometimes work in isolation, with very similar cohorts. This should help the wider partnership to understand the landscape we all work in, and identify spaces, places, services and people who might not have been as visible before. Refreshed guidance on information sharing, as well as a focus on a new Partnership Communication Strategy will also achieve better results in this area.



DOMESTIC ABUSE

Now children are recognised as victims in their own right, the CSCP will consider how it can best ensure that the incidence and impact of domestic abuse where children are present is fully understood and that professionals are using all the tools and skills available to them to mitigate the impact of domestic abuse and protect children from becoming victims.

Our own SPRs and the National Report relating to Star & Arthur feature Domestic Abuse. The voice of the child and the extended family were poorly articulated and this feature will also be an area of examination for next year.

SEXUAL ABUSE

The CSCP recognises that its data and understanding of who the victims of child sexual abuse (CSA) are and how we are working together to reduce it is poor. Whilst the Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy is being refreshed, it will not actively address this risk. More work is required in this area including intra and extra familial abuse and supporting professionals to have constructive conversations in this tricky domain.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

The CSCP Executive have commissioned an Independent Review of the Partnership to assess the effectiveness of the Partnership. The findings of this work will influence the 2023 work plan.

PART 5: WHAT CHILDREN & FAMILIES SAY



Ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision

MENTAL HEALTH PRIORITY GROUP

We influenced some of the questions due to go out in the school surveys over the next 2 years to gather feedback about what young people think about their mental health and whether they know where to go for support.

YOS

Improved their data capture and recognised the disproportionality of young Black males and those with a learning disability or SEND. As a result they have introduced a Disproportionality Dashboard which has been recognised and circulated as a good example of how to make service improvements.

CAMHS

A clinician working with a family needed to refer them to SPOC. The family was very anxious about this, however the way CAMHS/CSC worked together was very supportive and continued alongside the assessment. The family said they felt very supported and their fears about being blamed were unfounded. The outcome for the family was positive.

As a parent you only ever want the best for your children, and it was so comforting to know that Early Help had exactly the same view. M and Early Help made sure that my daughter and myself were fully supported on this journey, by displaying patience empathy and understanding

Parent feedback re. keyworker Sept 2021

When my son and I first met V the risk was extremely high. However, with the help of V's plans that were acted upon, this risk was massively reduced. Everything that V has promised us, she has not failed to follow through. My son is now living a happy and stable life, he is due to start his mentoring at Palace for Life next week, this again is V's doing.

Parent feedback re. EH Social Worker August 2021

She has helped my daughter to become more confident by getting her the support she needs and In return has also given her a voice about the things that have happened to her which will eventually come in useful as she grows older so she will be able to stand up for what is right for herself making her a more confident young lady.

Parent feedback re. keyworker June 2021



CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

Empowerment, Memories, Positivity, Interesting, Respect and Educational.

E.M.P.I.R.E's purpose is to empower children looked after and care leavers with the confidence to influence policy change. It allows them to shape the service and have their voice heard. They also get the chance to make new friends, go on trips and engage in activities they may not have had access to without the support of the E.M.P.I.R.E Team.

All children and young people automatically become E.M.P.I.R.E members from the day they become looked after by Croydon. The team manager now sits on the CSCP Learning & Improvement Group to help bring the voice of care experienced children into the plans for learning and development of the wider workforce.

They ensure there are a wealth of holiday activities for E.M.P.I.R.E children and workshops such as "Living Independently" and support for foster carers.

Some of the quotes from E.M.P.I.R.E children, about the support they receive from the E.M.P.I.R.E Team include:

You guys never let us down and I respect that.

All of my good memories of my childhood happen at E.M.P.I.R.E - no one would take me the places you do.

You give us real life advice and stop us making silly decisions.

E.M.P.I.R.E is literally one big family.

E.M.P.I.R.E gave me a laptop that helped me do my coursework at home as I have anxiety and was struggling to go to the library.

The CSCP publish this report to summarise its work in 2021/22. You can find more information on our website <https://croydonicsb.org.uk/> as well as details of how to contact us.

GLOSSARY

BME

Black Minority Ethnic

BCU

Basic Command Unit

BME

Forum Black
Minority Ethnic Forum – A
Community Partner

CAMHS

Child & Adolescent Mental
Health Service

CAP

Complex Adolescent Panel

CCE

Child Criminal Exploitation

CCG

Clinical Commissioning
Group

CDOP

Child Death Overview Panel

CDR

Child Death Review

CHat

Child Health at home

CHIST

Croydon Health Integrated
Safeguarding Team

CHS

Croydon Health Service

CIN

Child in Need

CLA

Children Looked After

CLIP

Croydon Local Intelligence
Programme

CP

Child Protection

CPFC

Crystal Palace Football Club

CQC

Care Quality Commission

CSC

Children's Social Care

CSE

Child Sexual Exploitation

CWD

Children with Disabilities

CYP

Children & young people

DA/DASV

Domestic Abuse/ Domestic
Abuse & Sexual Violence

ETE

Education, Training &
Employment

FGM

Female Genital Mutilation

GCP2

Grade Care Profile version 2

HV

Health Visitor

ICPC

Initial Child Protection
Conference

JSNA

Joint Strategic Needs
Analysis

KPI

Key Performance Indicator

LADO

Local Authority Designated
Officer

LCSPR

Local Child Safeguarding
Practice Review

LeDeR

Learning Disabilities
Mortality Review

M/A

Multiagency

MACE

Multiagency Child
Exploitation Panel

MH

Mental Health

PH/PHN

Public Health/Public Health
Nursing

QA

Quality Assurance

RISE

Refuge, Information,
Support and Education
Charity

S & L/ SALT

Speech & Language/
Speech & Language Therapy

SCR

Serious Case Review

SEND

Special Educational Needs &
Disabilities

SLAM

South London & Maudsley
NHS Trust

SPOC

Single Point of Contact

SYV

Serious Youth Violence

TAS

Team Around the School

VAR

Vulnerable Adolescent
Review

VOC

Voice of the Child

WT

Working Together 2018

YAG

Youth Advisory Group

YOS

Youth Offending Service