School Safeguarding Audit (Section 11) 2022-23

Reporting on the academic year 2021-22

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 (FINAL)

Contents

Croydon Schools Safeguarding Audit 2022-23

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) on the completion of the annual school self-assessment safeguarding audit. It also serves to inform schools about trends, areas for development (key recommendations) and strengths across the borough.

*Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are **discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.***

Schools are required to have their own policies, procedures and practice in relation to child protection and safeguarding. These are linked to other policies in school and are reviewed and amended by the Governing Body with advice from the local authority (LA).

Schools and colleges have a key role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. *Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities (in relation to their education functions) and governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions (including sixth form colleges) to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age attending further education institutions. The same duty applies to independent school under section 157 of the same Act.*

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for schools to complete this audit there is an expectation from the Council that this will be completed and the return rate is high, with **ALL** schools completing it.

The audits have been reviewed by the Education Safeguarding Lead and the majority were found to be reflective and completed to an appropriate level of self-challenge. A number of areas around high data or comments on teaching of safeguarding themes will be followed up with individual schools. Key recommendations following the review of the audit returns is included in this report along with a detailed action plan for the LA to support schools in strengthening their knowledge and implementation of safeguarding practice within their provision.

The self-assessment audit is for head teachers and governors to assure themselves that appropriate challenge is provided with rigour and that action is then taken on the findings. It is not possible to corroborate the audit findings through this report alone. A number of follow up actions will therefore be undertaken by the LA to validate the findings. Two schools have submitted their audit since a deep dive visit was requested.

Those schools where a need for significant areas of improvement, or repeated areas of development are required, will be contacted by the Education Safeguarding Lead and supported in making relevant changes.

Catherine Bennett.
Education Safeguarding Lead
April 2023

1. Purpose and Rationale

1.1 Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 and section 157/175 of the Education Act 2002 requires the local authority, maintained schools and other education providers (including Independent schools) "shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to [their] conduct are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school". The purpose of the school self-assessment Safeguarding Audit 2022 ("the Audit") is to ensure the necessary arrangements have been made and children are being safeguarded.

1.2 The audit is largely an education provider completed self-audit using a standardised template provided by the Local Authority. This year, there are three versions which has enabled SEND provisions and nurseries to respond to more appropriately targeted questions, relevant to their intake of pupils. This process supports the statutory requirements placed upon the Local Authority, ensuring our compliance and serves as further evidence for the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The safeguarding arrangements in schools selected are examined in much the same way as an OFSTED inspection. The LA received in total 156 responses from school/providers and the findings from this report are based on these responses. *(Excluding academy trusts who have submitted their own version).*

2. Audit Response Rate

2.1 A year on year comparison shows there continues to be an increase in audit responses. This was achieved by pro-actively chasing of schools with regular reminders to those who did not submit 11th November deadline. This year 67% of schools submitted their audit by the initial deadline compared to 70% last year. It was noted that secondary schools and post 16 provisions had the lowest response rate by the deadline whereas 84% of Primary, 80% of nurseries and 72% of specialist provisions submitted within the expected timeframe.

2.2 100% of audits were returned this year. One secondary school and one independent school did not submitted their audits within the extended timeframe and have since received confirmation of a planned visit (one completed and one due this term).

2.3 Some academy trusts submitted their own safeguarding audit. There continued to be the need to follow up on requests for these but, all have been received. This enables the local authority to have oversight of the safeguarding arrangements in those schools, though it is not possible to incorporate their data into this analysis as the information requests are not comparable. These schools were requested to assist with additional data, not included in their own audit format, for analysis but no all were received. What we have received has allowed us to gain a fuller understanding of reported numbers across all schools and colleges in the local authority for specific themes such as child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, online bullying and knives and offensive weapons in schools.

Reviewing Previous Recommendations

Recommendation from LA and CSCP	Action/Outcome
Recommendation 1: Schools and education providers to continue to be subject to arranged 'deep dives' to assess the validity of the audit responses. Where the audit shows a school is not compliant with an area of practice they will be reminded either of the required standard or signposted to what is considered good practice. Those schools that have not submitted an audit return will be subject to an announced safeguarding visit.	In 2021/22 From Jan - July2022, 16 schools were visited and safeguarding reviews completed. 9 of those visited were recommended to receive further support. One school cancelled on several occasions and this being highly supported this academic year. Some of the recommendations/actions included - Developing and improving recording systems - Improvement of risk assessments following a significant incident - Using data to identify trends in concerns and targeting resources to prevent further incidents. - Improve coverage of complex safeguarding areas such as FGM within the curriculum - Staff development in contextual safeguarding beyond just the 4 main categories of abuse. Please note that other LA staff will have completed additional visits which I have not reported on in this report but those with a significant safeguarding issue would include me.
Recommendation 2: Specialist practitioners in themed areas to deliver training on their area within the DSL forums to improved skills and knowledge as well as signpost to good, age-appropriate resources for staff to access and apply within their curriculum.	A number of internal and external specialists have attended the DSL forum and DSL check-in meetings providing a breadth of information on key themes, including 'talk consent', 'prevent', 'Lucy Faithful Foundation' and many others. In the new academic year the DSL check-in meetings have regular attendance from the gangs team, police, CSC and EH. External colleagues will continue to be invited.
Recommendation 3 Providers to have access to training opportunities for child-on-child abuse and specific training on harmful sexual behaviour which they can then disseminate through their own provision so ALL staff have a secure understanding of the contextual safeguarding risks at ALL ages.	There have been a number of meetings held with DSLs and Head Teachers to assist in this area. A handbook, resource pack and training slides created and shared for all schools and available on the CSCP website. In this current school year, there was further training on understanding harmful sexual behaviour delivered in the Autumn Term. In addition, from Spring term 2023, there is a new Healthy Relationships Advisory Forum for schools to access and get advice and guidance around concerning behaviours to try and prevent escalation.
Recommendation 4 Educational provisions of all types to provide numbers of child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour and Youth Violence (knives or offensive weapons) on a termly basis to the LA in order to provide a more timely response with providers as well as moving closer to a preventative model rather than a reactive one. This should also include providers identifying pupils who have has several educational moves and those manage moved outside of the FAP process.	Schools who completed the LA audit have provided numbers related to specific incident types. During the analysis of this process, I have identified a couple of school to speak to as the numbers appear higher than the majority of schools. Requested numbers on a termly basis have been varied but approximately half of schools providing this information. This does not fulfil the purpose of the task so I have stopped requesting this and will work solely on annual data. Val Burrell-Walker has reported that they now operate a professionals meeting for every young person who has had two or more managed moves.

Recommendation 5	Communication remains an issue, but this is not solely regarding SPOC/MASH but often updates from other teams when early help has been requested or when a child and family assessment completed. This requires ongoing challenge which I will continue to do with managers on behalf of schools.
Communication between SPOC and education providers requires improvement when referrals are made. This includes clarity over the temporary procedure for requesting a call back from a social worker where there are difficulties getting through on the consultation line. It also needs consistency in the feedback to providers from SPOC on whether their referral progresses to EH, CSC or is closed with NFA.	The feedback around SPOC/MASH appears more positive following the support of our social work colleagues in MASH (led by Jonathan Lung), who have taken on board and responded to feedback from the previous audit.
	The feedback numbers from SPOC/MASH remain similar to the previous year, but 84% of those who used the consultation line found it helpful compared to 70% the previous year
Recommendation 6	Information to schools for parents has been provided but the Online subgroup needs further attention. Following a review of this, it was felt it would be beneficial for CB to chair with support of HM.
Schools to be provided with further links to 'Parentzone Local' information and resources through the Online Sub-Group.	CB has made contact with Parentzone Local and further information will be sent for circulation to schools.
	Once the new Education MASH Officer starts on 24.4.23, CB will have capacity to put more focus into the online sub-group.
Recommendation 7	This remains an ongoing process, but significant steps forward have been made in terms of what is available to support schools in identifying, responding, reporting, and providing intervention including the new advisory forum mentioned in recommendation 3.
Schools to be supported in responding to the OFSTED review of Sexual Abuse in schools and colleges through training, signposting, resources, policy and procedures.	

3.   Employment, Training, Policy and Procedures

3.1   This year's data supports the fact that **ALL** Croydon schools stated that they were compliant with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE). The audit shows that this good practice applies to safer recruitment practice for staff/volunteers and governors and that this practice appears to be fully embedded within Croydon education provisions. All provisions have a member of the interview panel with safer recruitment training with 56% having two or more members.

3.2   This year **ALL** school/providers answered 'yes' to having a single central record of checks on all staff/volunteers and governors.

3.3   Five provisions reported that their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) required an update in Designated Safeguarding Lead training as this had not been completed within the last two years. Further details of training opportunities have been provided to schools as a priority to ensure they are up to date and compliant with expectations.

3.4   The data this year showed that 100% of schools reported that staff members had attended whole school safeguarding training.

3.5   **100%** answered YES to the question - *All staff receive regular safeguarding updates from the DSL or an external provider through a mix of staff inset training and newsletters/email*

3.6   Only one school did have an up-to-date Safeguarding and Child Protection policy in place. This has since been rectified and the LA model safeguarding policy has been shared and the school used this to form an up-to-date policy.

3.7   The audit found that 100% of schools stated that they had included safeguarding in their induction procedures for all new staff (including volunteers and temporary staff). Some of the ways this is; KCSIE module online, PowerPoint summary with the DSL, leaflet, quick reference guide and a video of the annual safeguarding training.

3.8   100% of provisions have someone who has successfully completed the required safer recruitment training on their interview panel.

3.9   The audit showed that 100% of provider's staff members had read and signed to show they have knowledge and understanding of Part A of the updated 2022 Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

3.10 The audit asked how visitors are made aware of safeguarding procedures and how to report a concern. Some of the responses included having leaflets, information on the electronic sign-in, posters around school and information on the reverse of the visitor's pass.

Recommendation 1:
Explore the quality of the visitor information provided and ensure it includes relevant information to ensure concerns are reported in a timely manner.

4.   Thematic Focuses

This report continues to take a thematic approach focusing on key themes for information and data purposes including: Extremism and Radicalisation (including hate crime), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Children Missing from Home or Care, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage (FGM), Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV and child on child abuse, Early Help, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Single Point of Contact (SPOC).

4.1   ALL provisions are raising awareness of themes with their students to varying degrees. However, there needs to be continued progress in an age and developmentally appropriate way to empower schools to have skills, confidence and resources to address this consistently and in a progressive manner across all year groups. Analysis has shown that a theme may be taught in year 6 for example but not then revisited until year 9.

Teaching of Themes in Nursery and Primary

Teaching of Themes in Secondary and Post 16
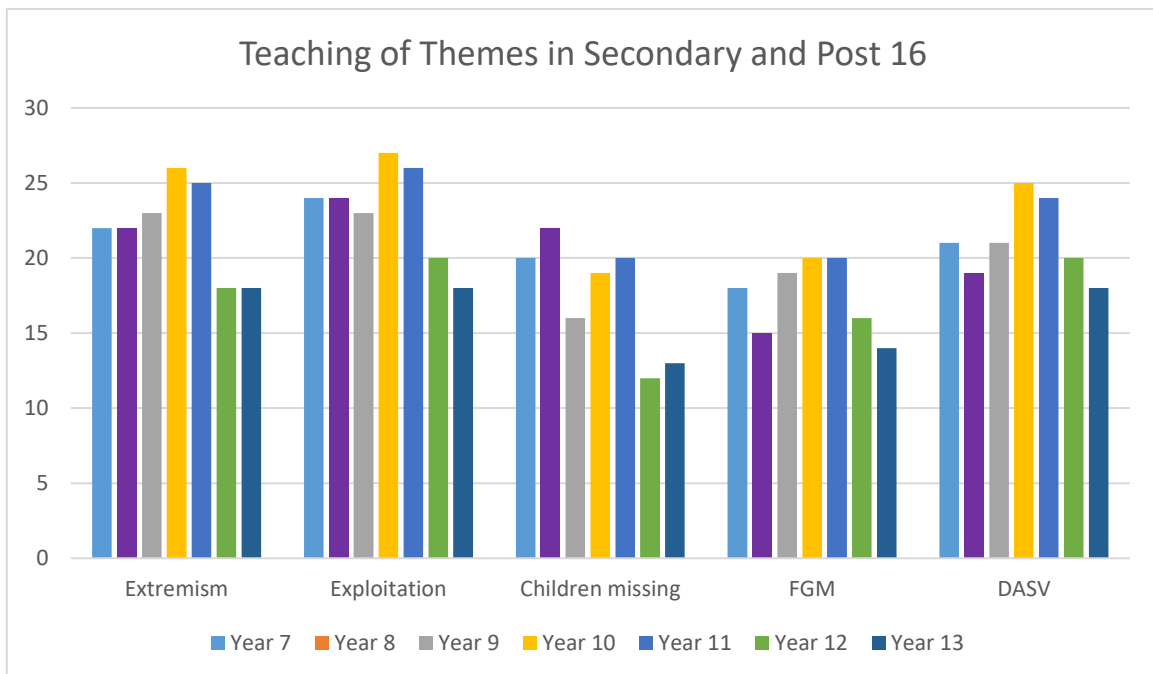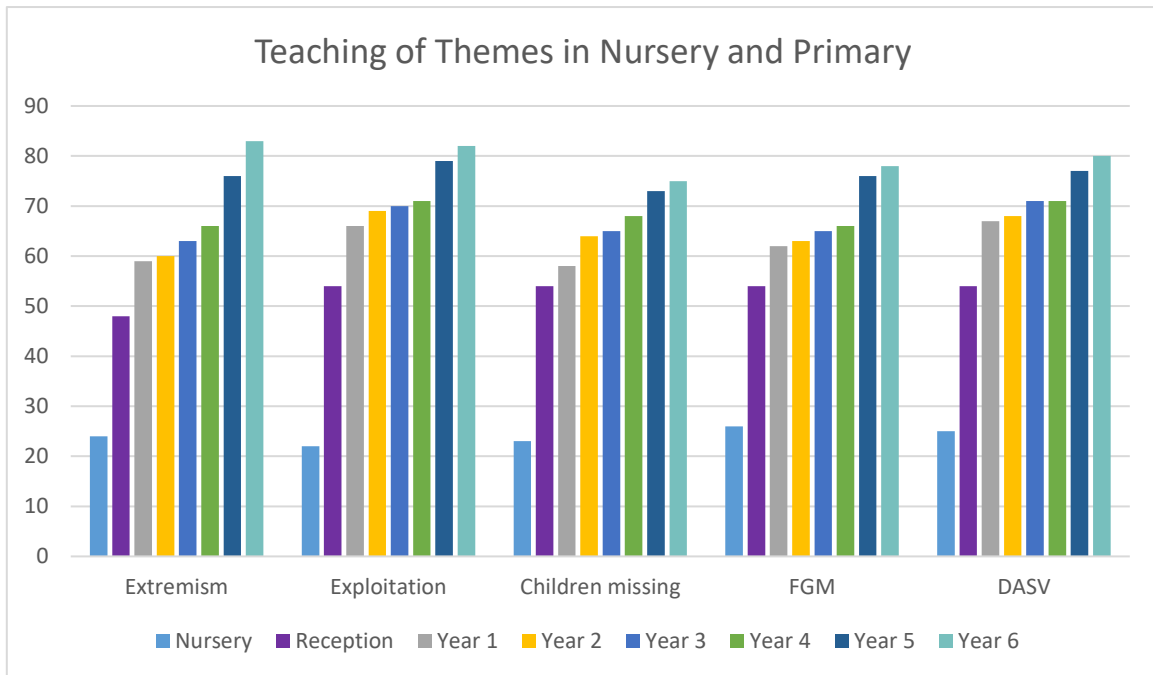
In our SEND provisions, the responses varied depending on the level of need. For example, there were a couple of schools who do not teach the pupils about going missing, this is because they have significant/severe disabilities and completely reliant on adults to move them and meet their basic needs.

From our mainstream responses, 7 schools do not teach about children missing from home/care, 7 do not teach about FGM and 3 do not teach about domestic abuse. This will be explored further with individual schools.

The data shows me that 84% of Year 6 pupils learn about exploitation and 77% of Y6 learn about the risks of running away and missing from home. Both are key areas in preparing children for transition to high school. This is an area for development.

Recommendation 2:
Schools to be upskilled on understanding the risks of children who go missing from home and care and the relationship between this and CCE/CSE. This will be through information sent and opportunities to attend LA led training.

Recommendation 3:
Gain clarity around transition programmes provided by schools for Y6 pupils around safeguarding themselves in high school and when out in the community.

5. Extremism & Radicalism

5.1 The audit asked schools if members of the Leadership Team have attended the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent" (WRAP) Training or other training linked to raising awareness of extremism and radicalisation. The audit found that 88% of providers have taken up this training opportunity. Further information on arranging an update will be provided.

5.2 Providers were asked about the year groups of students receiving sessions in relation to extremism and radicalisation during the last 12 months. The data identified that 100% of providers are providing pupils with awareness on this issue which is a 8% increase on the previous year's data. However, we need to be mindful that this is not across all year groups and provisions would benefit from continued support in how to provide this at an age and developmentally-appropriate level. *Consideration should also be given as to whether some primary schools may take a more creative approach to delivering awareness on this topic, such as delivering awareness through assembly and informal discussions during lessons. It is understood that data of this nature is difficult to capture in an audit document.*

5.3 This year ***100%*** of all education providers that submitted the Croydon section 11 audit reported that they have in place either a Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy that includes a section on Radicalisation and Extremism or a separate policy on Radicalisation and Extremism.

5.4 The data suggests a slight increase in referrals relating to the issue of radicalisation, with the reported data showing that providers had made a total of 16 referrals in the last twelve months. This compares to 15 referrals for the previous year and 14 the year before.

5.5 A new area of data for this return was around hate incidents related to culture, gender or sexuality for example. We don't have comparative data as this is new for this audit, but schools reported 311 individual incidents around hate, 13 of which resulted in a referral to social care or police. Some of the work to support pupils who have either been a victim or the alleged perpetrator has been through counselling support, referral to youth offending service, engaging with the safer schools officers, restorative justice approach and reflective conversations.

6. Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

The DfE (2017) Child sexual exploitation Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation.
The definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows:
child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may

have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

6.1 Exploitation remains a priority area for the local authority as it continues to receive high profile attention within the service. Croydon has fully embedded its Complex Adolescents Panel (CAP) which meets on a weekly basis, with regular buy-in from multi-agency operations targeting victims, perpetrators, local hot spots where offences may take place using a contextual safeguarding model.

Education providers report that 55% of members of leadership teams have attended 'Croydon Gangs'; 'Child Sexual Exploitation' and 'Supporting Young People Affected by Child Sexual Exploitation' training or other similar training linked to child sexual exploitation, which is a significant drop on the previous year (81%). Other schools have completed one area but not both and 19% have not competed any. Details of how schools can access the support and training has been distributed.

6.2 When asked about which year groups are made aware through taught curriculum of child sexual exploitation 100% of schools provide some learning around exploitation, however, not across all year groups. Last year we had 5 schools, and the previous year 21 schools who were not teaching about exploitation so we have made excellent progress and will continue to work on increasing the frequency of the teaching to pupils.

6.3 Reports found that 100% of providers have in place either a policy on child sexual exploitation or incorporate it as a theme into their safeguarding policy.

6.4 The data also shows that there was a total of 68 reported referrals from providers that have gangs and/or CSE as the dominant feature. This is an increase from last year's figure of 50 and the previous year of 58. This year we have broken the data down to show how many concerns were raise for CCE and CSE separately and how many led to a referral.

Exploitation Concerns and Referrals

Year on Year combined CCE and CSE referral Comparison
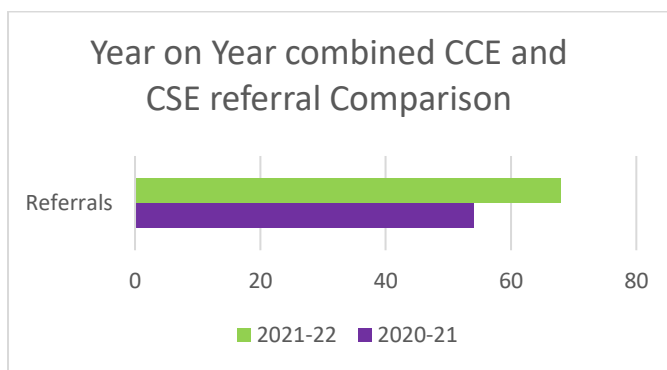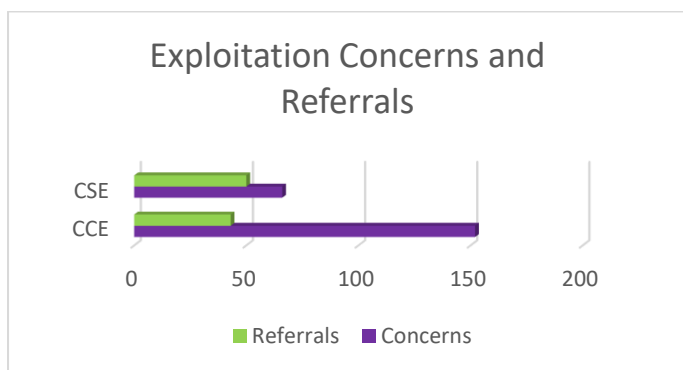
7. Children Missing from Home or Care

7.1 Data indicates positive staff awareness in relation to children missing from home or care, however, 92% of providers feel confident that they are able to implement this process in their work practice compared to 98% in the previous audit. Following this decline, further information and guidance has been sent to schools and training offered on 'understanding the risks around children missing from home/care'. Through discussion with schools, there continues to be a need for further highlighting in the links between children missing from home/care to potential CCE/CSE.

7.2 It was found that 95% of providers, compared to 88% last year and 74% previous year, have managed to spread awareness of children missing from home or care through their taught curriculum. We need continued work and development to ensure ALL providers raise awareness in this area. This year's data responses show the majority of primary schools covering this in Upper KS2.

7.3 When providers were asked the question: '*do they have in place either, a Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy that includes a section on children missing from home or care or a specific policy on children who go missing from home or care*', we have had an increase from 94% last year to 100% of schools/providers.

7.4 In 2021-22, schools reported referring 59 cases to MASH/Early Help/Police as a result of concerns relating to missing from home or care. This is a slight decrease in referral numbers from the previous year's 62 referrals.

8. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. Although FGM is practiced in some cultures this practice is illegal in the UK and considered a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. This mandatory duty came into force in October 2015.

8.1 When asked the question whether members of schools' leadership team have attended training on FGM or have used resources developed by the Department for Education to aid internal training and dialogue on the issue 90% of the schools in Croydon had done so, which is a decline of 7% on the previous year's figure. Schools have been seeking an alternative to the online training in order to aid discussion and understanding which is something to be explored further.

When asked a question in relation to "*Children at school being made aware through taught curriculum of the definition of FGM, religious myths associated with FGM, and FGM and the law" and the question "are Children aware of who to contact should they wish to discuss any concerns they have?*". Responses suggest that 68% of providers are making all or some of their pupils aware of FGM through the school's curriculum, which is 4% decrease on last year's figure. Much like previous year's most of those providers that answered 'no' were primary schools. These findings suggest there needs to be some continued work to raise awareness on FGM within younger year groups in an age-appropriate way. In addition to this, some of the SEND provisions who have pupils with severe learning difficulties do not have this as part of their curriculum as it is not developmentally appropriate.

8.5 *100%* of schools have a section about FGM in their school safeguarding policy or a separate FGM policy.

8.6   There were 7 reported referrals made to MASH/Early Help in relation to FGM, an increase of 5 compared to the previous year and one reported previously.

Recommendation 4
Explore what can be provided for face-to-face training and more teaching materials on FGM, forced marriage and Honour Based Abuse

## 9.   Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV)

DASV continues to be one of Croydon Council's on-going priorities.

9.1   School engagement in training on DASV saw an uptake of 89% either through Croydon LA training opportunities or other providers. This is 2% increase on last year and demonstrates development in school engagement in relation to training in this area. Some schools, this is the leadership team whereas other schools show excellent practice and have all teaching staff or whole school staff.

9.2   When asked whether *"Children at our school are made aware of DASV and healthy relationships and are clear on who they can talk to about any concerns they may have",* 98% are providing direct and/or discrete lessons in this area, an increase of 8% on the previous year. My analysis of this would be how schools have embedded the statutory Relationships, health, and sex education.

9.3   Providers were asked the question: '*do they have in place either a Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy that includes a section on DASV or a specific policy on DASV?*' - **100%** of schools/providers reported that they either have a policy in place within their safeguarding policy or linked to another policy/signposting to KCSIE. This is consistent with last year.

In comparison to last year, the number of referrals made in relation to DASV has again risen. This year there were 181 reported referrals made to MASH/Early Help due to DASV which is an increase of 16 referrals on last year's 165 referrals.
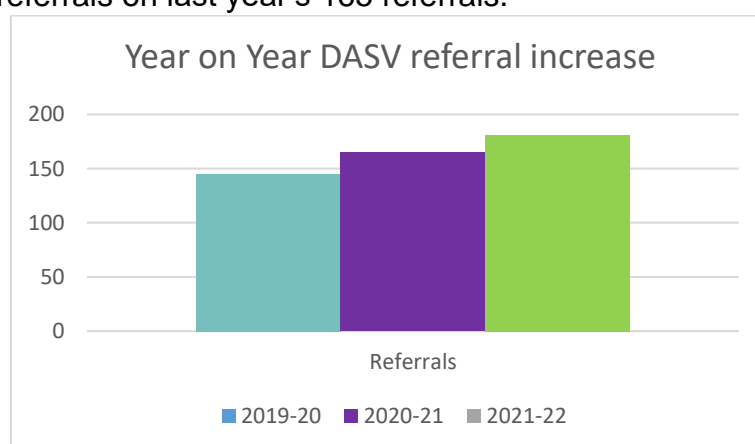
10.   Child-on-Child Abuse (formerly known as Peer-on-Peer)

In 2021-22 the LA took action to improve identification of child-on-child abuse including harmful sexual behaviours following the OFSTED report on Sexual Abuse in Schools (June 2021). The audit has provided some clarity around what schools have also done in response to the outcomes raised by OFSTED. Only one provision in Croydon who do not currently teach consent showing that

education provisions, have fully engaged with the LA mission to increase awareness and educate our children and young people around healthy relationships.

Please note, there is no year-on-year comparison with peer-on-peer abuse data as this was not a full section in the audit until now. Having this in the audit allowed the LA to assess what already in place and what support needs to be provided in the coming year.

10.1 97% of schools report having received training on child-on-child abuse. This is a significant increase on 42% previously. **Only one school** reported they would not feel confident in knowing how to respond to incidences should they occur.

10.2 Only **25%** have shared the OFSTED report on Sexual Abuse in schools with parents and carers. Although this is a slight increase on the previous return of 20%, in order for continued home and educational provisions partnership working, it will be recommended that providers should not only share the report but also their response as a provision as part of their safeguarding processes. The LA can support with this as part of the 'Taking Action against Sexual Abuse in Schools/Colleges' handbook.

10.3 50% of schools have asked their staff to read the OFSTED report on Sexual Abuse in Schools, an increase of 10% from previously. Although it is not within guidance that they should, I would expect, as good practise, that all schools request this of their staff (or at least the headlines) so staff are aware of changes and updates to policy and procedures in this area. The training slides provided with the Handbook provides the headlines.

10.4 99% of providers completing the audit have confirmed they are teaching CONSENT as part of their curriculum. Only one school stated this was not currently part of their curriculum and this will be explored individually with the school.

10.5 In the last academic year, 406 incidences of child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour. This is compared to 223 incidents in the previous year. This indicates that schools are much clearer on identifying incidences but also highlights the significance of the concern within Croydon.

Recommendation 5

Further exploration around the types of incidents related to child-on-child abuse to clarify the level of severity. Where there are concerns, a visit will be completed to unpick the situation, explore the curriculum and assist school in reducing the concerning behaviour presented by the pupils.

11. Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

The Children's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for all referrals to early help and children's social care. The referral pathway is open to all practitioners, stakeholders and the general public. Professionals can also contact the Single Point of Contact for advice, provided that the case is not allocated to another social worker and the child lives in the Croydon area. The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) consultation line is a service provided as part of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care offer.

11.1 Schools reported that there were 1181 referrals made to SPOC this academic year by education providers, a slight increase of 15 from last year.

The school reported data also found that:

- **39.5%** referrals to SPOC were requests for Early Help intervention;
- **60.5%** were for children's social care intervention through SPOC;
- When asked about the level of response from social workers on the outcomes of referrals they have submitted, providers advised the following;

Feedback on all referrals	Feedback on some referrals	Feedback on none of the referrals
60%	33%	5%

- **95%** of providers agreed with all or some of the decisions made by the front door, only **4%** did not agree with the decision made by the front door;
- The SPOC consultation line has been used 1108 times by providers, a significant increase on the previous year of 842;
- **84%** of schools and colleges consulted, agreed they felt the consultation line was helpful compared to 71% previously. This has shown the response made by Jonathan Lung and the SPOC team has made a positive impact on relationships between social care and schools. Many of the issues continue to relate to the current telephony service which is not adequate for the needs presented.

12. Early Help

The Croydon Early Help offer is fully embedded and is positively impacting on service delivery. Each locality hub uses an integrative model with a multi-agency team of practitioners that are able to lead in direct work with vulnerable children/families. Early intervention is essential in ensuring children and families receive support before any issues become complex, thus reducing the risk of harm and the need for a more intensive intervention from statutory services.

12.1 When asked the question *"Has the Croydon Partnership Early Help Strategy been promoted to families through a variety of ways - e.g. website/leaflets etc.?"* 79% of providers answered yes, which demonstrates the need for further promotion of this area. This is an increase of 17% on the previous return.

12.2 The reported data indicated that the number of Team Around the Family (TAF)   meetings in the last 12 months totalled 961 recorded meetings. This figure has increased on last year's reported 771 TAF meetings These consistent findings clearly suggest the TAF process has become fully embedded within provider practice, indicating that schools are viewing themselves as part of the wider early help offer.

13. Safeguarding Recording, Monitoring and Referrals

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Every member of staff who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children and consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child.

It is the responsibility of all professionals to ensure that all children are safeguarded. This should be done by actively encouraging members of staff to work together proactively with children and families who may need help and for this to happen as soon as possible so that children are protected harm. Therefore, it is important there are systems in place to support and promote good practice in this area.

12.1   The audit identified that 100% of education providers keep their child protection records separately from child's main school file and in a locked cabinet or through a secure, online system and that all child protection concerns were recorded legibly, dated and signed with the information contained in child protection records only shared on a need-to-know basis. These figures remain consistent year-on-year.

12.2   There were 57 reported positive DBS disclosures received in the last academic year containing details of cautions, warnings, reprimands, convictions or additional police information.

12.3   Statutory guidance and procedures state that every council has a duty to manage allegations and concerns about any person who works with children and young people in their area. This includes council staff, staff or partner agencies and volunteers. Croydon Council complies with this duty by employing a dedicated member of staff known as the Local Authority Designated Officer (or LADO)

12.4   With the audits received through the Croydon format, this academic year there were 189 individual reported contacts with the LADO which is 40 contacts more than the previous year. This year 25 schools reported a LADO meeting took place as a result of a referral to the LADO. 108 calls led to a school based investigation.

12.5   The data reported by schools through the audit indicates that 102 education providers reported and recorded incidents of physical/verbal bullying (94 last year). There were 1212 reported incidents of bullying recorded, which was 404 **more** than last years reported figures. As predicated in last year's report, Covid-19 lockdowns is the likely reason for the previous drops but with schools returning to 'normal' we have seen a significant rise not only based on schools being fully open, but also due to the decline in social skills and relationships schools are seeing between students.

12.6   There were 318 recorded incidents of cyber-bullying with a total of 76 providers reporting incidents of this nature. This is in line with the previous cyber-bullying data. This is likely to link to the increased reliance on technology during COVID and schools are fully aware of the issue.

12.7   Sadly serious youth violence continues to make the headlines and the impact is also affecting us locally within Croydon. It is therefore important for pupils to know about the law in this area, and the likely consequences both for themselves and others if they are found in possession of a knife or other offensive weapon.

Croydon's local protocol states that any **knife** found on a school site must be reported to the police. This ensures the police have an accurate picture of the number of weapons found in schools and allows for support services to put in place appropriate interventions with the young person afterwards.

In addition, Croydon has a broader gangs and serious youth violence strategy and is establishing a Violence Reduction Network to tackle the issue in a joined up and coordinated way.

12.8   There were 31 incidents involving offensive weapons recorded by providers and out of those incidents recorded 28 were reported to the Police. This is a decrease of weapons in schools on the previous year which was 48. Schools have engaged well with the safer schools officers. The police teams have visited schools to use knife arches and wands but also to engage with young people making them approachable and building positive relationships.

The definition of "offensive weapons" is broad and some schools may not classify all possible weapons as needing a police response. It is a criminal offence to carry a knife on schools' premises and education providers and under the local protocol these incidents should be reported to the police regardless of the severity of the incident.

Weapons were reported as having been found in primary, secondary and special school; independent schools; colleges; and PRU/AP settings.

Schools report that they have had to act as an appropriate adult for a child on one occasion, two less than the previous year.

12.9   New data collated this year show that excluding regular knife arches and use of wands as regular practice, schools and colleges completed 256 searches of pupils due to concerns around drugs and/or offensive weapons. Only 5 of these searches were completed by police.

12.10 The audit data found that 3109 pupils had been removed from the school roll in during the academic year. It was also found that 619 of cases had moved abroad and/or no new school had been identified. Schools have been provided with support around guidance including a 'quick guide'. Following 'Child Q', school meetings were held with the LA to encourage open discussions around the possibility that it could occur in any of our schools and in addition, how to prevent this.

Recommendation 6

Bullying, including cyber-bullying is showing a significant increase on the previous year. Schools to be provided with support and resources to help address these challenges and reduce the number of incidents in the future.

Recommendation 7

Following 'Child Q', further training to be offered to schools to build on their knowledge of searching procedures but more importantly, their understanding of adultification and the impact on young people.

14. Extended School Activities

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 states *The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009[54] and the Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Application of Enactments) (England) Regulations 2007[55] require governing bodies of maintained schools and management committees of pupil referral units (PRUs) to ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training. Governing bodies of maintained schools and management committees of PRUs may choose appropriate training and may take advice from the safeguarding partners in doing so.*

13.1   This year it was reported that 100% of providers are operating safe recruitment procedures and have DBS checks carried out on staff.

13.2   This year 100% of providers within extended schools activities have in place a child protection policy of their own or have adopted school's procedure.

13.3   The data found that 100% of providers/schools have procedures for liaising with the school's designated safeguarding lead on child protection concerns or allegation against staff.

13.4   The data showed that this year 98% of providers/schools had carried out risk assessments for all lettings to determine any potential risks (an increase of 2%). Schools should consider the potential risks of not carry out appropriate risk assessments when agreeing to letting out their premises to outside organisations for activities. The policy or risk assessment can be used as a basis for making decisions on who and what is suitable and help to support any risk assessment that is required to vet external speakers, groups particularly around radicalisation.

13.5   The data found that 100% of providers were happy with their agencies safeguarding policies.

14   School Data Request

14.1   Regulations specify the grounds by which a child may be removed from a school roll.   All referrals need to meet one of those criteria before removing a   child from a school roll will be sanctioned. Referrals are triaged and the   response   is   then   tailored   according   to   the subsequent risk assessment. In addition to those referrals from Croydon schools' referrals are also received from other local authorities and external agencies (e.g. the NHS).

Elective Home Education (EHE).

End of Year EHE Register	**590**
Total Moved OOB	**30**
Total Established EHE Returned to school	**8**
Total Registered EHE Returned to school	**60**
EWS;CME; Other	**9**
School application	**5**

Termly Trends:

Autumn Term Enquiries	**93**
Autumn Term New EHE	**85**
Spring Term Enquiries	**38**
Spring Term New EHE	**48**
Summer Term Enquiries	**49**
Summer Term New EHE	**51**

EHE Progress and Escalation:

Red - concern	**3**
Orange - outcomes not age, ability, aptitude appropriate or unsubstantiated	**6**
Green - broadly achieving age, ability, aptitude appropriate outcomes	**43**

Breakdown:

Year Total EHE Mainstream	**564**
Year Total EHE Statement EHCP	**26**

Inspections:

Face-to-Face meetings	**26**
Work samples/email/post	**22**
Telephone summary	**1**

Key Stage Starts:

EYFS	**8**
Key Stage 1	**28**
Key Stage 2	**46**
Key Stage 3	**72**
Key Stage 4	**30**

Reasons:

Distance or access to school	**0**
Religious or cultural beliefs	**1**
Philosophical or ideological views	**67**
Dissatisfaction with the system	**4**
Dispute with school	**21**
Bullying	**6**
As a short-term intervention for a particular reason	**34**
A child's unwillingness or inability to go to school	**6**
Special educational needs	**6**
Familial	**6**
Health	**9**
Covid -19 related	**7**

Stop gap - school place preference	**17**

Enquiries:

Enquiries	**147**
School/Agency Referrals	**124**
New EHE	**184**

EHE Year 11 Destinations:

Further Education/Sixth Form College	**2**
Continuing EHE AS and A'Levels	**0**
Not known	**69**
Training	**0**

The end of term figures recorded were:

Autumn 2021	635 ↑
Spring 2022	623 ↑
Summer 2023	590 ↔

*(See Appendix 2 for passages from Government Guidance, **please note it is guidance not statutory**).*
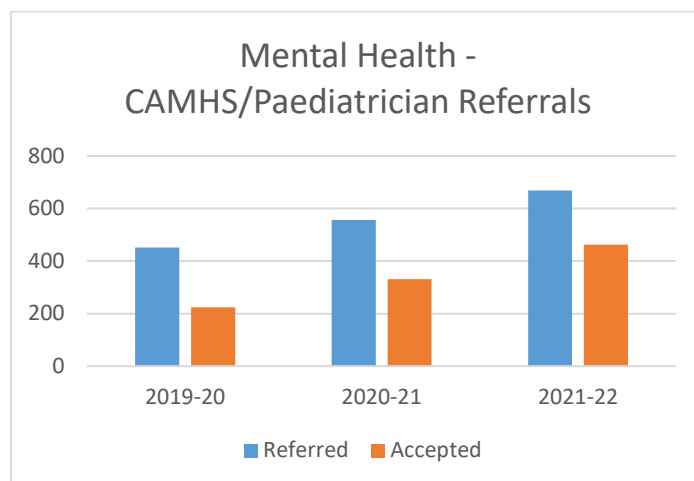
EHE oversight continues to be a huge task, processing and data keeping, administration and inputting records into Capita and SharePoint to ensure that the local authority is fulfilling its first duty in identifying children who are not on a school roll and who are receiving education otherwise than at school. Year-on-year we continue to see an increase in EHE numbers within the LA, with no increase of support for EHE staffing capacity. This will be resolved in due course. The LA have secured a permanent EHE Lead and will be looking to recruit an assistant.

14.2 Croydon Council is currently leading on Operation Encompass which is an initiative that enhances communication between the police and schools where a child has been a victim of domestic abuse. The purpose of the information sharing is to ensure schools have more information to support safeguarding of children. By knowing that the child has had this experience, the school is in a better position to understand and be supportive of the child's needs and possible behaviours Operation Encompass will complement existing safeguarding procedures. It is extremely important that all Croydon schools are aware of this new initiative.

The data suggests that 81% of the providers that answered this question are currently registered to operation encompass. A further 11% have either signed up since or in process.

14.3 Mental health can impact on young people's lives both within the family or personally. It is important that all providers are able to facilitate appropriate support for these types of concerns. Returns tell us that 92% of providers have access to appropriately trained mental health support. This is 3% increase on the previous year.

The audit found there were 678 referrals made to CAMHS this academic year as a direct result of pupils suspected of having mental health concerns. Referrals have increased by 122 from last year's figures. 463 referrals met the threshold for CAMHS compared to 331 last year. This year-on-year increase was predicted following COVID and is a significant concern for schools, having to manage challenging situations with referral waiting time around 2 years.

Mental Health - CAMHS/Paediatrician Referrals

Year	Referred	Accepted
2019-20	~450	~230
2020-21	~560	~335
2021-22	~670	~465

14.4 The data informed that 97 providers (of those who completed the LA form) currently have access to a defibrillator which is a continued increase of providers having access to this life saving equipment.

15. Recommendations

	Recommendation	Timescale	Lead
1	Explore the quality of the visitor information provided and ensure it includes relevant information to ensure concerns are reported in a timely manner.	During each school visit throughout the year	Cath Bennett Val Burrell-Walker
2	School to be upskilled on understanding the risks of children who go missing from home and care and the relationship between this and CCE/CSE.	March 2023	Cath Bennett Val Burrell-Walker
3	Gain clarity around transition programmes provided by schools for Y6 pupils around safeguarding themselves in high school and when out in the community.	June 2023	Cath Bennett
4	Explore what can be provided for face-to-face training and more teaching materials on FGM, forced marriage and Honour Based Abuse	July 2023	Cath Bennett
5	Further exploration around the types of incidents related to child-on-child abuse	August 2023	Cath Bennett

	to clarify the level of severity. Where there are concerns, a visit will be completed to unpick the situation, explore the curriculum and assist school in reducing the concerning behaviour presented by the pupils.		
6	Bullying, including cyber-bullying is showing a significant increase on the previous year. Schools to be provided with support and resources to help address these challenges and reduce the number of incidents in the future.	July 2023	Cath Bennett
7	Following 'Child Q', further training to be offered to schools to build on their knowledge of searching procedures but more importantly, their understanding of 'adultification' and the impact on young people.	July 2023	Cath Bennett Val Burrell-Walker

<u>Appredix 1 -</u> Elective Home Education Government Guidance

Parents have the right to choose to educate their child(ren) at home, *Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that: "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable - (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."*

Monitoring

Education Act 1996 and the authority should act accordingly.
Section 5.3 - There are no detailed legal requirements as to how such a system of oversight should work, and it is for each local authority to decide what it sees as necessary and proportionate to assure itself that every child is receiving a suitable education, or action is being taken to secure that outcome. Establishing a positive relationship between the local authority and the home-educating parent – where that is possible - will allow authorities to better understand parents' educational provision and preferences and offer them appropriate support. A positive relationship will also provide a sound basis for investigation if the authority receives information that a suitable education is not being 16 provided.

Section 5.4 - **In any event, the department** *recommends* **that each local authority:**
• Should provide parents with a named contact who is familiar with home education policy and practice and has an understanding of a range of educational philosophies;
• Ordinarily makes contact with home educated parents **on at least an annual basis** so the authority may reasonably inform itself of the current suitability of the education provided. In cases where there were no previous concerns about the education provided and no reason to think that has changed because the parents are continuing to do a good job, such contact would often be very brief;
• has a named senior officer with responsibility for elective home education policy and procedures, and the interaction with other work on issues such as children missing education, unregistered settings, vulnerable children, and welfare;
• Organises training on the law and the diversity of home education methods for all officers who have contact with home-educating families, possibly in conjunction with other authorities;
• Ensures that those LA staff who may be the first point of contact for a potential home-educating parent understand the right of the parent to choose home education. It is very important that parents are provided with accurate information from the outset to establish a positive foundation for the relationship. However, parents are under no obligation to accept support or advice from a local authority, and refusal to do so is not in itself evidence that the education provided is unsuitable;
• Works co-operatively with other relevant agencies such as health services to identify and support children who are being home educated, within the boundaries established by data protection and other legislation.

The department recommends that each local authority should, as a minimum:
• have a written policy statement on elective home education which is clear, transparent and easily accessible by using different formats as necessary, is consistent with the current legal framework and preferably drawn up in consultation with local families who educate children at home so that it can reflect both the challenges and rewards of educating children in this way. It should take into account local circumstances and set out how the authority will seek to engage and communicate with parents; • set aside the resources necessary to implement its policy effectively and consistently. This is not always easy at a time of constrained resources; but effective implementation in conjunction with work in related areas such as education welfare, children missing education and admissions, can reduce spend in the longer term on families where engagement is difficult;
• Consider their organisational structures for dealing with home education and the related areas mentioned above. Although parents who educate their children at home sometimes say that home education should be dealt with in isolation, the reality is that it needs a holistic approach to issues of suitability, attendance, welfare and safeguarding. All of these factors need to be in place to ensure a good education outcome;
• Seek to offer guidance to all known home-educating families in their area about their rights and obligations, and also provide advice on good practice and available resources for parents who request it;
• make it clear in all documentation that the local authority sees its role in relation to home education as part of its wider responsibilities, including safeguarding, for all children living in its area;

• regularly review its elective home education policies so that they reflect current law and local circumstances, and are compatible with this guidance document;

• provide clear details of their complaints procedure and deal with all complaints in a sensitive and timely manner.

Local authorities may often choose to go further than this - for example by operating voluntary registration schemes so that support can be given more readily to those who wish to receive it, and by providing more information on home educated children in their locality. Such schemes can also help authorities discharge the responsibilities which they have under ss. 436A and 437 of the 1996 Act (see below) and the department would encourage those authorities which do not operate voluntary registration to consider doing so. However, registration is currently not a legal obligation for either parents or authorities.

KCSIE 2021 point 166 From September 2016 the regulations were amended so that the local authority must now be informed of all deletions from the admission register when this takes place at a nonstandard transition time.

Croydon's policy and information
https://www.croydon.gov.uk/schools-and-education/parents/educating-your-child-home