

Strategic Safeguarding Children Plan Priorities for 2022/2024



Safeguarding Surrey's
children together

The first discipline is to focus your finest effort on the one or two goals that will make all the difference, instead of giving mediocre effort to dozens of goals.

Chris McChesney, Sean Covey and James Huling, (2012) *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*, p. 23 Simon & Schuster Ltd

Introduction

The safeguarding partners through the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) has responsibility to coordinate safeguarding services, to act as the strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others in the work of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare and implementing local and national learning including learning from serious child safeguarding incidents. The SSCP, jointly with the wider Safeguarding Partnership, commissions an annual Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan which identifies the strategic priorities of the SSCP.

Business As Usual Safeguarding Activities

As a safeguarding children partnership, there is always a wide range of business-as-usual issues and actions that we must pay particular attention to if children are to remain safe and their welfare is to be promoted. These represent on-going or business as usual safeguarding activities that must be continuously coordinated and evaluated if the SSCP is to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and statutory guidance Working Together 2018 and 2023. The SSCP will continue to give conspicuous oversight of continuing improvement as we make progress towards getting to 'Good'. The SSCP will also continue to focus on the following areas of multi-agency safeguarding practice.

The journey of the child through the safeguarding system

- Early help and promoting good developmental progress and well-being for all children.
- Children in need including children with Special Educational Needs and Children with Disabilities
- Children on Child Protection plans
- Children looked after by the County Council
- Care Leavers

Specific Safeguarding Concerns

- Domestic abuse
- Children at risk of various forms of exploitation
- Serious youth violence
- Children missing from home, school and care
- Parental substance misuse
- Other forms of abuse

Scrutiny and Quality Assurance of Multi-Agency Child Safeguarding Practice

- Strengthening the ability of the Partnership to demonstrate improvements in the quality of multi-agency child safeguarding practice and to evidence a positive impact on safeguarding children.

User Voice and Influence

- Developing our work in ensuring children and young people's voice and influence

Practitioner Voice and Influence

- Ensuring that the work we do is practice led and practice informed.

Developing and Reviewing Policies and Guidance

- Developing high quality, multi-agency policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, which are shared, understood, and implemented in practice.

Developing the SSCP Priorities

The SSCP committed to updating its partnership governance arrangements in 2023. At an SSCP Executive Development Day in March 2023, it was agreed that the new arrangements and priorities would be developed around its “three pillars” approach to the SSCP’s priorities initially set in 2022: Early Help & Thresholds, Child and Adolescent Resilience and Support, and Neglect. It can be said, therefore, that the approach taken in setting the SSCP priorities from 2022 to 2024 has been an iterative development on the partnership’s previous work to date. The following overarching priorities are key actions which, we believe, will deliver systemwide improvement in critical areas of multi-agency safeguarding practice. They have been informed by local child safeguarding practice reviews, multi-agency audits, local and national serious safeguarding incidents, local and national research, feedback from partners and practitioners. These will also be reviewed again by December 2024 in line with the requirements of Working Together 2023.

What Children and Young Adults Have Said...

These priorities have also been informed by the voices and experiences of children and young people. The Children and Young Adults we spoke to told us that early help is essential; there should be a heavy focus on prevention – working with children and families to prevent or de-escalate crisis.

Children and young adults have also told us that support for mental health and emotional well-being is important. We need to ‘think relationships’ and start early with helping children to understand good and healthy relationships through speaking about kindness, empathy, standing up for yourself and others, what is safe and not safe. Young people want us to think carefully about the messages we give and how we communicate them. Young people have a voice and a view and want to be included in work around safeguarding. In response to the feedback from young people, the SSCP will ensure that all the actions will include a clear focus on prevention and early help.

SSCP Priorities for 2022-2024

Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

Emotional and mental health continues to be a priority of the SSCP and focusses on suicide prevention, self-harm and eating disorders. One of the areas for improvement identified in the Inspection of Surrey local authority children’s services published in March 2022, was for the Partnership work to secure support for children and young people’s mental health and well-being.

Mindworks Surrey is the emotional wellbeing and mental health service for children, young people, parents and carers, and professionals across Surrey. The Mindworks Surrey Access and Advice service replaced the CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA) and helps young people and their families in need of support to access it in the most appropriate way. It is intended to enable easy and early access to advice and signposting to existing support as well as acting as gateway to more specialist or clinical support as needed.

Priorities are:

1. Work with commissioners and providers to ensure that processes are in place to monitor the effectiveness of the delivery of the contract.
2. Commissioners and providers will offer evidence from parents, children, and partners, that the Mindworks offer is working and that children receive the help they need when they need it.
3. We will seek to further develop and embed a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy that demonstrates that child and adolescent mental health and well-being is everybody's business.
4. The self-harm protocol will continue to seek evidence that it is working to improve practice and support to children and families where self-harm is a factor.

Neglect: improving the quality and timeliness of our practice in relation to neglect

Neglect remains one of the most prevalent forms of harm experienced by children in Surrey. Neglect is an urgent safeguarding issue which requires an urgent, skilled safeguarding response. We want to ensure that practitioners in all agencies are supported with the skills, awareness, and tools to effectively intervene in cases where neglect is a factor. The outcome we want to achieve is that children identified as living in neglectful situations are identified and supported in a timely way so that their experience of care is improved, and impact of neglect is addressed.

Our priorities and action plans:

- Increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and recognition of all forms of neglect.
- Deliver effective response and support to all forms of neglect in partnership with all agencies across Surrey.
- Provide the right support at the earliest opportunity using the principles of the Family Safeguarding model, supported by our continuum of need document.
- Improve how we evidence the impact of support and monitor long-term outcomes for children and young people.

Early Help

Early Help refers both to help in the critical years of a child's life (including pre-birth and pregnancy) and responding as soon as possible, **at any age, through childhood and adolescence**, when difficulties arise. We seek to offer support at the earliest opportunity to help families solve problems or to reduce the impact of needs that have already emerged.

In Surrey, the approach for helping families early is embedded within the **Continuum of Support** and the Social Work practice model '**Family Safeguarding.**' Within this model we have identified five types of support: **Universal and community, Emerging Needs, Targeted Support, Intensive Support and Statutory services.**

By working together, we will develop flexible services which are responsive to children's and families' needs and provide the right kind of help at the right time. This will shift focus away from managing short-term crises, towards effective help and support for children and their families at an earlier stage.

We are committed to:

- Promoting the welfare of children and protecting them from **significant harm** is at the centre of all we do.
- Working together across the whole partnership, aligning our resources so we can best support families and do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.
- Using motivational interviewing to engage with families, seeking their consent and agreement.
- Working to families' strengths – embracing a strength based, whole family approach to finding sustainable solutions. Taking time to fully understand the needs of the whole family and harnessing support from their wider family network. Parents say they are motivated by having goals that reflect their family priorities and working with practitioners whose actions are driven by the needs of the child.
- Focusing on solving problems before they escalate and offer flexible responsive support when and where it is required.
- Building the resilience of families and communities to support each other.
- Basing all that we do on evidence, both of what is needed and of what works.
- Being clear and consistent and open about the outcomes we want to achieve, to make a positive difference.