



CSCCP

Croydon Safeguarding
Children Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT

2023/24

“History will judge us by the difference we
make in the everyday lives of children.”
- Nelson Mandela

CONTENTS

This annual report covers the period April 2023 - March 2024. It seeks to answer questions to evidence the effectiveness of this partnership, in accordance with the requirements of Working Together 2023, specifically.

INTRODUCTION _____ **Page 3**

Foreword from the Lead Safeguarding Partners and Independent Scrutineer. Outline of the CSCP arrangements and the safeguarding context in Croydon.

PART 1: THE WHAT? _____ **Page 10**

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? _____ **Page 29**

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? _____ **Page 34**

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

PART 4: THE WHAT NEXT? _____ **Page 35**

An indication of the priorities and work planned for the coming year.

PART 5: THE VOICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES _____ **Page 36**

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

FOREWORD FROM THE LEAD SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

Katherine Kerswell

Chief Executive
London Borough of Croydon

Katherine Kerswell

Andy Brittain

Borough Commander
Metropolitan Police

ABM CH Supt

Elaine Clancy

Chief Nurse Officer
NHS Southwest London

Elaine Clancy

We are the three Lead Safeguarding Partners for the CSCP in accordance with the Working Together 2023 guidance. We are supported by our Delegated Safeguarding Partners who provide the day-to-day stewardship of the CSCP as the CSCP Executives, they are:

- Fiona Martin – Detective Superintendent, Metropolitan Police and Chair of CSCP
- Debbie Jones – Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, LB Croydon
- June Okochi – Director of Quality, SW London, Integrated Care Board.

This annual report provides assurance of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) commitment and impact to safeguard children and improve their outcomes. The CSCP achieves this by providing a framework where all agencies working with children and families can work together effectively; and tests whether this framework is successful. There are 3 main workstreams:

- Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- The Learning Offer
- Quality Assurance

Much has been achieved by the CSCP in the year, highlights included:

- Two Case of Concerns were concluded
- Four Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR) were concluded and published
- Three Rapid Reviews were completed – all had local actions but were not progressed to Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews as they mostly featured learning already in action in other reviews.
- The CSCP has become more forensic, and evidence based in its assurance methods
- The National Panel asked the CSCP to share examples of its Safeguarding Review work (including the Jake Safeguarding Practice Review video)
- Support has started to improve work in the MASH
- Strengthened the enhancement of processes for inspection frameworks, including Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI).
- The CSCP has influenced and supported Public Health with their suicide and self-harm reduction policy.
- Improved engagement with voluntary and community Services which has led to greater awareness of the support on offer as well as improved safeguarding assurance of this sector.

There are still challenges in the consistent quality of partner engagement, which impacts on the pace of work the CSCP can deliver on. This has improved with the addition of a CSCP Quality Assurance Officer who joined the team in February 2023 and has made significant progress. Partner capacity is cited as the greatest barrier to consistent engagement, however the more robust expectations required from Working Together 2023 will focus attention on this for the coming year.

MESSAGE FROM THE INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER



My role as the Independent Scrutineer is primarily concerned with two things – acting as a “critical friend” (commenting on developments, comparisons with other partnerships) and ensuring that the safeguarding arrangements in the Borough are compliant with government guidelines. I have now been in this role in Croydon for around 18 months and I have seen considerable change and progress in this time.

The various audit activities (single and multi-agency audits, Section 11 audits and analysis of trends) are greatly strengthened. There is a great deal more direct involvement from partners, both the three core partners (Health, Police, Council) and the wider partnership. The thematic review of Serious Youth Violence, for example, has received positive interest from the National Panel which oversees safeguarding partnerships and from other areas. The Rapid Reviews and Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) described in this annual report have been incisive, with excellent contributions from partner agencies. They help to shape services and to give direction as to which priorities the partnership should be focussing on.

The use of data has changed fundamentally over the period of this annual report. The right data is being collected and is being analysed to assist with planning and policy formation. It is acknowledged that further development is needed in the effective uses of data, but this is a very good start.

The new requirements of Working Together 2023 (which replaces the 2018 guidance) have been introduced into partnership arrangements and I am confident that the CSCP is going to be fully compliant with the guidance by the deadline date of December 2024.

A lot of discussion and work has gone into ensuring that the voices and the felt experiences of children and young people in the Borough are fully heard and listened to. There is still some way to go in this and, like all partnerships, there is a journey being travelled towards the point where everything we do is directly informed by the child’s voice in the borough. The appointment of two Young Scrutineers, who will work alongside me, post-dates this annual review. I am looking forward to the next Annual Report being influenced by all this hard work, with the golden thread between what the partnership does and how safeguarding is being improved, being prominent.

It would be remiss of me not to thank all those I have had the pleasure of working with – the partnership team, the staff from all partner agencies and the children and young people I have had the opportunity to meet and to hear from. I have great confidence for the future of the partnership.

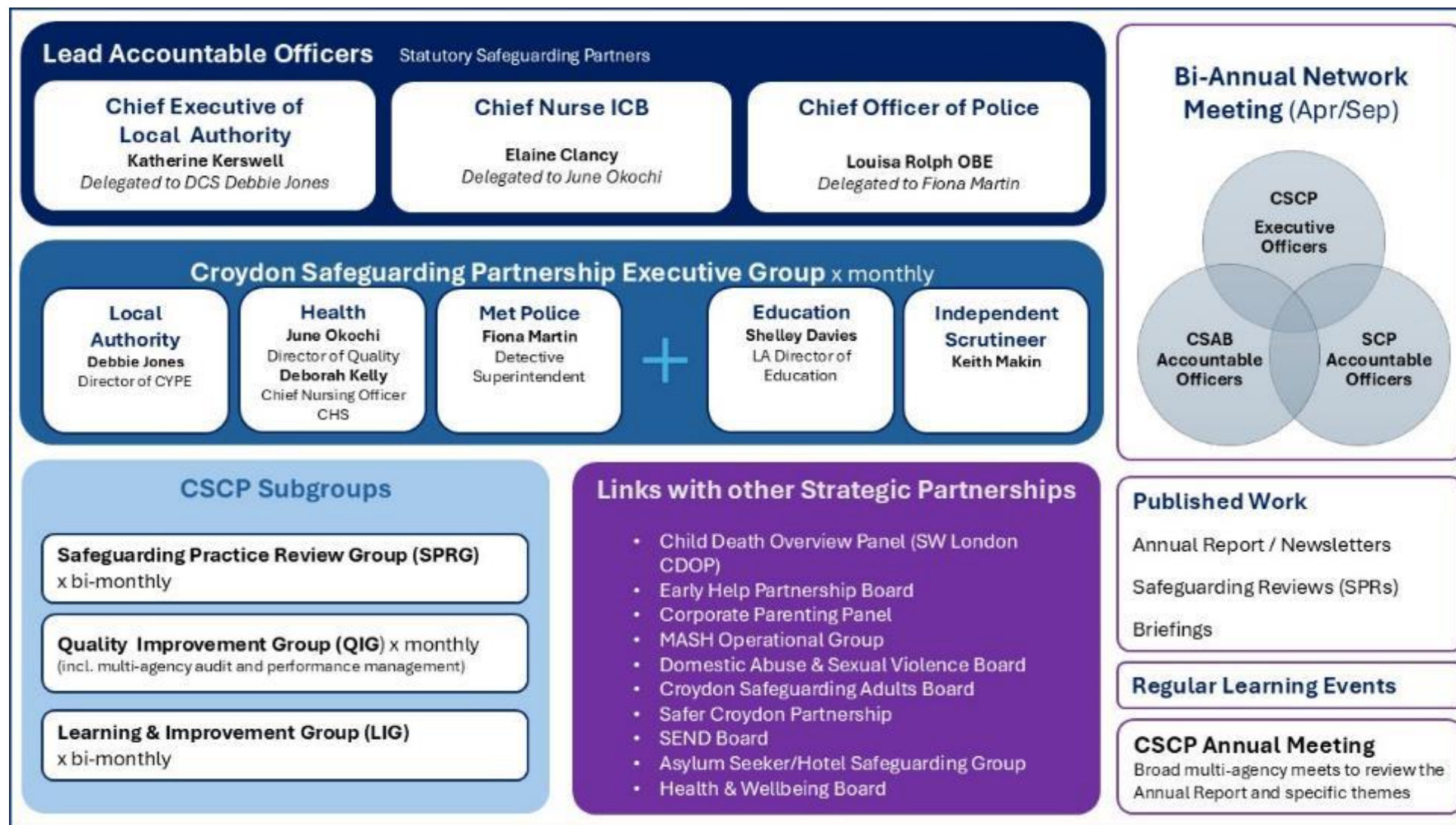
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Makin', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Keith Makin

CSCP Independent Scrutineer

CSCP ARRANGEMENTS 2023-24

In December 2023 'Working Together 2023' was published which calls for a revision of the arrangements for LSCPs, including new roles of Lead Safeguarding Partner and Delegated Safeguarding Partner. The structure chart below is as of April 2024.



CSCP BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2023-24

The local authority still has a disproportionate burden of the cost of providing the CSCP framework. This has historically occurred because the LA have paid all the salaries of the CSCP staff and the Independent Scrutineer costs.

Working Together 2023, the statutory guidance which every LSCP (Local Safeguarding Children Partnership) follows, was revised in December 2023. This requires a new framework for LSCPs which is more robust and more accountable of the Lead Safeguarding Partners. Such is the expectation for change, that the government has provided a one-off payment of £47,300 additional funding, specifically for all Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSCPs) to support the necessary changes. The changes were accounted for in the financial year 2023-24. The CSCP has purchased a new Learning Management System (LMS) and online audit support tool which will reduce the operating costs for the CSCP for the next 3 years as well as enable us to charge for no shows and some training resources to earn money.

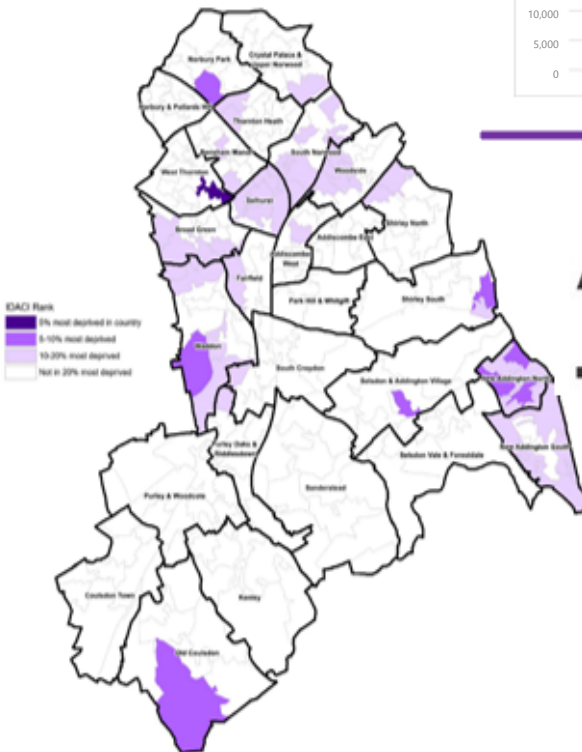
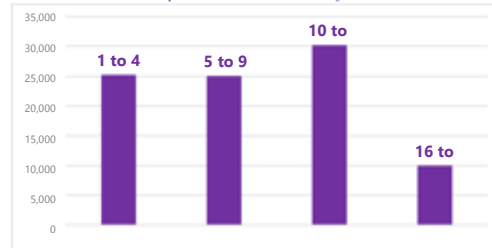
The CSCP Business Team is relatively unique in that the team provides all the support for the CSCP and the CDOP. When researching other LSCPs it is apparent that they utilise other LA staff as and when required, but this does not appear on the balance sheet. Comparing the CSCP, with an area who used the Local Authority QA staff for Reviews, or the Policy Team to create resources, or the L&D Team to provide training and the Digital Team to produce briefings and reports is not equitable. Neither is comparing an area where the CDOP function is paid for by Health.

The current structure of the CSCP Business Team ensures we are well placed to provide high quality support to implement the Working Together 2023 changes. Many LSCPs have used their grant to employ a person to implement the changes for them.

INCOME	£	%
SLaM	£13,540	2.85%
MET Police	£5,000	1.05%
Croydon ICB	£33,850	7.12%
Croydon Health Service	£33,850	7.12%
National Probation Service	£3,897	0.82%
LB CROYDON	£303,457	63.87%
LB CROYDON (IS COSTS)	£34,207	7.20%
DfE (WT 2023)	£47,300	9.96%
TOTAL INCOME	£475,101	

EXPENDITURE	
Staff & related costs	£352,422
Independent Scrutineer costs	£34,207
Safeguarding Practice Reviews	£7,510
CSCP training provided	£29,667
Mailroom, stationery, supplies	£4
TASP Membership	£825
Spend against dfe GRANT (including purchase of PHEW software)	£47,341
OTHER IT COSTS (Adobe licences / chronolator licence)	£3125
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£475,101

Age banding
(ONS Census 2021)



5 state-funded nursery
86 state-funded primary
25 state-funded secondary
9 state-funded special
2 state-funded alternative provision
26 independent schools
(Jan 24 School Census)

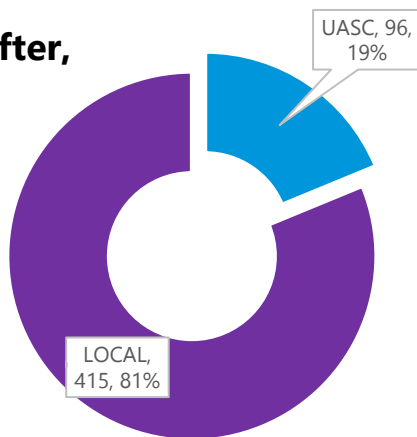


The CSCP regularly reviews data and performance figures. Increasingly we have been pressing for the join up of separate data sources across partnership agencies to provide data more likely to identify vulnerable cohorts and direct resources to support them. This is a national challenge, hope to be helped by the formation of a central government (data team) as a result of the Star & Arthur review.

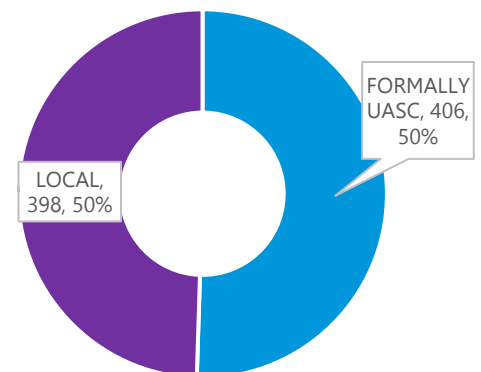
No. of contacts requesting Children's Social Care (2022/23)	C&F Assessments Completed (2022/23)	Children In Need (open Referrals – July 2024)	Child In Need Plan (not CWD – July 2024)	Child Protection Plan	Number of children with an ECHP as of March 2024
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Children Looked After, 511
(July 2024)



Care Experienced, 804
(July 2024)



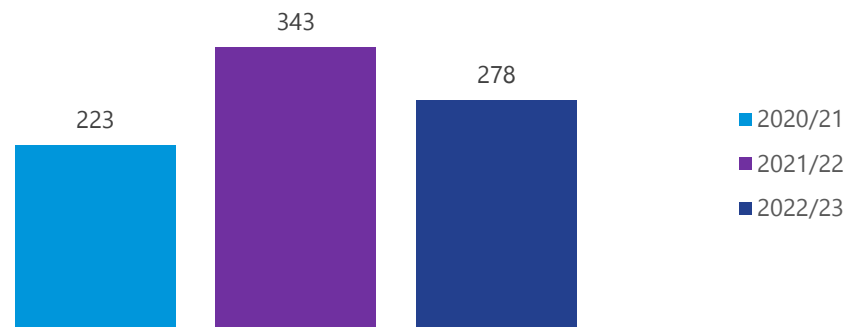
2022/23	Croydon	Stat Neighbours	London	England
CLA (Rate per 10,000)	59	57	51	71
Local CLA (Rate per 10,000)	47	50	44	64

At Cabinet last year, there was a request as follows:

The Sub-Committee were reassured that the Schools Audits for 2022/23 and 2023/24 would look to gather more detail on the forms of sexual abuse in Croydon schools and were supportive of this data being included in the next Annual Report.

Education have provided the following:

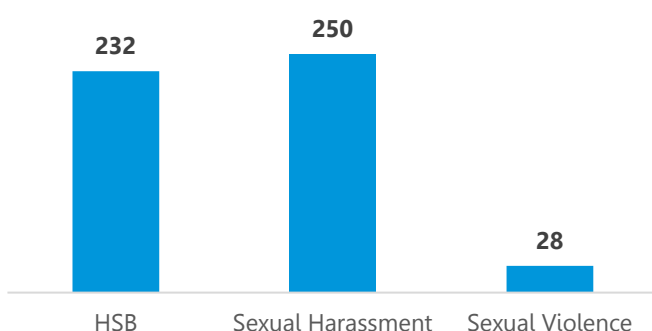
Incidents of sexual harassment / violence in schools



During the 2022/23 academic year, Croydon experienced a significant rise in child-on-child abuse cases in schools, reflecting a concerning national trend. School staff reported a total of 1,125 incidents of child-on-child abuse, a figure that highlights the gravity of the issue.

- 510 cases (45%) were of a sexual nature, underscoring the prevalence of sexual misconduct among students.
- 250 incidents involved sexual harassment, a form of abuse that can severely affect the well-being of young individuals.
- 232 cases were classified as harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), behaviours that, if unchecked, can escalate into more severe actions.
- 28 cases involved sexual violence, the most serious and damaging form of abuse reported.
- Half of the total cases (around 562) were non-sexual incidents, such as bullying, but the large number of sexual abuse cases demonstrates a critical need for further action and prevention within schools.

Reported Incidents by Type



HSB: Developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive.

Sexual Harassment: 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline.

Sexual Violence (according to sexual offences act 2003): Rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.



PART 1: THE WHAT?

This section outlines the key actions the CSCP have taken to strengthen safeguarding processes and multi-agency collaboration, informed by Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. By adopting an evidence-based approach, we've improved risk management, accountability, and outcomes for children and families.

Key Themes for the CSCP to focus on for 2023-24, included:

- Safeguarding of Asylum Seeking/Displaced Families
- Child Victims of Domestic Abuse
- Professional Curiosity/working with resistant families
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Serious Youth Violence/Extra Familial Harm

The CSCP business plan included activities and actions to examine these areas, however we maintained the flexibility to respond to emerging themes and issues.

QUARTER 1 (APR - JUN 2023)

Significant events included a Themed Learning Event co-delivered by CSCP, CSAB, and a DHR (domestic homicide reviews) Co-ordinator, which effectively increased attendees' knowledge, skills, and confidence despite challenges with attendance.

The Quality Improvement Group (QIG) provided assurance of safeguarding standards for education through a school's audit, refreshed the content for the Threshold Document, and used the Lewisham JTAI as a benchmarking tool for Croydon. Key learning from a Rapid Review highlighted inconsistencies with threshold referrals, poor information sharing and a lack of professional curiosity.

The Safeguarding Practice Review Group (SPRG) introduced a new style of review summary, to improve access to the learning from all types of reviews and published the [LCSPR for 'Jake'](#). This review explored the safeguarding concerns surrounding the case of Jake, a 17-year-old boy who took his own life.

The QIG raised awareness of key issues such as strip searches and CAMHS data, commenced Section 11 scrutiny, and developed new CSCP resources for information sharing. The Learning Improvement Group (LIG) agreed on a refreshed Neglect Strategy and supported MASH Operations by sending an Operation Encompass letter to schools.

A coordinated media response was managed for an inquest and a Network Meeting effectively brought together the CSCP, the Croydon Safeguarding Adult Board (CSAB) and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), identifying cross-cutting themes and linking content for annual reports. Leads from those agencies and their Independent Scrutineers or Chairs talked about the progress and identified exploitation as an area requiring more joined up consideration in the coming months as it affects all age ranges and the community.

This period saw continued progress with QIG ensuring compliance across partnerships and improving safeguarding assurance, particularly within the housing sector. The CSA Partnership Agreement was endorsed, and data from a schools' survey provided valuable insights into student wellbeing.

QUARTER 2 (JUL – SEP 2023)

Activities included preparations for a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), influence on the final version of the Suicide & Self Harm strategy, and new strategic input for the mental health sector, by supporting Public Health colleagues to reach new strategic links with other partnership agencies. Achievements extended to hosting a well-received Serious Youth Violence Thematic Review learning event and advancing the Baby Eva Safeguarding Practice Review.

The QIG continued to provide feedback and updates on Section 11 progress, emphasising the importance of inter-agency communication and comprehensive safeguarding measures.

QUARTER 3 (OCT – DEC 2023)

South London & Maudsley (SLaM) launched a centralised safeguarding team in October 2023 which has strengthened Trust wide safeguarding governance with integrated oversight, management and consistency, ensuring that the Trust meets its statutory duties and responsibilities.

In October, the CSCP introduced a new feature in its newsletter, "Spotlight on...", aimed at raising awareness of services supporting children and families and encouraging networking. The October issue featured Mainzworld, the December issue highlighted Gloves not Gunz, and the January issue showcased Change Grow Live, the boroughs Drugs and Alcohol Support Service.

In October we published the [LSCPR for "Chloe"](#) a 17-year-old girl who was taken into care just before her teen years, having experienced sexual abuse and childhood trauma. This briefing was published using the new style 7-minute briefing format, which demonstrates the improved quality of content being delivered by the CSCP Business Team.

A Single Agency Audit Template was developed by QIG to capture evidence of single agency audit activities aligning with CSCP focus areas. Additionally, a successful community event, where the Executive Mayor and the Community Safety Partnership were in attendance, provided valuable content for the SYV Thematic Review.

The publication of the SYV Thematic Review was postponed to avoid timing conflicts with family commemorations and the festive season, with proactive publication rescheduled to February.

A learning event on suicide and self-harm, incorporating insights from the Jake and Chloe reviews, was successfully conducted. This moving and impactful session included contributions from Jake's family, CAMHS, Public Health, Grassroots, and the Clinical Social Work Team.

The Annual Report was published, aiming to raise awareness of the previous year's work.

QUARTER 4 (JAN – MAR 2023)

In January, the QIG and Executive Group drafted the Business Plan for 2024-25, integrating revisions for the upcoming WT2023 work. The thematic review on SYV was published in February, with a task & finish group assigned to progress the recommendations. Preparation for a potential JTAI continued with wider partnership engagement, and a multi-agency audit was agreed.

In February 2024 the CSCP published its [Serious Youth Violence Thematic Review](#) which focused on seven children/young people who were charged in association with the deaths of three children in 2021, these tragic deaths were not linked. The 3 Recommendations were:

- 1) Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership to actively seek evidence to demonstrate how the **10 Key Principles (K.I.D.S. V.O.I.C.E.S.)** are being applied across multi-agency services, schools, and across various panels and strategy forums and seek evidence of impact.
- 2) The voices of children/young people, family members and the community should be actively sought to achieve co - production in the future design of services.
- 3) Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership to highlight the national issues raised in this CSCR with relevant national bodies such as the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

A multi-agency task & finish group (T&F) was convened in January, to gather the evidence of what agencies and the community are doing in response to the recommendations and to identify good practice, challenges and areas for improvement. Specific sessions were held for Members to appraise them of the review which were well received.

The group has met several times. One of those sessions was held in the Wellness Centre in the community. The discussion was useful and progress was made to determine what work is already occurring against the [KIDS VOICES Principles](#) as well as what else could be done to support embedding these themes

The T&F group is now focussing on 3 deliverables:

- 1. Safeguarding Toolkit for parents** – a resource that encompasses both preventative and post-incident support and guidance.
- 2. Establish a social media presence to extend reach** - provide visibility to provide more join up and engage with communities in real time.
- 3. Rebuild / reconnect the community** - more community-led events where people are empowered to take the lead on more meaningful activities.

February was also the start of improved efforts to gather young persons' feedback on the Annual Report and progress the appointment of Young Scrutineer for the CSCP (appointed in July 2024).

The [Baby Eva LSCPR](#) was published in February and was shared with other boroughs as the Hospital involved was not in Croydon. Baby Eva suffered non accidental injuries shortly after birth.

By March, a new training course had been commissioned in response to the learning from the Jake and Chloe reviews. This training is bespoke for Croydon and designed to support professionals working with young people at risk of suicide and self-harm. This work has also influenced the suicide and self-harm strategy for Croydon and the CSCP has been instrumental in supporting the work of the Public Health Team via their Suicide & Self Harm Steering Group.

Reviews

The CSCP carry out a number of different types of safeguarding reviews. The focus is what can we learn and how can this improve the practice system. Its focus is not to apportion blame. Under statutory guidance, we are required to conduct:

Rapid Reviews (RRs) – where a child dies or is seriously harmed AND neglect or abuse is suspected. (There are additional expectations if a child is looked after).

and

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LSCPRs) - where the criteria is met to conduct a more in-depth review and there is learning for the local safeguarding system which is then shared to reduce the likelihood of re-occurrence.

However, we recognise the value in reviewing other incidents and have additionally developed our reviews to include:

Case of Concern (CoC) – which do not meet the criteria for conducting reviews, but still appear to have learning and potential improvement to the multi-agency safeguarding system.

This year involved a comprehensive examination of various cases across different age groups, revealing distinct themes and insights related to lived experiences. The tables below summarise these findings, highlighting how challenges such as parental mental health, domestic abuse, and neglect manifest differently across age categories.

	Insufficient Professional Curiosity	Inconsistent application of threshold / referrals	Adultification	Neglect	Poor information sharing/systems not supporting good information sharing	Inconsistencies around how consent (or lack of it) influencing risk assessment	SEND identification	Self-reporting by child and/or parents not adequately triangulated	Inadequate application of SOCIAL GRACES
◆ Case of Concern									
◆ Rapid Review									
◆ Safeguarding Practice Review									
CoC Child 1 (2022)	●	●	●		●			●	●
CoC Child 2 (2023)	●	●			●	●			
CoC Child 3 (2023)	●	●		●	●				
Family D twins (2023)	●	●		●	●				●
Child EA (& others) (2023)		●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Baby KC (2024)	●	●		●	●	●			●
Jake (2020)	●	●	●		●				●
Chloe (2020)	●		●		●				
Cora (2020)	●			●	●	●			●
SYV Thematic Review (2021)			●			●	●	●	
Baby Eva (2023)	●				●				

For children under three, the key issues include parental mental health, substance misuse, and non-accidental injuries. In the 4-11 age group, themes of physical abuse, domestic abuse within the family, and neglect are prevalent. For older children, aged 12-18, the reviews identified concerns such as adultification, involvement with mental health services (CAHMS), and serious youth violence. The tables also reflect the complexities of contextual safeguarding, the impact of school exclusion, and the critical role of education and early help services in addressing these issues.

Lived experience themes related to age		
Under 3s	4-11 year olds	12-18 year olds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental Mental Health • Parental Substance Misuse • Non-accidental Injury • Domestic Abuse • Neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Abuse • Domestic Abuse • Neglect • Intra-familial CSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adulthoodification • CAHMS involvement • Contextual safeguarding • CP Plans in place • Early Help involvement • Education referrals • Intra-familial CSA • School exclusion • Serious youth violence • Suicide • Parental mistrust of systems

Examples of Partnership Responses to Reviews

The CSCP Briefings and Learning Events continued to be popular across the workforce and we have seen many agencies take further action to embed key themes and messages, examples include:

Children's Centres, Parent Infant Relationships and Parenting

Practitioners across CYPE have been trained in using Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) informed practice to support families affected by child-to-parent violence. 20 Champions were trained, who then shared the learning across their teams. The NVR approach helps improve parent-child relationships, allows parents to view their child's behaviour through a trauma-informed lens, and aids parents in regaining control. NVR informed group sessions will be piloted by the service in the summer of 2024.

Our efforts emphasise understanding children's lives as a continuum, being curious about their early experiences that may have impacted their emotional well-being and development into adolescence. We are piloting the use of the EHM group module for children's centre services to enhance transparency for children already known to CSC or council early help services. Additionally, the Family Hub registration form and privacy notice have been completed, enabling families to access various Family Hub services and moving towards a shared recording system across Family Hubs/Early Help services.

Education

Monthly briefings for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and updates from the Education Safeguarding Lead serve as primary channels for disseminating CSCP messaging and training across all schools and settings. We actively participate in forums with primary and secondary school heads, as well as with CLSS and SENCOs, reinforcing key messages and sharing learning and training resources at every level. Additionally, we lead the VRU's Inclusive and Nurturing Schools project, making a substantial impact on 20 schools over three years. Regular email updates and tailored training sessions, such as those addressing the risks associated with children missing from education, further enhance our engagement and support for educational providers.

Police

Police have actively contributed to reviews and facilitated information sharing to support agencies in assisting victims and others in need of help. This collaboration allows agencies to focus on relevant areas and effectively manage risks. Over the past year, there has been an increase in data sharing from the Police to other agencies. This data, when integrated with other information, helps to validate and contextualise trends. Such collaborative sharing enhances the ability of agencies to take swift, targeted actions to prevent crime. Timely sharing also improves decision-making and enhances risk management efficiency. For instance, in rapid strategy meetings, shared information enables both the Police and other agencies to collectively address risks and concerns affecting children at specific times, thereby strengthening safeguarding efforts.

Health

South West London Integrated Care Board (SWLICB) assures the Board and committees that the quality of safeguarding practice across the Croydon health economy is fit for purpose. The safeguarding team, therefore, is required to ensure that there are effective means of supporting Croydon practitioners to maintain a good level of safeguarding knowledge, competence, and skills. The team is available for advice and guidance for all providers, across the health economy. In addition, the team provide advice across the partnership on health matters that relate to safeguarding.

In order to prevent further harm and safeguard children in Croydon, the ICB continues to share learning, embed continuous improvement, and disseminate information to wider stakeholders. Governance and escalation processes are in place within the ICB and health partners. The impact is measured via Section 11 and discussions with providers in supervision or contract meetings.

In support of the VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Strategy, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Support Worker (Charity funded year- long role) – 60 Champions (acute and community) have been trained and recruited in CHS.

In support of the priority “Child Victims of Domestic Abuse” - this has been discussed at the forum for GP Safeguarding Leads which is a quarterly forum facilitated by the ICB Safeguarding Team for Croydon.

SWL ICB secured funding for the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme which is a gold standard domestic abuse training programme for clinical and non-clinical staff in GP practices

Designated professionals at SWLICB fully engaged with work done by NHSE regional leads to drive improvements with the application of the Mental Capacity Act, with the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children leading on the work with 16- and 17-year-olds.

Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) replaced the Serious Incident Framework. PSIRF is the NHS’s approach to developing and maintaining effective systems and processes for responding to patient safety incidents for the purpose of learning and improving patient safety.

SWLICB continue to engage with national task and finish groups/ workstreams and share learning and good practice at a local, regional and national level.

Addressing health inequalities is a key priority in the Joint Forward Plan and the ICP Strategy. There is a Health Equity Partnership Group overseeing the work on addressing the wider

determinants of health as well as embedding the key means to reduce health inequalities: prevention, increasing community empowerment and increasing self-empowerment and self-care. In relation to Core20Plus5, we have invested through the SWL HI Investment Fund in 39 Place Based projects and 3 SWL level projects (Core20plus5 connectors, Brazil Model and SPEAR) plus social prescribing for CYP.

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM)

SLaM has invested in its safeguarding provision to improve patient experience and ensure effective engagement with partner agencies and response to safeguarding concerns.

Recommendations from CAMHS contributed to the awareness promotion of Think Family and the recruitment of a Domestic Abuse and Exploitation Lead.

Youth Justice Service (YJS)

Reviews are regularly circulated and discussed with the wider Team. The recommendations within each report provides learning and reflection for YJS. Following the SYV Thematic Review a series of team sessions explored the Key Principles this has helped the team to focus on the importance of relational work and earlier intervention.

The team participated in specific suicide prevention training, following the Jake and Chloe reviews.

Croydon College Group

Integrated lessons learned about exploring gender identities and promoting inclusion for the LGBTQ+ community into their Tolerance and Compassion Workshops for all new learners starting in September 2024. This effort has significantly improved the sense of safety for this cohort across both campuses.

They have also been mindful of these issues while addressing individual risks and challenges that have emerged. This approach emphasises fostering hope, aspirations, and a solution-focused mindset when learners encounter difficulties, aiming to enhance mental health, well-being, inclusion, and reduce the risk of involvement in serious youth violence.

The expanded teams are now well-defined in their roles, supporting learners and colleagues throughout the College and collaborating effectively with various partner agencies.

SPECIFIC CHALLENGES BROUGHT TO THE EXECUTIVE GROUP FOR ASSURANCE

The CSCP Executives and Independent Scrutineer meet monthly and receive a quarterly update summarising all CSCP activity.

Health Visitor Inbox

Health notified the CSCP via a report outlining the incidence of a large number of unopened emails in the Health Visitors and School Nurses inbox. Assurance was given that this was being treated as a Serious Incident. The final report, including measures to prevent a repeat incidence was provided at a subsequent meeting. At time of preparing the report, this issue was resolved.

MASH Inbox

The Local Authority notified the CSCP that responses to emails is a challenge and there was a backlog of unanswered emails. These were not referrals, mostly notifications or requests from other local authorities. This is caused by capacity in MASH and the embedding of the portal system. At time of preparing the report, this issue has robust oversight and with the introduction of additional roles, is better managed.

Harmful Practices Group (HPG)

The Harmful Practices Group (HPG) was a useful forum for professionals to collaborate and to understand and address harmful practices in Croydon.

The group was not reconvened following the withdrawal of funding by the Home Office. The risk that child victims of abuse related to harmful practices might not be identified and supported or assurance that the multi-agency workforce has access to appropriate training and resources to raise awareness of harmful practices was raised to the CSCP Executive group and featured on the risk register whilst assurance of a training offer was sought (there is training offered at a London level, which is accessible via the CSCP website) and whilst agreement for another funding stream was considered.

The funding for the post to co-ordinate the group has not been achieved, despite the CSCP Exec bringing it to the attention of the Network Meeting in May 2024.

Child OS

The CSCP Executive held an extraordinary meeting to understand and resolve the challenges for Child OS who was under 18 at the time they spent an extended time in the Hospital Emergency Department. Professionals were unable to source an appropriate care placement. Placement availability was a key factor. Specialist placements like this are not properly resourced and must be tackled nationally. The facts were provided to TASP (The Association of Safeguarding Partners) to support their co-ordination of case studies and letter to Government to challenge the issue of insufficient placements. There was learning for the Escalation Policy too, as the case was escalated too early and too high in the hierarchical structure which was not helpful. As a result, the Case of Concern process and Escalation Policy have been revised.

Safeguarding Assurance (Section 11)

The CSCP received assurance presentations from key stakeholders including Police, Health, and Education. Moving forward, the aim is to conduct assurance reviews every two years, unless earlier reviews are deemed necessary due to identified risks. The goal is to transition towards comprehensive Section 11 presentations biennially, supplemented by updates on risks and action plans in between.

The SWLICB (Croydon Place) safeguarding team enable provision of assurance to the executive team at SWLICB and the Health Board that the statutory duty to safeguard adults and children (including children looked after) is being fulfilled across the health economy.

Designated Health professionals continue to work collaboratively with commissioners and the contracts team to ensure safeguarding oversight throughout the commissioning cycle from procurement to delivery of services. This includes safeguarding representation at the Procurement Oversight Group.

Designated Health professionals are proactively involved in the monitoring of safeguarding assurance from providers of health services, including (but not exclusively) South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM), Croydon Health Services (CHS) and Primary Care (GP practices).

In terms of community engagement, there has been a concerted effort to foster better collaboration between partners and the community. The Quality Assurance (QA) Officer has actively participated in various community events and visited several community services, resulting in increased visibility and uptake of training within the community. This engagement has provided valuable insights and highlighted areas for improvement, particularly in enhancing information sharing and clarifying the role of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH). Efforts have been directed towards ensuring organisations receive appropriate threshold training to address these needs and strengthen safeguarding practices.

There is still work to be done to strengthen trust and engagement in the community. The QA officer has been liaising with larger organisations (Legacy, Reaching Higher, My-Ends Consortium) to support them in becoming a more central part of community safeguarding. The aim is to help these larger organisations become “safeguarding champions” within the community. It would be beneficial to have their attendance at QIG meetings, and for these organisations to act as a bridge between Partnership communications/learning and smaller organisations. My-Ends, Reaching Higher, and Legacy already work in partnership with smaller organisations and are well-positioned for this role.

Engagement with faith groups has posed challenges, albeit with some progress. Meaningful responses from faith leaders have been slow despite attendance at meetings. Collaboration with Police colleagues who specialise in engaging faith groups, has been instrumental. Plans are underway to enhance engagement with Pentecostal churches through community leaders, aiming to establish safeguarding links and initiatives.

Audits

The CSCP conducted and engaged in a number of audits in the year in question. We were unable to complete all the work intended, some of challenge related to the need to focus on the dataset and Section 11 first, but now this work is more consistent, the 2024-25 audits should have more focus.

Professionals Survey

The CSCP designed and circulated a survey intended to support understanding of what training front line staff had completed or were aware of or wanted new training on. It was also designed to test general safeguarding awareness such as the role of the LADO, knowledge of CSCP Briefings and the Newsletter.

Despite a determined campaign for it to reach the several thousand professionals across the network in Croydon, only 107 people responded. Many were from Education where the Lead Safeguarding Officer had been tenacious in ensuring their network completed the survey. This skewed the results somewhat, but it also identified some preferred training content and a weakness in the quality of ensuring CSCP communications reach the intended audience.

As a result, the L&D programme reflects some of the feedback and newsletters have become more engaging. This has also influenced the new arrangements required for Working Together 2023, where ensuring the effectiveness of CSCP communications will be key.

SWL Audit - Complex Cases

This work is co-ordinated by Sutton LSCP and pertinent to all LSCPs in SW London. Each borough submitted to cases to the review, where the young person had complex health needs and required long stays in hospital.

Whilst there are 5 Local Authority areas in SW London, there is only one ICB (Health) area and 2 police BCUs, so attempting this kind of join up is both ambitious and more efficient.

Audit, moderation and focus groups have taken place. The draft of the final report has been confidentially shared for further comments from the participants. The findings will be presented in August 2024.

Domestic Abuse Audit

In November 2023, an audit to understand the impact of Operation Encompass was agreed with the partnership. The 3 agencies required for this audit were the Police, MASH and Education.

It had been agreed that the audit would take place in January over a specific week. Unfortunately, we have been unable to complete this audit. This is because the MASH was unable to provide the information required as part of the audit due to capacity issues. At the point this may have been possible, the information was not accessible in the Children's Social Care records system and the window of opportunity was lost.

In addition, since the agreement of this audit the Police has changed their systems. MERLINS are no longer in use as they have been replaced with RADAR. This means that the information that we had collected, could not be triangulated. It is hoped to reconvene this audit when the MASH Refresh work has been concluded.

In 2023-2024, SLaM conducted a comprehensive Domestic Abuse Audit to evaluate staff knowledge and practices, focusing on critical areas such as DASH assessments, Routine Enquiry procedures, and Safety Planning. This audit, which included specific considerations from Domestic Homicide Reviews involving SLaM, has already led to improved awareness and readiness among staff. A forthcoming report on audit findings will guide actions to be implemented by the newly appointed trust-wide Domestic Abuse and Exploitation Lead from July 2024, reinforcing commitment to enhancing safeguarding protocols across the trust.

The Croydon Health Service Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty (DoLs) Audit

A single agency audit, which included a small sample size of 16 and 17 years olds. It identified areas for improvement including:

Recognition of where an MCA assessment is required

Quality of MCA assessments and use of the MCA assessment form for evidencing practice

Croydon Health Service has identified MCA as a Trust priority for 2024, a Task and Finish Group is being arranged.

Child Sexual Abuse Audit

This work was commenced by the Children's Social Care Quality Assurance Team, during the year in review, with the Thinking Space training and planning being set up. Audit activity to test the effectiveness of this work will occur in 2024-25. Further multi-agency audit work is planned by the CSCP QA Officer in 2024.

Greenwich Peer Review & MASH Audits

In September 2023 the Local Authority invited colleagues from Greenwich to conduct a peer review of the MASH. This included desktop research and consultation with key partners. The review concluded that there are skilled and knowledgeable staff in the MASH, enhanced by a good Early Help Triage Team which includes an Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA). There are good referral pathways. In most cases thresholds are applied correctly, there are good relationships with Early Help providers and the interface between the Family Assessment and other support teams is aided by co-location. The dashboard and data are in development and staff are keen to learn from and utilise the data, however it needs more refinement.

Three key areas were identified for improvement:

To support MASH to move towards a fully functional multi-agency service (practice improvement activity identified a high level of single agency decision making)

Ensuring the timelines for decisions about children and young people

Improving the quality and speed of information sharing

During Nov 2023- Feb 2024 the Children's Social Care QA Team carried out live audits to review the application of thresholds. This included live discussions with Team Managers as well as file reviews. Application of threshold considered to generally be proportionate based on the information available to the MASH decision maker at the time. However, this was significantly impacted by the lack of partner information provided during the MASH triage stage and led to the CSCP Quality & Improvement Group having oversight of the MASH Operation Group who are working through a refresh of the Standing Operating Protocol for the MASH, to incorporate all agencies and an action plan to drive improvement.

There have been improvements, particularly around the timeliness of decision making and better partner engagement in decision making.

Pre-Birth Thematic Audit (2024-25)

Children's social care QA Team conducted audits in November 2023 and January 2024. Pre-birth assessments are crucial to determine the level of support or risk to unborn babies.

The main source of referrals was the emergency services; Police and LAS (32%). Midwives surprisingly only made 22% of the referrals, and 22% of the unborn children already had older siblings already open to Children's Social care.

The main risk issue identified by the referrer was domestic abuse (42%), which perhaps reflects the number of referrals made by the police and LAS.

61% of unborn children were referred before the 20th week of pregnancy which should have allowed sufficient time for purposeful work to take place. Only 13% of unborn children were referred after 30 weeks of their mother's pregnancy.

There was evidence of good partnership working in the initial stages, but this was not often sustained throughout the pre-birth period. Work is needed on improving joint working and liaison. It is hoped that clearer planning and joint birth plans will contribute to this process and the feedback from the safeguarding midwives is that this would represent very positive progress.

Updated multi agency guidance is being developed, and this has been accepted as a recommendation in QIG.

Windows Into Practice (WiP)

A cycle of audits led by the Children's Social Care QA Team to audit and moderate 70 cases based on a specific theme. The findings and recommendations are shared across the CSC practice system and summarised in the CSCP Learning & Improvement Group. Each audit seeks feedback from family and children (where age appropriate). A reflective meeting takes place within 5 working days for any cases which may require further action.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection Preparation

There was a possibility that Croydon could be selected for a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) on the Serious Youth Violence theme. As a result, the LA initiated a JTAI Readiness Group to bring a multi-agency lens to assessing how well Croydon would perform if selected.

If selected it would be necessary for the multi-agency partnership to co-ordinate an audit on up to 6 young people considered at risk of being involved in serious youth violence. A trial of this process was co-ordinated with some support from the CSCP Business Team.

The conclusions on this work included:

Agencies are excellent in a crisis and responding to incidents, but there is less evidence of joined up, proactive approaches to work together to reduce the incidence and impact of SYV.

There are a number of great pieces of work happening across Croydon, but providing a cohesive narrative to this is challenging. It is also a fast-moving space, with many VCS (Voluntary & Community Services) organisations offering necessary support, but without the ongoing security of funding.

There is good evidence of the reach and appropriate sharing of the report, including its use in single agency spaces to influence and inform work with children vulnerable to being involved in serious youth violence,

There is little appetite for agencies to evidence their impact, understandably many are focused on delivering direct services to children and families. The reality is that evidencing it is seen as an additional task with no benefit for their service. This may call for a rethink in how we as a CSCP ask and collate evidence to support our aims.

This feedback resonates with the findings from the JTAI Self-Assessment.

New Website

The CSCP invested in a new website which came online in 2023 and has benefitted from in house expertise of the CSCP Business Team to continue to develop the website.



Improvements to accessibility

The CSCP website has been redeveloped in response to feedback from users who expressed difficulties finding key documents and resources. The new website layout now provides a more user-friendly experience with dedicated pages for resources and information. The improvements to the layout include:

New Reviews and Briefings Page

- Consolidates all review documents and briefings in one place for easier access.
- Offers search functionality to quickly locate specific reviews or briefings.
- Includes a summary section for recent and important updates.

Dedicated Training Page

- Users can view the training levels outlining required competencies for different roles
- Registration has been streamlined so users can manage their learning accounts.
- Lists upcoming training events and workshops with detailed descriptions.

Extensive Library for Guidance

- Houses both local and national guidance documents, ensuring a wide range of resources.
- Organised by category and topic for straightforward navigation.
- Incorporates a downloadable section for offline access to important documents.

Regular News Updates

- Keeps users informed with the latest news and developments relevant to the community.
- Includes announcements about new resources, policy changes, and upcoming events.
- Offers subscription option for email notifications to stay updated in real-time.

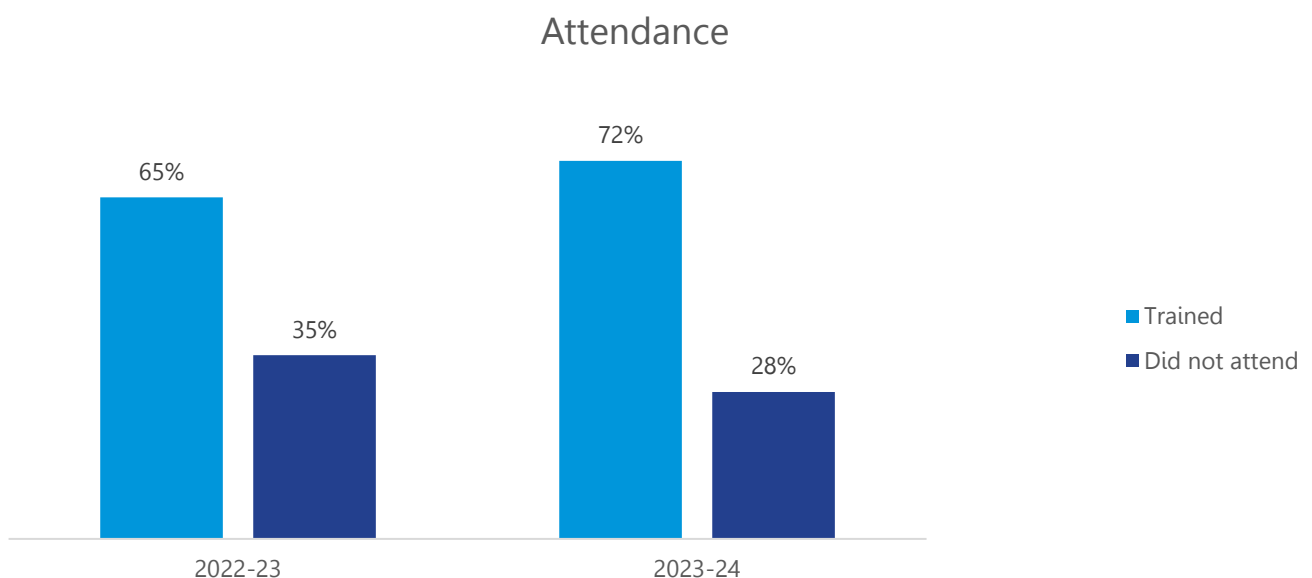
These enhancements aim to simplify access to critical information, making it more efficient for users to find what they need.

Learning & Development

Over the past twelve months, the learning and development programme has seen significant advancements. This includes commissioning training to support practitioners working with young people at risk of suicide and self-harm and procuring a new learning management system (LMS) to streamline training administration.

The rationale for adopting the LMS was to address inefficiencies and enhance the overall management of the training program. This system is designed to automate tasks such as certificate management, email reminders, training registers, and provide more comprehensive reporting. The adoption of this LMS is expected to enhance feedback accuracy, reduce administrative processes, and support better tracking and evaluation of training outcomes.

Key Learning Points and Attendance Improvement



The key learning points of 2023-24 highlighted the need to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguarding training. During this period, there has been a notable improvement in attendance rates for in-person safeguarding training, increasing from 65% to 72%. This improvement is attributed to the implementation of automated reminders and a more responsive rescheduling system. Despite this progress, it has been identified that to further improve attendance and engagement, it is essential to address the primary reasons for last-minute cancellations, which have been cited as annual leave and schedule clashes.

Financial Insights and Future Directions

The total expenditure on commissioning costs, which included external trainers and venue hire, was approximately £17k. An analysis of the attendance data revealed significant potential revenue if external agencies were charged for access to safeguarding training. This potential revenue stream will be explored in 2024/25 once the new LMS is fully operational. Moving forward, the CSCP will need to continue exploring ways to enhance the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding training. The introduction of the new system opens possibilities to design bespoke

training based on the learnings from LCSPRs (Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) and Rapid Reviews, giving professionals access to learning in real time.

In-person training	eLearning
Challenging Disproportionality Child Neglect CSCP Learning Events Domestic Abuse Training Expanding Cultural Competencies: Supporting Young LGBTQ+* Gang Training Graded Care Profile 2 Level 3 Safeguarding Children Threshold Training*	Child Sexual Exploitation L1 & L2 Mental Health Awareness Safeguarding Children Awareness Safeguarding Children L1 & L2 Safeguarding Children with Disabilities Trauma Unconscious Bias

New Courses*

Threshold Training

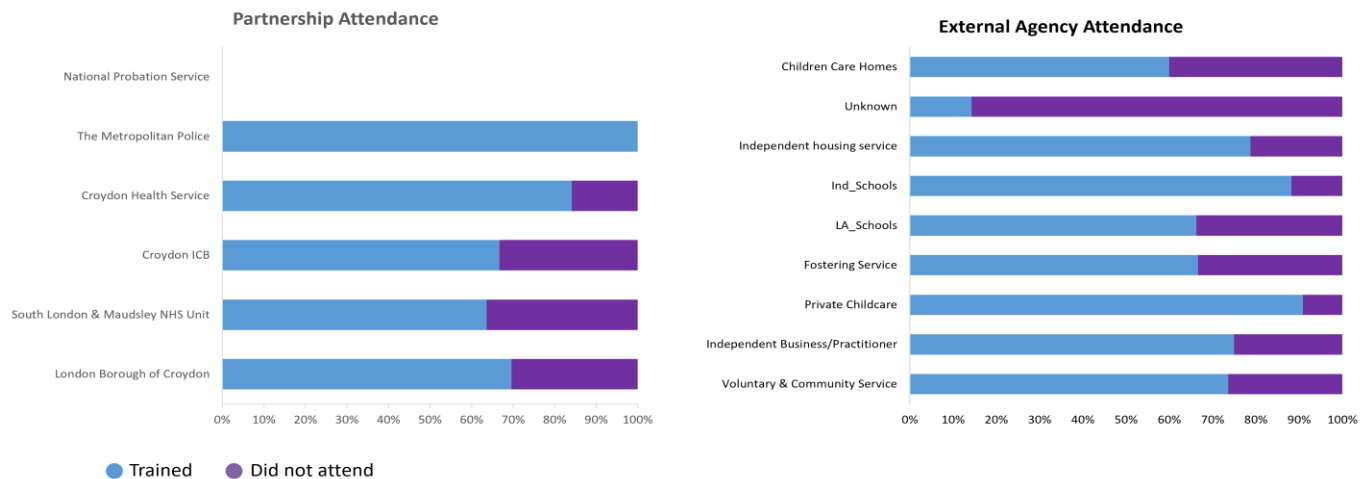
The Threshold Training aims to enhance participants' understanding and application of the updated Threshold Guidance for Croydon, focusing on assessing and identifying children's levels of need to provide appropriate support. Key components include the importance of the Threshold Document, obtaining consent, and making clear and accurate referrals. The training covers the use of tools such as Burnham's Social GRACES and the Assessment of Need Triangle to ensure holistic and effective assessments. It also highlights Operation Encompass, which facilitates information sharing between police and schools to support children affected by domestic abuse. The session concludes with a Reflective Forum to reinforce learning, address outstanding questions, and encourage participants from multi-agencies to share insights and commit to practical changes in their practice. For 2024/25, an eLearning awareness course is currently being developed. This short course will serve as a prerequisite for face-to-face training and will provide a crucial introduction to understanding Thresholds and the Continuum of Need.

Expanding Cultural Competencies; Supporting Young LGBTQ+*

The course has been jointly developed by the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) and London South Bank University (LSBU) aims to enhance professionals' competence in addressing issues related to gender, identity, and mental health among young people. The course emphasises the importance of understanding and utilising social graces in assessment processes to ensure holistic support. The training also focuses on cultural competence, particularly in handling LGBTQ+ issues, equipping professionals with the knowledge and confidence to engage in sensitive discussions and provide effective support. By fostering a safe and informed environment, the programme seeks to improve the quality of trusted relationships and outcomes for vulnerable young people.

Multi-agency participation

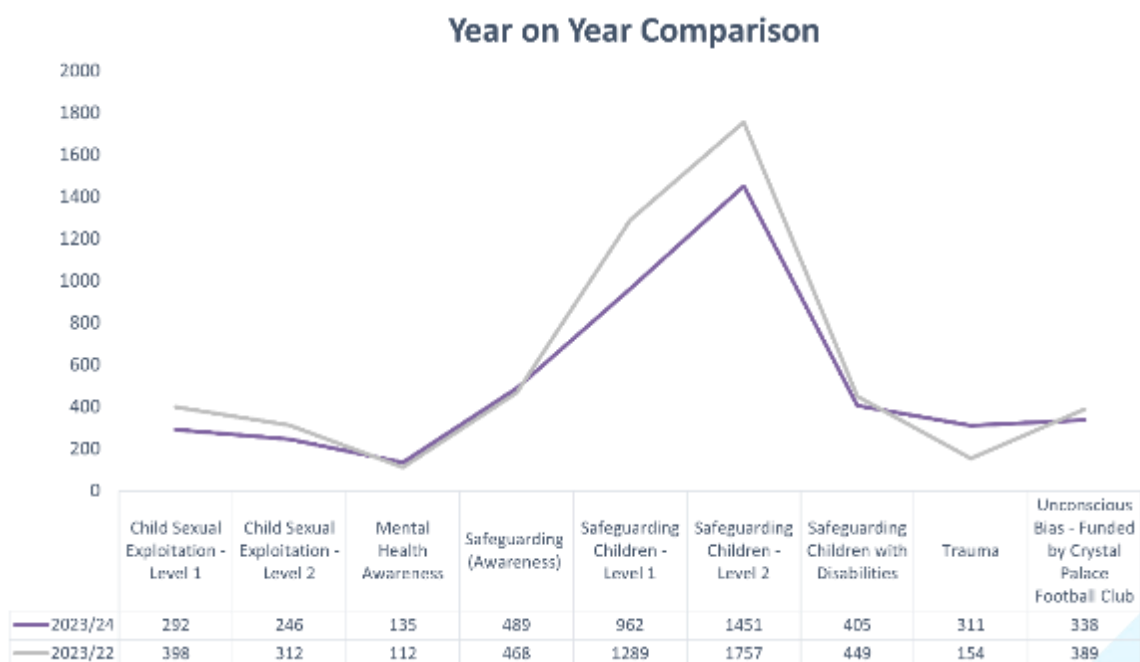
The attendance to safeguarding training by the partnership is disproportionate, with the probation service not utilising the training at all. The ICB, Metropolitan Police and SLaM have been recorded as mainly attending the CSCP learning events. Social Workers and Early Help practitioners make up the majority of professionals from Croydon Council. Croydon Health Service and Croydon Council have a high attendance rate across all the safeguarding courses on offer.



The attendance to safeguarding training has become increasingly popular with the professionals from the voluntary and community sector. This has been influenced by outreach work led by QA officer and community-based events. Improved access to booking has also increased interests from independent businesses who are taking advantage of the free training offer.

Engagement with eLearning

Over the last two years, there has been an 11% decline in overall enrolments. However, safeguarding children remains the most popular course, and there has been renewed interest in the trauma course.



Trends in course access supported a business case for procuring software to integrate e-learning into a system, providing more autonomy over content. This move was essential as it became evident that several courses were not being utilised effectively.

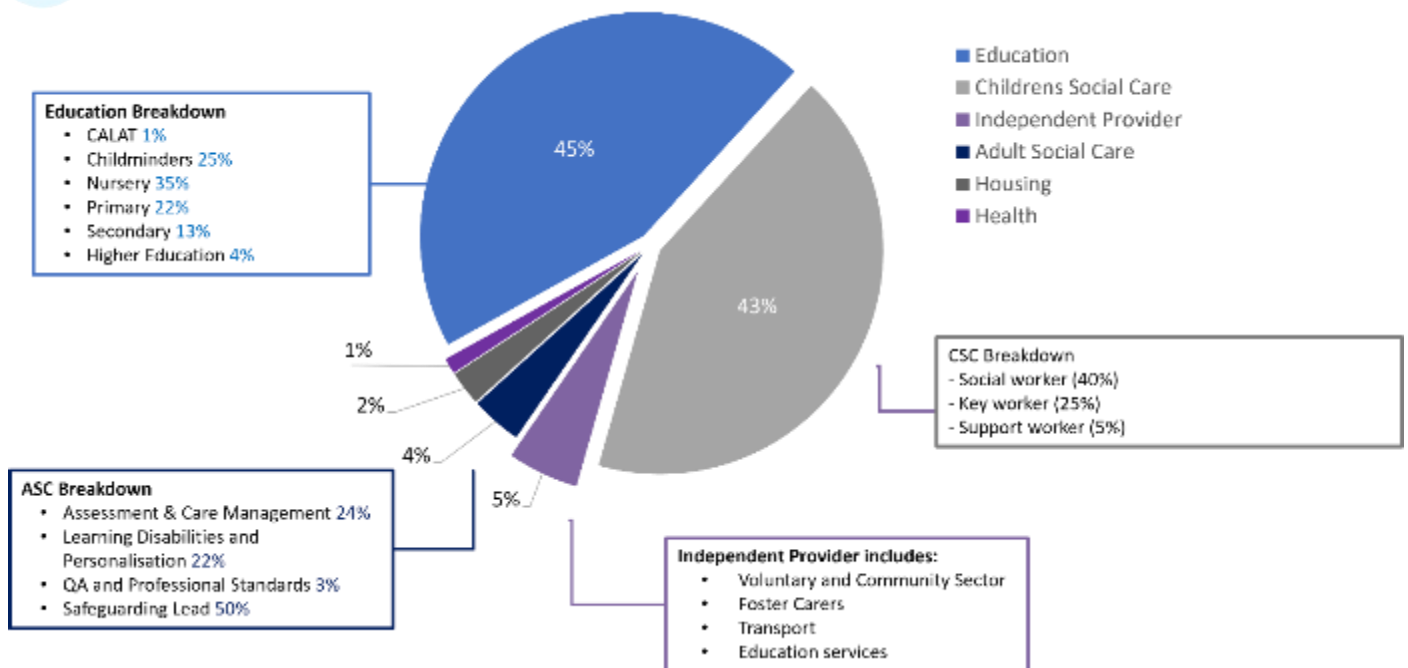


Figure 1 - Sector breakdown of eLearning platform

Other Training Opportunities

As well as signposting to pan-London training and one-off events hosted by other organisations, some CSCP organisations have linked with other agencies to provide bespoke training. For example:

The BME Forum also work with Off the Record attending meetings to support and deliver cultural competency training to staff in SLaM.

SWLICB secured funding for the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) program which is a gold standard domestic abuse training program for clinical and non-clinical staff in GP practices. *"Very informative, learned lots of new things and tips which will help me to identify the victims of DVA in my career as GP"*

Joint Work with The Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB)

The CSCP and CSAB continue to work together and share learning. Examples include:

Joint work to support the suicide and self-harm strategy with Public Health colleagues including collaboration to develop the suicide and self-harm cluster policy.

Joint work to support Asylum Seekers and displaced families, including visits to hotels

Health Safeguarding Teams are core members at the Transitional Safeguarding Panel, this is in support of children and their transition through to adult services.

Increasing data sharing opportunities and learning from each other's data.

The CSAB Manager attends the CSCP Learning & Improvement Group.

Network Meetings bring together the Executive Partners from CSCP, CSAB and Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to ensure attention to cross cutting themes.

Sharing learning and information (all adult safeguarding reviews are summarised in the CSCP monthly summary).

Adult Safeguarding representation in the MASH Operational Group.

Designated Nurses for safeguarding children and adults work closely together and have an integrated approach.

Crossover with the Safer Croydon Partnership

The Safer Croydon Partnership is the statutory Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for Croydon. It is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety. The core members of the Partnership are the five 'responsible authorities' that have a statutory duty outlined under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to maintain a CSP for the borough and to collaborate in identifying the priorities for reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and reoffending.

The five 'responsible authorities' are:

- the Local Authority
- the Police
- the London Fire service
- the local Integrated Care Board (ICB), and
- the local Probation services

A number of people who sit in CSP meetings also attend CSCP (and CSAB) meetings. There are often common themes of work which is aligned to CSCP activity, for example:

- The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy
- Violence against young people
- The Youth Safety Delivery Plan
- The Safer Schools Project
- The Dedicated Town Centre Projects
- Youth Justice Partnership
- The Family Justice Service/MARAC

The CSP were involved in the preparation, publication and task & finish work for the Thematic Review on Serious Youth Violence, but we are still to see the embedding of the 10 Key Principles, especially alongside the Youth Safety Delivery Plan.



PART 2: THE SO WHAT?

The next section outlines the CSCP's impact through the work of safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training initiatives. These efforts have positively influenced outcomes for children and families, from early help to looked-after children and care leavers, by strengthening support systems, improving coordination, and enhancing the quality of care provided.

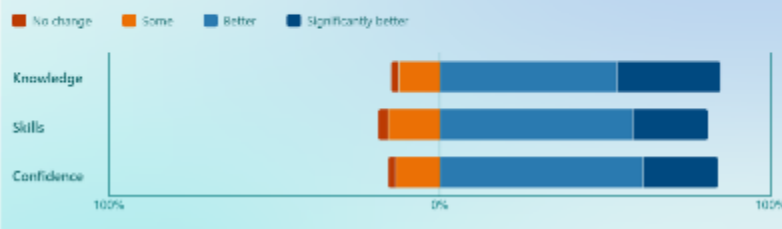
Impact of Training

Measuring Impact – Post Training

Before you completed the training, please rate your knowledge, skills and confidence in the topic(s) covered



Having now completed the training, please rate your knowledge, skills and confidence in the topic(s) covered



Positive Takeaways

- The openness to discuss important subjects
- The use of real case studies
- Group work / Networking
- Different points of view helps to positively shift the discussion
- Interactive sessions
- Strengthened knowledge and confidence

Suggestions for improvement

- Training to be in person
- Restrict block bookings from one agency
- Adapt content so it reflects a multi-agency perspective
- Use social media to raise profile of CSCP and training
- Gang training should be mandatory
- Better comms re: venue / training updates

Feedback – 12 Months Post-training

“What difference do you think the training has made to your colleagues/team/service?”

57%

Of participants are new to the CSCP training program.

“For one colleague that also attended the training I know that she very much like me the impact on our work and challenging ourselves was immediate and will continue. More training like this please.”

“It has opened up more conversations.”

“My assessments report have improved. The risks to the families have reduced.”

“The ability to respond to needs and concerns better.”

“The need for clearer and regular logging of incidents of neglect has helped give more detailed referrals”

“I think it gave me more confidence regarding safeguarding and sharing concerns with the social worker.”

94%

Agreed this training will have a direct impact on their day-to-day practice

Graded Care Profile 2

To date, CSCP has trained 332 practitioners who are licensed to use the GCP2 tool in their assessments to help identify neglect. This course boasts the highest attendance rate at 87%, up from 79%, largely driven by managerial support. Impressively, the assessment for the GCP2 license has a 100% pass rate. Given its popularity and success, this course should be offered regularly as a staple in the training program.

Health is using CSCP bespoke resources in their briefings to GPs and hospital staff.

Impact of Quality Assurance (QIG)

Improved data provision and analysis has been an aim for this year. This has improved, but not consistently until the end of the period in review. This has been due to challenges in partner agencies providing suitable data and the difficulties in choosing and displaying the right data for partners to analyse. The following agencies were able to provide specific feedback about the impact of their data and quality assurance.

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM)

SLaM, who are a Mental Health Assessment & Treatment Provider has developed a specific dataset, available to ICB colleagues, called the Safeguarding Health Outcomes Framework (SHOF). This framework reports on several key performance issues related to safeguarding across the trust, providing enhanced organisational and directorate oversight over KPIs and safeguarding performance.

The Perinatal Mental Health Service maintains a dynamic weekly multidisciplinary template to monitor safeguarding cases involving children, adults, and MARAC, ensuring continuity and oversight regardless of clinician availability. This system has proven effective in preventing any oversight and ensuring comprehensive support for families, demonstrating a proactive approach to safeguarding

Croydon College Group

The improvements in detailed data are enabling them to track various issues affecting students more effectively. Importantly, the initiatives they are developing around regular meetings with college staff teams, as well as with Virtual Schools and Youth Justice Teams in the statutory sector, will help address these issues and improve outcomes for specific cohorts. Additionally, they have recently agreed to meet regularly with the Young Carers Team from Off the Record to better identify and support young carers.

In November 2023, the College commissioned an independent safeguarding audit conducted by RSM UK, followed by a comprehensive scrutiny of safeguarding practices during a week-long rehearsal for a full inspection. Regular dip sampling of safeguarding practices has been instituted, with detailed audits conducted to ensure all referrals and actions are appropriately followed up. Learner feedback consistently indicates a sense of safety on campus, with clear support pathways established for addressing any concerns promptly.

Addressing community safety concerns, the College is actively implementing proactive solutions across its campuses while providing support to learners encountering issues outside the college environment. Accreditation through Matrix in May 2024 reaffirmed the College's strong performance in information, advice, and guidance, with recognition for its safeguarding practices.

The Safeguarding and Wellbeing Teams are actively engaged in various meetings and conferences, including Early Help, Child Protection, and Looked After Learner meetings, catering not only to Croydon students but also to young people from other local authorities.

Education

The data sharing agreement with partners grants access to Police data and performance metrics, allowing partners to evaluate the effectiveness of Police processes over time. This agreement also

facilitates the sharing of best practices among partners. Data sharing is crucial for targeting issues such as Anti-Social Behaviour, Exploitation, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, and MASH.

By sharing data, a multi-agency problem-solving approach is established, enabling increased input from agencies with various specialisations. This collaborative effort enhances the ability to safeguard children more effectively.

The Section 11 assessment covering all Croydon schools and settings has been commended by independent scrutiny. We conduct spot check visits and safeguarding checks throughout the year, ensuring comprehensive oversight and compliance. Teams actively contribute to Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI) and the Youth Justice Board (YJB), representing educational perspectives and providing feedback to schools. Additionally, Croydon's commitment to the Violence Reduction Unit's London Inclusion Charter and involvement in developing a London-wide strategy underscore its dedication to collaborative safeguarding efforts.

Recent audits, including those assessing MASH referral quality and Virtual School audits of CLA Personal Education Plans (PEPs), demonstrate ongoing efforts to enhance safeguarding practices. These audits aim to improve the quality of referrals from education settings and subsequently enhance outcomes for children involved. These initiatives reflect Croydon's proactive approach to safeguarding, aiming for continuous improvement and effective collaboration across education and safeguarding sectors.

Youth Justice Service (YJS)

It was apparent that a number of YJS children were not accessing mainstream services including the school nurse because of their circumstances. A Physical Health Nurse has now joined the team. They are responsible for the screening of every child open to Youth Justice which has ensured a number of benefits including:

Previously unregistered children are now able to register with GPs

linking with the CLA nurse to ensure CLA children are accessing their health appointments and supporting them when they miss appointments.

liaising with other health teams (eg Diabetes Nurse to assist a young person who had missed appointments).

Arranging prescriptions, writing and updating GPS of conditions or concerns, signposting.

Set up a sexual health clinic on site for YJS children to access.

Has discovered many of our children are not up to date with vaccinations and has been able to advocate and talk to parents about this.

Children's Centres, PAIRS (Parent and Infant Relationship Service) & Parenting Support

The service aims to support healthy child development and parent-child relationships across three key areas: Children's Centres, Pairs, and Support and Interventions. The Service Manager actively participates in Windows in Practice audits to ensure practitioners consider the broader early help offerings in their support to families. A targeted audit led by the Family Solutions service evaluates how well practitioners understand the wider community early help offerings and their ability to refer or signpost families to these services, especially when referrals do not meet the threshold for intensive early help intervention.

Professional attendance at CPC audits has revealed that social workers may not always be aware of families accessing children's centre services. To address this, the service is exploring ways to raise awareness of wider early help services, such as building closer working relationships between the Family Assessment service and children's centre services. This ensures social workers consider the support available through children's centres as part of statutory interventions or step-down processes. The Family Assessment Service has appointed several children's centre champions to facilitate this initiative, resulting in an increase in CSC referrals for children's centre support.

Police

The Police have conducted two Section 11 audits in the past six months, demonstrating compliance with safeguarding requirements under the Children Act 2004. These audits ensure that Police practices meet established standards and provide reassurance regarding their safeguarding responsibilities. Police involvement in Operation Encompass and subsequent data audits reflect their commitment to evaluating performance and enhancing service delivery. These audits are crucial for monitoring and improving interactions with children, ensuring that responses align with safeguarding protocols.

Following positive feedback from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in Sutton, the Police are actively engaged in local audits and preparation groups. These initiatives focus on information sharing, identifying missed opportunities, and sharing successful practices across agencies involved in child welfare. These activities underscore the Police's proactive approach to safeguarding through rigorous audits, strategic performance groups, and continuous improvement initiatives. Their efforts aim to ensure consistent adherence to best practices, enhance collaboration with partners, and improve outcomes for children in contact with the Police.



PART 3: THE WHY NOT?


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

Audits

Whilst there has been significant audit activity undertaken in single agency forums, the work to progress multi-agency audits has been harder to achieve. It will be a priority to ensure proportionate, achievable audits are progressed for 2024-25.

Early Help and Family Hubs


Whilst the CSCP have been engaged and supportive of the work of the Early Help Partnership Board, and the Family Hubs workstreams, it has not been possible to achieve evidence of the quality and direction of this work as the focus has been on the implementation. The revised Early Help Strategy has been under review for some time and there are proposals to move to a different operating model (FLOURISH). This received more scrutiny when Children's Social Care produced their Safeguarding Assurance at the June 2024 QIG and subsequent meetings which are starting to engage the wider partnership in FLOURISH.





PART 4: THE WHAT NEXT?

This section provides an overview of the key priorities and initiatives that the CSCP has identified for the coming year. It will outline the strategic focus areas aimed at improving safeguarding practices and outcomes for children and families.



A key deliverable will be to ensure the CSCP aligns with the revised Working Together 2023 Guidance. This is more robust than the 2018 version, requiring more evidence of the accountability of the Lead Safeguarding Partners and a move to more equitable partnerships. There is a requirement to publish our new arrangements by December 2024 and work is well underway to ensure this occurs. Multi-agency workshops are planned to ensure each agency has the opportunity to engage and shape the new arrangements. This approach is likely to support a positive culture to build on for the following year.

Key priorities for safeguarding assurance include securing evidence from Licensing, Commissioning, Culture and Community Safety, and Faith Groups, while also building on the strong foundation established with VCS organisations.

The new auditing software will be implemented for Section 11 and audits in the coming months. This software will significantly support our efforts by:

Establishing a consistent approach to Section 11 audits.

Providing a clearer understanding of engagement from services and organisations.

Expanding our reach to ensure broader assurance of safeguarding arrangements in Croydon.

For 2024-25 our focus will be:

- The MASH Refresh Project
- Annual Conference (November 2024)
- Publish the new CSCP Arrangements (in accordance with Working Together 2023)
- Engage and support the Early Help and Family Hubs projects
- Progress the appointment of the Young Scrutineers (achieved in July 2024)
- Refresh/relaunch the multi-agency Pre-Birth Guidance
- Implement fee-based training model
- Network oversight to reduce the impact of exploitation
- Engaging with the Impower Review to ensure maximum join up and reduce duplication of multi-agency spaces

Health colleagues have highlighted that tackling health inequalities is a key priority in both the **Joint Forward Plan** and the **ICP Strategy**. A **Health Equity Partnership Group** is leading efforts to address the broader factors that influence health, while also focusing on three main strategies for reducing inequalities:

1. Prevention
2. Increasing community empowerment
3. Promoting self-empowerment and self-care

This approach aims to embed sustainable solutions for improving health equity.

In relation to Core20Plus5, they have invested through the SWL HI Investment Fund in 39 Place Based projects and 3 SWL level projects (Core20plus5 connectors, Brazil Model and SPEAR) plus social prescribing for Children and Young People.



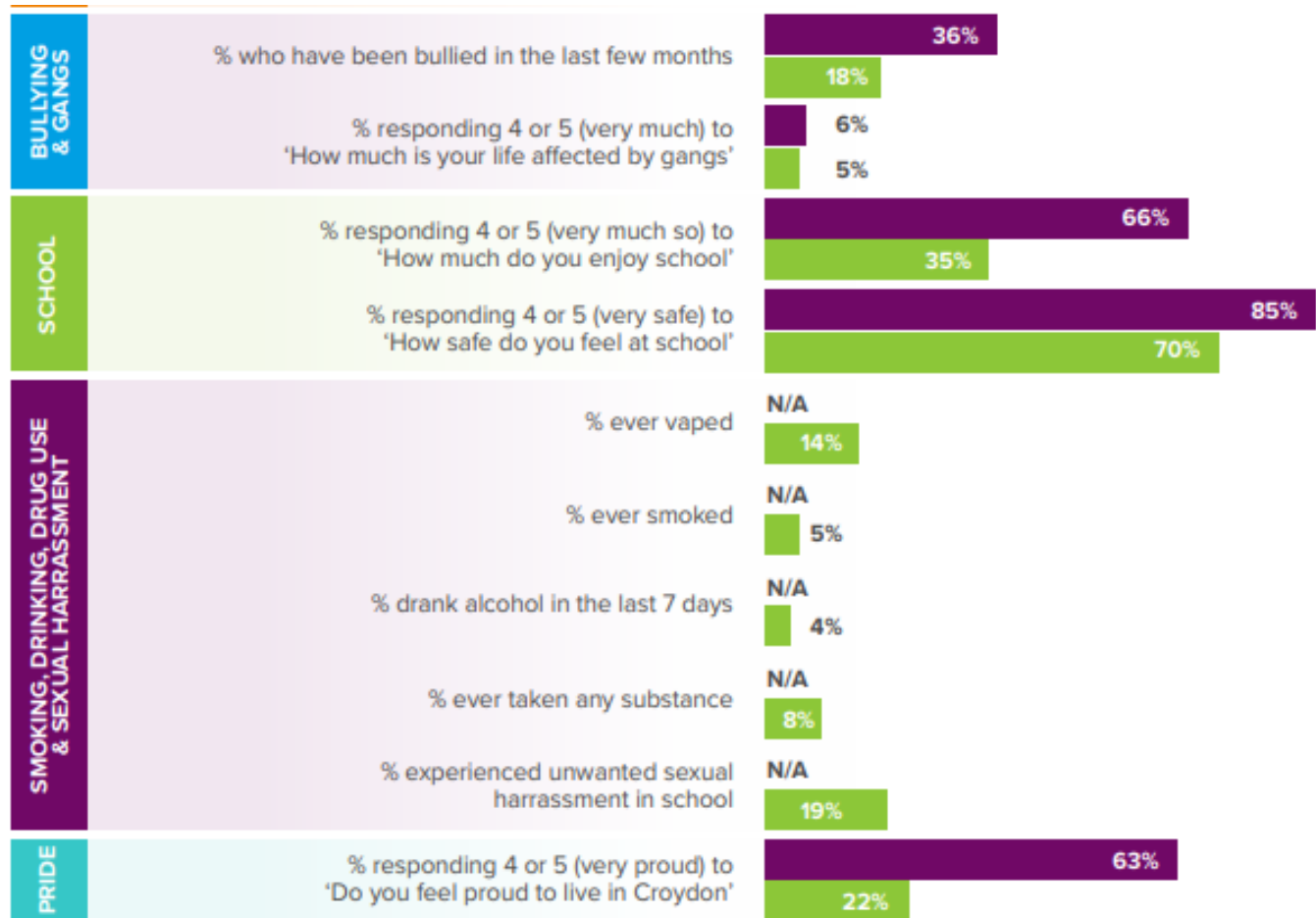
PART 5: THE VOICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The CSCP has made significant progress in capturing and utilising the voice of children and families to shape services. This section highlights examples of how feedback has informed and influenced service provision, ensuring a child-centred approach and responsive support for families.

The CSCP influenced some of the questions in the Schools Survey and was one of the first to see the early findings at a QIG meeting in June 2023. [View full report](#) -

[Children and Young People health and wellbeing survey 2022-23-Final report.pdf
\(croydon.gov.uk\)](https://croydon.gov.uk/children-and-young-people-health-and-wellbeing-survey-2022-23-final-report.pdf)

These key messages give some idea of the level of engagement that the resort elicited:



Jakes Video

The family of a young person who tragically took his own life created a powerful reminder of the importance of seeing the whole child, beyond just their presenting need. This message has been widely shared in forums across Croydon and pan-London. The National Panel recognised the CSCP's Safeguarding Review as exemplary, requesting its dissemination to other LSCPs as a model of good practice.

Croydon Council (Youth Participation Service)

The voice of young people is consistently represented across Croydon Council. Young people have informed housing policies that have led to identifying safer communities for residence for young people leaving the care system. These young Ambassadors for housing are responsible for bring the national charity, House Project, to Croydon to ensure safer living conditions for Croydon Young People. Young people are represented on various committees including the Corporate Parenting Board where there is a youth co-chair who works directly with the adult chair.

Young Ambassadors completed 234 hours of paid work between October 2023 and March 2024. Hours are compensated when an ambassador meets with colleagues to consult, feedback, present,

train or interview others. There are more hours of support and development provided to Ambassadors which we do not itemise as this is part of our offer to them.

Two Young Scrutineers have just been recruited to work alongside the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership to bring a youth perspective to safeguarding in Croydon. Currently there are 19 young Ambassadors who are compensated for their participation in the areas of housing, stability, permanence, and safeguarding. These young people bring a unique perspective to the work in these focus areas.

Starz and Sistas

This programme emerged through a location risk discussion with partners. Intelligence detailed a number of identifiable girls being active in committing robberies in a specific location. Conversely, most of the girls were also known for their own vulnerabilities including sexual exploitation. Many of the females had not yet reached the Youth Justice Service and the programme was designed and created to divert them from entering the system, looking at ways to redefine their identity and recognise their own victimisation.

The programme, ultimately underpinned by a relational approach and voice of the child, looked to promote and entice opportunities. Fundamentally the programme started with discussions on various topics chosen by the children and use of food and reward incentives. Once relations began to strengthen the programme looked at future aspirations of the girls and empowerment.

The measurable outcomes that were observed following the implementation of the project included a reduction in missing periods, increased attendance at school, a reduction in arrests and intelligence on the girls, and many of the girls being removed from plans. The programme demonstrates purposeful voice of the child.

Creating Permanence

Multi-agency professions have collaborated with Children Social Care to create a Permanence Strategy to prioritise what is required to ensure children in care have warm, caring and stable homes without disruption.

Children were consulted on what is important to them, they said:

'Permanence means that we are respected by you. You provide love and warmth, and are consistent, reliable, and loyal. You provide safe, stable homes where we can live forever or for long period of time.'

Children and young people were very clear about the range and importance of relationships, individuals and organisations that create permanence for them. These included: -

Their family, birth family, extended family, new family, carers. School friends, pets. Football team, independent reviewing officer, school nurse, CLA nurse, friends, Aunty, social worker, mentor, personal advisor. Manager, Chief Executive, King. Supervising social worker, Doctor, CAHMS, General Practitioner, Director, Manager, School Governors, Children in Care Council.

'I love my sister looking after me, I want her to be my Special Guardian.'

'We want our permanent homes to feel more homely.'

'We want our carers to be able to make decisions without having to wait for social workers and managers to agree to plans.'

'We can't invest in new families and homes when they are temporary.'

Children and young people are clear and insightful about their needs and who can deliver on them. Their views are respected and are incorporated into individual and corporate planning.

Off The Record (VCS)

During an Outreach FE College session, a non-binary student came aboard Talkbus and spoke about being bullied at home and College and having severe anxiety/panic attacks, wanting to end their life. They'd had a previous negative experience with counselling when at school. The Talkbus is a well-placed, well-connected resource and they attended the North End shopping centre sessions for the next month and got to trust us. Within three months we had obtained a referral to CDI's Community Counselling service, helped them find a weekend job in the restaurant of a local golf club and invited them to join the Young People's Team.

Shortly before Christmas, a 16-year-old young person texted our service saying they wanted to kill themselves. We reply immediately, talk and keep her safe over Christmas. They started counselling in January 2021, and we work together for 20 months with a mix of therapy, creative writing and outreach working. With their consent, we print their stories and poems in our quarterly reports and the Chief Exec recites one of their poems at the annual AGM. They get good A Levels and leaves the Borough to start University in October. They have stayed in touch and is now achieving a Psychology Degree, living in a shared house and started their own small business and tutoring GCSE Maths.

A 15-year-old non-binary young person who self-referred to our service for their second episode of counselling, having previously come through to us on the CAMHS pathway last year. In the initial appointment they were presenting with suicidal thoughts and self-harm, they requested to have art therapy as they previously found it easier to speak about their emotions whilst drawing.

They would often become more talkative during the sessions. The games also helped to build a connection and allowed for some small moments of laughter into the sessions, which felt important as YP's mood was typically very low day to day.

We also created a safety plan and spent some time exploring self-harm distractions and triggers, as well discussing some of the underlying problems contributing to their suicidal thoughts. They reflected on difficulties at school including long-term bullying and friendship issues, they spoke about not feeling accepted, cared for, and believed that they were never a priority in many of their peer relationships.

They discussed the complexities of the relationship with mum who suffered from severe mental health difficulties herself, and the impact this had on them growing up – which included them missing out on large chunks of school.

In a later session, S presented as extremely "down" - they did not want to talk and appeared very tearful and acknowledged suicidal thoughts, this led to a CAMHS intervention and support with the young person citing that since coming to the art session, their self-harm has decreased overall and shared that it had felt like a 'relief' to have had someone to speak to. They believed that they had begun to take their first healing steps.

Parent and Infant Relationship Service (PAIRS)

This case study highlights a successful therapeutic intervention with a family facing initial parenting challenges exacerbated by a physical disability and complex PTSD. Through 12 sessions of parent-infant psychotherapy, a mother and father significantly improved their parenting confidence and emotional availability towards their lively and initially challenging seven-month-old baby. They learned to manage their baby's needs more effectively, fostering his trust in their guidance and enhancing his ability to tolerate separation and frustration. Concurrently, the therapy strengthened relationship of the parents, promoting better communication and mutual support. Their efforts, supported by practical interventions like attending local parent-child activities and addressing housing concerns, culminated in securing stable housing, providing a conducive environment for their baby's development. Overall, the family's journey underscores the transformative impact of targeted therapeutic support on parental confidence, child development, and family cohesion.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Team

The Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) attended five engagement sessions with Croydon Superstars to inform the New Thematic inspection with the Theme Prep for adulthood

The DCO continues to attend Croydon Active voices (Parent/Carer Forum) coffee morning whenever feasible to liaise with parents on current issues

Voluntary & Community Services (VCS)

The CSCP QA Officer has dedicated significant time engaging with the community this year, participating in various local events and meetings to better understand the needs and concerns of community members. This immersive approach has provided valuable insights that have directly influenced the strategic direction of the CSCP's initiatives. By fostering open communication and collaboration with community stakeholders, the officer has been able to identify key areas for improvement and ensure that the CSCP's efforts align with the priorities of those they serve. This engagement not only enhances the effectiveness of the CSCP's programs but also strengthens community trust and support for their work.

Some of the key messages from the VCS include:

- The perceived need for support among children and families has increased.
- Poverty, particularly regarding access to food, has been a significant challenge. Reaching Higher is collaborating with the local community food kitchen to support young people in cooking and healthy eating.
- Collaboration with Legacy Youth Zone revealed that while females account for 25% of attendance, they represent 75% of safeguarding concerns, many of which are related to child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- Girls are engaging less than boys in the youth services offered, especially in activity-based programs.

These messages have led to specific matters being investigated via the dataset and questions asked of specific meeting groups.