



# Annual Report

## 2019 - 2020



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# Introduction

**Working Together 2018**, provides that -

The safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

In addition, the report should also include:

- **evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers**
- **an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities**
- **a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements**
- **ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.<sup>1</sup>**

## The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership current arrangements and structure

The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership was established on 1 September 2019 in response to the 2016 Wood Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership consists of the three safeguarding partners, Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and the Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group. In addition, the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership includes Education and Schools. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) is led, jointly and equally, by Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group (on behalf of all CCGs and NHS providers in Surrey). As per the SSCP's published arrangements the three named statutory 'Safeguarding Partners' has formed an Executive Group for the Partnership, joined by representatives from the county's schools and colleges, district and borough councils, and the Police and Crime Commissioner's office. The published arrangements also provide that representatives of the Third Sector will attend the Executive Group on an issue by issue basis.

The membership of the Children's Safeguarding Partnership now includes 'relevant agencies' and this group has been extended to more fully represent the breadth of interests/stakeholders in children's safeguarding in Surrey.

The SSCP is structured as follows:

**The Executive Group** - The members of this group form the strategic leadership group and 'virtual management team' for Surrey's safeguarding arrangements.

**The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership** - the overall aim of the Partnership is to ensure Surrey's arrangements fulfil the vision and values of the partnership in their operation.

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<sup>1</sup> Working Together 2018, chapter 3, pp. 80-81, paragraphs 41 to 43,

**The Business Group** - the key role of the Business Group is to ensure the business of the Safeguarding Partnership and decisions taken are progressed efficiently and effectively.

## SSCP sub-groups

**The Case Review Panel** - the purpose of this group is to ensure that the SSCP fulfils its responsibilities in relation to reviewing child serious safeguarding practice incidents and translating learning into practice improvements.

**The Engagement and Communications Sub-Group** - this group will take the lead in an annual programme of engagement and communications with both users of safeguarding services and with practitioners across the safeguarding Partnership workforce.

**Learning from Practice Sub-Group** - The role of the Learning from Practice Group, on behalf of the partnership, is to embed a learning culture and 'cycle' into the new safeguarding arrangements that improves outcomes for children and families.

**The Neglect Sub-Group** - The purpose of the Neglect Sub-Group is to take ownership and be accountable for the strategic oversight of the effectiveness of multi-agency practice in cases of neglect in Surrey.

In addition to the SSCP's Sub-Groups, the published arrangements include the following sector-led safeguarding forums and networks:

- the District and Borough Councils' Safeguarding Forum
- the Health Safeguarding Forum
- the Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum
- the Third Sector Safeguarding Network.

The Annual Report of the SSCP is part of the Surrey safeguarding partners' accountability to members of the full partnership, the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, relevant agencies and, most importantly, Surrey's children and families who are the principal beneficiaries of the activity of the Partnership.

This inaugural report covers an extended period of activity as the Partnership came into existence in autumn 2019; this report therefore covers the period from September 2019 until 31 December 2020. This report aims to provide a transparent assessment of the quality of multi-agency safeguarding practice in Surrey. The report will also include an analysis of the effectiveness of the SSCP, including the SSCP's performance against its agreed priorities; it will also include an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on the SSCP's agreed priorities, the report will also seek to provide, where possible, evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training.

We will also provide a summary of the key decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period and actions which are planned to be taken to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements. Throughout the report we will highlight the ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

This report is organised into the following sections:

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In reporting on the performance of the Partnership, we will want to indicate a shift from an outline of the Partnership's activities, towards reporting on the effectiveness and impact of our collective activity to keep Surrey's children safe and promote their welfare. To help us achieve this, we will seek to answer the following questions:

1. **What did we do?** What are the levels of activity?
2. **How well did we do it?** What is the quality and impact of safeguarding – auditing?
3. **Is Anyone better off?** Using the voice, experience of children, young people and families and the voice of practitioners to evidence quality and impact.
4. **What are we going to do next? Action Planning:** What we will do to improve and when will we know that we have improved?



# Section 1

## Multi-agency safeguarding in the context of COVID-19

**In 2020 the United Kingdom, like all other nations across our world, was deeply affected by the global pandemic identified as COVID-19. COVID-19 has radically changed the way in which services to safeguard children and promote their welfare are delivered across Surrey. In addition, the Impact of COVID-19 raised the levels of risks that vulnerable children and families are exposed to including domestic abuse and increased vulnerability relating to poor mental health coupled with limited opportunities for contact and support.**

## **1. What did we do?**

The SSCP Executive quickly responded to the COVID-19 Lockdown on 23 March 2020 by putting a COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan in place that allowed the SSCP, the Executive, the full Partnership its Sub-Groups, its forums and networks to continue to meet and conduct the core business of the Partnership virtually.

In addition, the SSCP held a number of COVID-19 Contingency Planning Meetings throughout 2020. During the March to July lock down, these meetings were held on a weekly basis, then moved to bi-weekly meetings as required. The focus of these meetings was to ensure that all safeguarding partners and relevant agencies were updated regarding challenges facing each agency, and the range of single and multi-agency initiatives to respond to the safeguarding issues and pressures emerging as a result of the pandemic. The SSCP worked closely with the Local Resilience Forum to ensure that critical safeguarding issues were considered and addressed.

The Executive also put in place a process to ensure that key decisions and actions would continue to be taken by the Executive remotely, as opposed to through face to face or virtual meetings.

### **The response of education and school settings**

There was a robust response from all schools throughout the year. A multi-agency group was created, co-chaired by the Director of Quality and Performance and the Schools and Education representative on the Safeguarding Executive. Members of this group included colleagues from Social Care, Vulnerable Learners and Schools Relationships. Working together towards the shared goal of ensuring the best possible attendance for children with Social Workers, the group implemented processes and procedures, along with relevant communications, that supported conversations with families so that their children took up their school place. The impact of this was that Surrey was significantly above the national average for the attendance of vulnerable pupils. Children's Social Care worked closely with headteachers to ensure that children were visited by their Social Workers. Vulnerable children in Surrey were three times more likely to attend schools during 'lockdown' than the national average (11%).

Like all Local Authorities, the numbers of parents requesting Elective Home Education – particularly from the Autumn term 2020 – grew exponentially (since September we have had 562 new requests from parents to Electively Home Educate their children and the number on Surrey's register is 1494 compared to 1021 at this time in the previous year). To address the consequent concern there was a robust multi-agency response which included increased activity and scrutiny of the parents' decision-making by the Inclusion Service and where necessary by Social Care, in conjunction with School partners. As a result Surrey's numbers, whilst high, were not as high as some of its statistical neighbours. The Chair of the Safeguarding Executive has written to the Secretary of State for Education, on behalf of Surrey Schools on two occasions to ask for a more robust National response to this issue.

Throughout COVID-19, The Education Recovery Cell has worked closely with Surrey Schools and Head Teachers to respond to a range of issues including:

- **personal protection equipment**
- **testing in schools**
- **support for vulnerable pupils**
- **school meals for vulnerable families**

## Surrey Police response

Surrey Police experienced increasing demand during the pandemic. Several meetings were held with Detective Chief Inspectors who manage the Safeguarding Investigation Units and Child Exploitation and Missing Units who agreed strategies to manage any increases in demand; this included using staff from other departments (Complex Abuse Unit, Public Protection Support Unit, Sexual Offences Investigation Team, CID) should the need arise.

Throughout the national Lockdown, the Police continued to deliver key communication messages on the importance of looking out for children, internally when attending and responding to incidents and reports and externally via our social media channels.

Surrey Police managed to maintain service delivery with regard to safeguarding during the COVID pandemic, responding effectively and appropriately to a range of issues presented to the police. Police Safeguarding Investigations Units have also continued to deliver safeguarding services as usual throughout this COVID period. The police have also adjusted ways of working, including conducting some enquires on virtual platforms; however, the police have ensured that they were able to conduct investigations as usual when required, by carrying out COVID 19 risk assessments prior to any face to face contact with children and families and using appropriate safety measures.

The police anticipated that early on in the pandemic, there would be a rise in Domestic Abuse cases due to lockdown measures, and ensured they were equipped to respond to an increase in demand by introducing a dedicated Domestic Abuse Response Team, available to respond at short notice.

The police ran numerous campaigns both internally and externally to raise community and practitioner awareness of children being victims of domestic abuse as well as suffering from other forms of abuse including neglect and physical abuse. The Police have delivered repeated Comms messages on the importance of seeing and hearing the child when attending incidents, publicising case studies where the Police have, or could have, made a difference by listening to the voice of the child. The Police also promote that every contact they have with a child can make a difference and leave a lasting impression. When the police are required to carry out reviews of Child Abuse investigations, the review team works closely with partners to ensure that these reviews are child-focussed, that investigators have the child at the centre of the investigations and that their voice is heard.

Throughout the summer holidays Surrey Police relaunched the **Child Criminal Exploitation Targeted. Tested. Trapped #SeeTheBiggerPicture** campaign, as phase one of the Serious Organised Crime Launch. This included TV adverts, Youtube adverts, using targeted social media, bus interiors etc. These campaigns were designed to raise awareness within the community to safeguard children from criminal exploitation and other forms of abuse.

Prior to the schools going back in September 2020, Surrey Police social media accounts focused on 'Back to school' safety with angles such as Sportsafe, new gadgets and importance



of online safety, prevalence of exploitation particularly when starting new schools and meeting new friends etc. The Police also continued to promote the **Targeted. Tested. Trapped** video towards young people on Facebook and Instagram.

To support with schools' wider understanding of Domestic Abuse, particularly with regard to the increased likelihood of disclosures once schools returned in full in September 2020, the Partnership held School-only training for Domestic Abuse to enable Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and school staff to recognise signs of abuse, respond to disclosures and take appropriate action, once a relevant concern had been raised. Evaluations from this training were very positive with school staff reporting they felt their offer to parents in such a situation was much more rounded and effective.

In addition to this, Surrey Police worked closely with Children's Services and Surrey Schools to identify vulnerable children and families where issues like domestic abuse were known to be a factor. The Police supported with conducting safe and well checks for children and families where there were concerns.

## Children's social care response

In Surrey County Council (SCC), Children's Services responded quickly to the changing situation introducing a range of contingency arrangements. SCC introduced a suite of guidance documents to support practitioners within Children Services to continue keeping children and families safe, this included information and guidance around undertaking and recording virtual visits, use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) when working face-to-face with children and families and new Risk Management guidance. SCC also introduced a process for RAG rating<sup>2</sup> children based on their risk to aid decision making as to which children and families could be visited by a 'virtual visit' and which children and families still needed to be seen face-to-face.

SCC also redeployed staff in the wider Children's Services workforce (including commissioned services), and elsewhere in the Council, to ensure that SCC could continue delivering a safe and effective service. SCC also created a new, temporary, residential setting to support children coming into care and utilising staff and facilities at Surrey Outdoor Learning Centre, to provide short-term support so as to prevent long-term family breakdown, and to prevent escalation of need.

SCC increased emergency, out of hours staffing capacity to ensure effective support for children and families who need support out of normal working hours. This included youth workers, family group conference coordinators, the Gateway team (placements), additional social workers and a mental health triage nurse. This actively prevented need escalating, family breakdown and so helped keep our children and families safe.

SCC worked in partnership to manage and meet demand across the county, including working closely with colleagues in Education Sector to ensure vulnerable children took up places at school and/or continued accessing education provision. As part of this work, SCC regularly updated the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Directorate Plan to reflect the COVID-19 situation, specifically adding a priority to highlight the changes that were implemented and how services can recover and learn from the situation to support the improvement journey. Throughout lockdown periods in 2020, SCC continued with the improvement plan in Children's Services.

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<sup>2</sup> **RAG** (Red-Amber-Green) **ratings**, also known as 'traffic lighting,' are used to summarise indicator values, where green denotes a 'favourable' value, red an 'unfavourable' value and amber a 'neutral' value.

To ascertain the effectiveness of these arrangements, the SCC commissioned Auditors reported that the process of RAG rating and virtual visits kept children safe, whilst allowing professionals to minimise the spread of COVID-19. Audits showed that recording and ensuring children were seen and their voice heard in virtual visits needed to improve. Further support and guidance were provided to professionals which audits then showed improved practice in these areas.

SCC have continued to restore services through 2020 with most up and running in a 'normal way' (under COVID-19 restrictions) and nearly all of our children and families have continued to be seen face to face rather than virtually - in line with government guidance. As of 18 December 2020, 82% of Looked After Children have been visited (face to face) within timescales, 73% of children subject to a Child Protection Plan and 67% of children subject to a Child in Need Plan have been visited (face to face) within timescales. The entire COVID-19 situation has seen demand for support increase significantly, which has put a significant strain on the system.

The increase in contacts to the Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) during lockdown and throughout the pandemic has led to a similar increase in referrals to social care. This has impacted on the re-referral rate and the number of children subject to a repeat assessment, Section 47 and Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC). Whilst this has not impacted on timeliness for a child to progress through the system, where targets are being achieved, we continue to see increases in the number of children who are the subject of a Child Protection plan for a subsequent time. SCC report that there are currently over 1300 open assessments in social care teams, the number of open assessments increased incrementally between April 2020 and October 2020. Assessment timeliness remains high with just under 95% completed within required timescales.

In the second half of 2020 there was an increase in strategy discussions and Section 47 enquiries which has led to a 15% increase in the number of children subject to Initial Child Protection Conferences. The number of children who are subject to a Child Protection plan has increased to 802, a 28% increase compared to this time in the previous year.

It is noted that there has been an increase in children coming into care during lockdown, specifically teenagers on section 20 (voluntary) agreements. Comparisons with national, regional and statistical neighbours suggests Surrey is potentially an outlier in this area. Excluding 26 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), there has been 182 new entrants to the care system between July and December 2020. Almost two thirds of these children and young people started with a voluntary, Section 20 agreement. There were 36 (32%) children aged between 10 and 15 years of age in this cohort and 29 (26%) young people aged 16 or 17 years of age when they entered care on a Section 20 agreement.

As at 30 November 2020, there were 1039 children looked after by Surrey County Council, 84 of these are UASC. The rate per 10,000 is 39 children and young people. This remains significantly below statistical neighbours (48), the region (53) and national figures for 2018/19 (65).

SCC has appointed 40 newly qualified Social Workers recently however these practitioners do not have a full caseload until the latter part of their first year in social work employment. Some additional funding specifically to mitigate the impact due to COVID-19 has been used to add capacity to the teams in the medium-term.

SCC will continue learning from what has worked and what has not worked as a result of changes in practice in response to COVID-19. SCC will also continue to work in partnership with key agencies to meet demand and meet the needs of children and families at the right time.

SCC will continue to deliver services in accordance with the latest [national guidance for children's social care services](#), this guidance highlights the key principles that will continue to underpin this work during these exceptional times. This includes ensuring that SCC remains

- **Child-Centred** - promoting children's best interests: nothing is more important than children's welfare; children who need help and protection deserve high-quality and effective support as soon as a need for help is identified
- **Risk-Based** - prioritising support and resources for children at greatest risk
- **Family-Focused** - harnessing the strengths in families and their communities
- **Evidence-Informed** - ensuring decisions are proportionate and justified
- **Collaborative** - working in partnership with parents and other professionals
- **Transparent** - providing clarity and maintaining professional curiosity about a child's wellbeing.

## The response from Health including Acute Trusts

Throughout 2020, the SSCP received comprehensive reports across the Health economy. Including questionnaire responses from Ashford and St Peters Hospital NHS Trust, Central Surrey Health, First Community Health and Care, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust, Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust. Each NHS Acute Trust and Community Health Provider reported their identified and assessed risks, outlining in detail the actions taken by the organisation to mitigate these risks.

The risks identified included:

- **increased incidences of Domestic Abuse**
- **increased presentations to paediatric A&E (PED) activity to increase to potentially pre pandemic levels.**
- **high numbers of patients attending PED and also those patients with mental health issues presenting to PED and being admitted to the paediatric ward in a crisis.**
- **increases in CAMHs presentations**
- **increases in eating disorders in young people**
- **increases in incidents and presentations of self-harm in young people**
- **increases in the use of Suite 136**
- **increases in demand for CAMHs beds**
- **localised increases in the North West Quadrant and the South East Quadrant.**

Colleagues across Health agencies reported in detail the actions taken to mitigate these risks including:

- **redeploying staff to critical areas of need**
- **working with statutory and voluntary organisations to prioritise need and to offer targeted support**
- **CAMHs services reported how they used a combination of telephone, online (virtual) and face to face interventions**
- **working closely with A&E departments and Children's Services.**

In spite of the exceptional challenges and pressures placed on health agencies, colleagues in health continued to prioritise safeguarding vulnerable children and families. This included

contributing to child in need meetings, attending Child Protection Conferences, participating in core group meetings and other multi-agency processes and continuing visits to vulnerable patients.

## The response of the Third Sector – working through COVID

Organisations in the third sector worked in partnership with key statutory and non-statutory agencies to ensure good joint working. The sector was represented on a number of the recovery cell groups including health and education to provide input in relation to the offer from the sector to support children, families and young people and raise any concerns and respond to emerging issues.

Third sector organisations rose to the challenge of COVID-19, by very quickly adapting their services to be able to continue supporting children, young people and families during lockdown and after. As a sector, organisations were willing to collaborate and share good practice, guidance and policies to support others as they transitioned from face to face work to virtual provision. As a whole, the sector has been able to remain open and have been innovative in their approach to working alongside children, young people and families. This has included text messaging, telephone calls, video conferencing for one to one and group work. For those young people that have been hard to reach organisations have delivered food parcels, sent arts and crafts packs through the post etc. in order to keep in touch. Additional funding that has been provided from commissioners within Surrey, the Community Foundation for Surrey and from national sources, have enabled charities to continue their work and pay for much needed PPE and other additional resources needed due to the pandemic.

However:

- some organisations have been unable to work at the capacity that they provided pre COVID due to social distancing guidelines relating to group work. This means they have been unable to reach and support as many young people as pre-March 2020. A range of organisation provided details of how they were supporting clients virtually including use of only meeting platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams.
- venues that organisations have previously used to provide provision are not available due to risks and costs associated with COVID. The cost of cleaning and the risk of cross-contamination in multi-use venues have limited the ability for organisations to run some projects.
- as to be expected, staffing issues, in terms of keeping staff safe, supporting their wellbeing, losing staff due to illness and commitments at home, furlough and inability to recruit staff has impacted on delivery for some organisations.
- funding – some organisations rely on fundraising to cover their core costs and this has been impacted due to the cancellation of events. Costs have not diminished as the same number of staff or more staff are required to host smaller groups or an increase in one to one support, to cover the costs of PPE and venues. This will continue to impact their revenue.
- charities have seen an increase in referrals and the level of complexity of needs has increased. In addition, there has also been an emergence of a different profile of children and young people being referred to organisations – particularly those presenting issues for the first time who have not been supported previously by other teams.

The third sector in partnership with statutory agencies have listened to children, young people and families. During COVID-19, three reports were published and shared widely across the Partnership to provide areas for reflection to guide strategy and practice. These reports have been used in different forums (including Education Recovery Cell, First 1000 Days Steering Group, SSCP Executive COVID Recovery Group, two Surrey and Borders Partnership Anxiety

Webinars) to inform practice in light of COVID-19. The reports focused on the experiences of lockdown for:

- children and young people aged 5+years
- parents with children under 5 years
- families with children with additional needs.

Key findings were:

- one size doesn't fit all – children and families have all had different experiences during COVID-19.
- relationships are very important – many appreciated having time with family, but others struggled, and many missed their friends despite technology.
- education - some children thrived with home learning and others couldn't wait to return to school. Many were worried about falling behind and the impact of COVID-19 on exams.
- anxiety and mental health were a strong theme – focusing on COVID-19 and the associated risks, school – peer pressure, falling behind, transition etc.
- activities – many children and young people enjoyed exercise and hobbies, but many families were anxious about going out after lockdown, to the shops, school etc. in case they caught COVID-19 or spread it amongst family.

## 2. How well did we do it?

The SSCP asked a range of agencies to complete a COVID-19 Recovery Questionnaire the findings of this survey are detailed below.

Most agencies reported that they were anticipating surges in activity as Surrey and the rest of the UK emerged from lockdown in July 2020. The majority of organisations RAG-rated their agency's readiness to mitigate anticipated surges. Four respondents rated their organisations as red. Two of these organisations were local charities which identified risks to funding which could not be managed. The District and Borough Councils' return identified financial risks and shared that plans were in place to monitor and manage local resources. Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) identified the financial costs related to pressures on bed placements and out of area placements. SABP outlined actions taken to mitigate these risks. Nine organisations gave themselves an amber rating and provided details of plans to address identified risks. Ten organisations rated themselves as green. One organisation did not provide a rating.

In terms of particular services expected to come under pressure, organisations/services included Domestic Abuse support services, Early Years provision, transport services to children with special educational needs, missing persons. Surrey Children's services and the Police both referred to delays in court proceedings and the backlog of open court cases. Children Services identified increases in Looked After Children cases and increased demand in Emergency Duty Team.

Other services expected to come under pressure also included support for vulnerable groups including Gypsy Roma and Traveller children, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Children in Care and Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) highlighted increasing demand for Bed Requests, Adult Mental Health Crisis and reflections on demand, presentations to Accident and Emergency Departments (A&E) continue to increase, increases in demand for tier 4 services,

136 suite<sup>3</sup> presentations, Referrals into Community, CAMHS, Children's Eating Disorder Services. Surrey Police expressed concern regarding the possible surge in violent and sexual offending post-lockdown

All agencies had a clear view of risk with plans in place to mitigate against the possibility of increased demand and other risks, but agencies' confidence in their ability to fully cover these risks was varied.

In relation to the sustainability of current arrangements, seventy five percent of respondents felt that these arrangements were not sustainable in the medium to long term and that additional support would be needed.

Fifty-two per cent of respondents (12 out of 23 responses to this question) had identified specific financial threats to services as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

What is clear from this snapshot of services is that all agencies have been impacted by COVID-19 and are working hard to respond effectively. There is a great deal of uncertainty and concern about the sustainability of arrangements to ensure service delivery and the financial impact for services during and post lockdown.

Key services to safeguard children and promote their welfare had plans in place to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The Executive continues to meet with key agencies to monitor the delivery of these plans in the interest of Surrey's children and young people. The COVID Recovery report was sent to the Local Resilience Forum so that system-leaders would remain sighted on the work of the SSCP and the key issues related to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare throughout the pandemic.

### Challenge activity

The SSCP worked closely with the Surrey Local Resilience Forum to ensure that they were sighted on issues affecting agencies who worked directly with children and families.

In addition, the Independent Chair and OPCC wrote jointly to the Secretary of State for Education, this letter was also sent to the Children's Minister on behalf of the SSCP, regarding the need for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and testing in Surrey's schools. The Independent Chair also worked with The Association of Safeguarding Professionals (TASP) to make representations to the Minister for Education regarding testing. The SSCP also wrote making representations to the Department of Education regarding increases in Elective Home Education (EHE) during the pandemic.

As noted above, EHE continues to be a significant concern for the Partnership during the successive lockdowns and the course of the pandemic. In previous years Surrey had approximately just over 1000 families who electively home educated their children. During the COVID-19, this number has risen sharply to approximately 1500 families in December 2020. This is a national issue and the SSCP and Partners are continuing to raise concerns and develop responses locally.

## 3. Is anyone better off?

The commitment of all agencies to prioritise the safeguarding of vulnerable children and families is also clear and has been demonstrated in each return. National organisations such as the

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<sup>3</sup> The Mental Health Act, Section 136 (s136) provides the police have the power to take you to a place of safety or keep you in a place of safety. The 136 suite is a place of safety with hospitals

Probation Service and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service had a higher level of confidence in the sustainability of their future plans; however, both organisations described how COVID-19 had impacted the way that services were delivered. As a result of the actions taken by key agencies the SSCP has good assurance that the majority of children in Surrey continue to be safeguarded during the pandemic. There are a minority of children who were placed at additional risk of Domestic Abuse and being adversely affected by poor parental mental health, and poor child and adolescent mental health. The SSCP have been assured that the C-SPA had robust processes in place to provide additional support.

As outlined above, the SSCP continues to be concerned about children and young people's emotional health and mental well-being. The Partnership is also concerned with the number of adolescents becoming looked after and are working to understand how we can support families more effectively. The SSCP is also concerned regarding the number of accidental injuries to pre-mobile infants and younger children. This is a national issue. The Child Death Review Team are undertaking a thematic review of Sudden and Unexpected Death's in Infancy (SUDI). This review will be presented to the Case Review Sub-Group in January 2021. The SSCP will also benchmark local practice against the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's review of sudden death in infancy, '**Out of routine: A review of sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) in families where the children are considered at risk of significant harm**' published in July 2020.

## 4. What are we going to do next? Action planning

The SSCP will continue to ensure that agencies work together to safeguard children and to promote their welfare throughout the pandemic. To achieve this, the Executive will continue to meet regularly to monitor the work being done and provide support and challenge to ensure that all organisations fulfil their responsibilities in relation to ensuring the safety and well-being of all Surrey's children and their families during COVID-19. The SSCP will also work with agencies to understand their risk assessments (including financial risk) that might impact on their ability to deliver services to children and families.

In particular the SSCP will:

- maintain oversight of critical areas including
  - domestic abuse
  - child and adolescent mental health and emotional well-being
  - support to families to ensure that younger children are safeguarded
  - support to adolescents who are on the edge of care
- seek assurance that all agencies ensure that their frontline staff have PPE and there are safer working guidelines available to all staff
- work with the Local Resilience Forum and its relevant cells to ensure that information and guidance regarding lock downs, key workers, vaccinations for staff is clear and accessible.
- seek assurance from all agencies that contingency and business continuity plans are in place to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on:
  - staff
  - service delivery
  - financial and other resources.

# Section 2:

SSCP performance in  
relation to its key  
priorities



**The SSCP Safeguarding Children Strategic plan identifies the key priorities for the continuing improvements to safeguard Surrey's children and young people and ensure that they are seen, safe and heard. The SSCP's priorities were agreed in September 2019, these were published as part of the Partnership Arrangements. The Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan was approved by the full Partnership in May 2020 and covers the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.**

In developing its priorities, the Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan aims to demonstrate its commitment to continuous improvement by ensuring that the plan builds on the work achieved in Surrey to date. The priorities identified in the strategic plan highlights the critical areas to which the SSCP will give conspicuous oversight in ensuring that each priority identifies the key actions to be taken by each agency in the SSCP. The Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan was developed and delivered in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the SSCP's response to the pandemic and its impact is highlighted within each priority as appropriate.

The Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan is monitored by the Executive Group, with exceptions being presented for review and resolution at each meeting of the Business Group. The Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan is aligned to the SSCP's Multi-Agency Quality Assurance Framework and its performance indicators. This ensures that there is a clear line of sight between the priorities of the Partnership and the work of each Sub-Group.

## **Priority one: thresholds and Early Help**

**Strategic Objective we will seek to ensure that there is a clear understanding of thresholds for different levels of intervention.**

Specifically the SSCP committed to the following actions:

- the SSCP will seek assurance regarding evidence that the understanding and application of thresholds is helping to keep children safe.
- ensuring that the C-SPA is responding to referrals effectively during the COVID 19 crisis
- the SSCP will seek to learn from Serious Case Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews which highlight circumstances where conventional application of thresholds may not be appropriate
- the SSCP will conduct a multi-agency audit on the quality of decision-making at referral and key stages in multi-agency intervention'.

### **1.What did we do?**

There is some assurance that there is increasing understanding of thresholds for support and intervention in Surrey. From 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 there were 7023 early help contacts into the Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA). In the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 this number was reduced to 3993. The Effective Family Resilience model was launched, and we were clearer as a partnership as to who we needed to work with and how. This was as a result of the introduction of the C-SPA and a new approach to managing referrals and contacts including greater clarity of referrals with the Police.

As outlined in section one of this report, on the SSCP's actions in response to COVID-19, we saw an increase in contacts to the C-SPA during lockdown and throughout the pandemic we have seen a similar increase in referrals to social care. We have been assured that the C-SPA is responding to referrals effectively during the COVID 19 crisis

The SSCP has worked closely with Partners to review and update the Effective Family Resilience Model so that it takes account of the fact that there are circumstances where conventional application of thresholds may not be appropriate and other forms of multi-agency support and intervention are required. We have updated and approved the SSCP Escalation Procedure so that a clear process is in place to ensure that professionals remain child focused and are able to come to a resolution as quickly as possible.

## 2. How well did we do it?

To more clearly understand the effectiveness of decision making in relation to early help and thresholds, the Learning From Practice Sub-Group conducted a multi-agency audit into the effectiveness of decision making and thresholds within Child Protection Conferences.

We received 88 returns from 100 children chosen within this cohort. Case numbers were provided from the Performance Team. Of those children, completed numbers were as follows:

- Police audited 25 cases
- Surrey Children's Services (SCS) audited 23 cases
- health audited 26 cases
- education audited 14 cases; there were 11 cases where there was no involvement from Education

The findings from this audit tell us that we need to get better at completing early help assessments. Early help assessments were completed in only 33% of relevant cases. We are getting better at presenting clear reasons for referral; this is evident in approximately 80% of relevant cases. A significant number of cases gave evidence of historical involvement.

The audit found that by the nature of some family's complex needs, there will inevitably be children who return to Level 4 services despite previous interventions, but if services are effective this will be a small minority. The information from this sample suggests that children are returning to Level 3-4 services due to a lack of addressing the key safeguarding issues within previous involvements.

### Surrey Police Early Help pilot

The pilot took place between 15 June to 15 September, Woking and Surrey Heath have piloted an early help approach in their respective neighbourhood policing teams. The aims of the pilot were to:

- reduce risk of child emerging into exploitation
- reduce childhood demand
- identify and address the needs of children who experience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma.

The pilot identified 3 main entry routes to this approach:

1. A child recognised by Surrey County Council as emerging risk of exploitation – level 2 or 3.
2. A child in the top 5 of children causing the most demand on policing in that borough.
3. Referral through the C-SPA with ACEs / Trauma informed indicators – screened through the early help co-ordinator .

In each of the 11 boroughs in Surrey Police, the neighbourhood team was involved in researching the crime or incidents which have occurred in the previous 24 hours. This provided the police with opportunities to identify cases for early help, using ACEs as a guide and to highlight to partners including schools, the opportunity to provide support.

The pilot found that the Early Help Offer is not always clear to partner agencies or social work teams and the challenge remains to ensure that this is fully understood and effective.<sup>4</sup>

The pilot also found that Surrey has a well-resourced front door and good range of early help services. There are remaining questions regarding early help and safeguarding, for instance, how strong is targeted Early Help/family support services that work intensively with families just below the social work (level 4) threshold? A related question is how strong is the CIN offer in Surrey.<sup>5</sup> It is expected that these questions will be resolved in the next period of SSCP activity.

### 3. Is anyone better off?

The Police Early Help Pilot provided the following example of positive impact

A 16-year-old male, who was using drugs and violence as well as being engaged in low level crime (bike thefts) to fund his drug use. This young person was not attending school and there was evidence that he was being exploited. There was also concern that he was at risk of further criminal and antisocial behaviour as well as call outs for domestic abuse at his home address. In addition, he was on the top 5 list of children at risk as well as a nominal on the criminal exploitation list. Given the severity of the problem solving needed he was allocated to the Youth Engagement Officers (YEO) team to support and problem solve. After numerous unsuccessful attempts at engagement, the YEO / Child Exploitation and Missing Unit (CEMU) joint team approach slowly built a rapport with him over time. Expectations were set from an early stage. Recognising the problems, and by establishing a rapport, they were able to secure his agreement to work with them. As a result they were able to help him move away from the 'friends' that were negative influences. He is now living in a separate part of the country with a family member. The YEO has visited him and with this positive relationship, he has since ceased his involvement in criminal behaviour and stopped abusing drugs; he has now enrolled in college.

### 4. What are we going to do next? Action planning

We know from audits and reports to the SSCP that frontline multi-agency practice that the Team Around Family and Lead Professional role needs to be strengthened. We also know that early help assessments need to be joined up so that there is a complete picture of a family's needs and a clear, multi-agency support plan in place which is regularly reviewed with the family and practitioners who are supporting them. We also know that we are not yet at a place where there is a shared understanding and consistent application of thresholds across Surrey. The work with regards to early help and thresholds needs to be strengthened and early help and thresholds will remain an area of focus during 2021-2022.

<sup>4</sup> December 2019 Commissioner visit

<sup>5</sup> Surrey stocktake Essex feedback September 2020

## Strategic developments to support Early Help

### Helping Families Early Strategy

The launch of the Helping Families Early Strategy was delayed by the pandemic but went live on 3 November 2020 through a Webinar which was attended by in excess of 170 people. The strategy is supported by Family Resilience Networks in each of the quadrants. These Networks meet at least quarterly and SSCP will receive a quarterly report on the progress of the strategy. All four quadrants have now hosted their first Network which have been well attended with representatives from a ranged of agencies across the sector. Throughout 2021-2022, the SSCP will seek evidence and assurance that this work is embedded and that this strategy is making a difference in providing effective support and early help to families.

### Family Safeguarding Model

In Surrey, the Family Safeguarding Model brings together under one roof all the professionals needed to help children. The specialist workers for domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health expertise have now joined the teams, and the model represents a shift to more multi-disciplinary case discussions and have new tools to support direct work with children and their families. Motivational Interviewing techniques are key to this practice model and the training offer has continued over the last few months with a new rollout being planned for SCC staff and partners during 2021.

Through its audit and quality assurance work, the SSCP has identified a range of legacy cases which illustrate some of the difficulties and professional tensions involved in threshold decisions. An audit was commissioned to explore the learning from these legacy cases with a view to informing improvements in the multi-agency understanding of levels of need and the application of thresholds for support and intervention.

As a multi-agency partnership there is a need to further improve our work in relation to early help and thresholds so that we are able to provide good evidence of a shared multi-agency understanding of needs, thresholds and pathways for support. We want to ensure that the Partnership is able to evidence consistency and transparency in the application of thresholds, so that decisions regarding thresholds are truly multi-agency and are in the best interests of children and families. The SSCP has also identified the need to improve the quality of professional challenge and escalation in cases where it is necessary to agree solutions that work for children and their families.

The aim of this work is that the SSCP is able to demonstrate effective multi-agency working and this includes improving the quality of early help assessments and strengthening practice around the Lead Professional Role and Team Around Family processes. The SSCP will seek assurance from all agencies that this work, including the Helping Families Early Strategy and the Family Safeguarding Model, is making a difference for children and families. Early Help and Thresholds for support will continue to be one of our key priorities for 2021 to 2022 where we will seek to further improve and embed the effectiveness of multi-agency practice.

## Priority two: neglect

Under the published partnership arrangements for Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership neglect has been identified as a key priority. This acknowledges that although responding to neglect is considered core safeguarding business, it also requires additional cohesive multi-agency responses, strategy, planning, scrutiny and oversight.

# 1.What did we do?

Through the work of the Neglect Sub-Group, we launched the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) as Surrey's assessment framework in cases of neglect. The goal is to equip the multi-agency children's workforce in Surrey with a clear practice tool for assessment and action in cases of suspected and actual neglect. The GCP2 is an assessment tool which helps practitioners measure the quality of care that a child is receiving. This tool has been developed and evaluated by the NSPCC and they have found it to be effective in helping identify whether a child is at risk of neglect.

A plan was developed to implement the GCP2 across Surrey. This implementation plan has moved forward. A project manager has also been recruited to oversee the multi-agency implementation and embedding of the GCP2. In addition, a GCP2 Project Board has been set up and has held its initial meeting. The Project Board will work closely with the Children's Workforce Academy to offer further GCP2 training to increase the number of staff being trained in the effective use of the tool.

# 2.How well did we do it?

## The neglect self-evaluation

A template was devised based on learning and findings from the report which followed the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) on Neglect which was published in 2017. The multi-agency self-assessment of neglect had a strong response from statutory services and agencies from the Third Sector.

Areas of positive practice and developing identified by agencies in the self-evaluation included increasing consideration of the voice of children. There was evidence that Neglect Champions were in place in key agencies. There was clear organisational accountability and commitment to addressing neglect. Agencies provided evidence that training, and supervision included a 'Think Family' approach. It was also clear from the self-assessment that neglect awareness is understood as a key priority area. There were examples of improving C-SPA and MAP responses and successful escalation processes (informal and formal). In addition, there was good multi-agency representation at CIN meetings and Core Groups and evidence of improved communication at step down. The self-evaluation returns also show evidence of commitment to the Family Safeguarding Model and Pilot for GCP2. Finally, there was evidence of a reduction in the number of re-referrals for neglect.

The self-evaluation also identified a number of areas where further focus is required. There was evidence of the need for move towards a consistent understanding of cumulative harm as a result of on-going neglect rather than incident led responses. There was also a need for improved inter-agency communication and multi-agency interpretation of thresholds. Multi-agency information sharing was cited as both a strength and a cause for concern. The self-evaluation highlighted the need for a more consistent use of chronologies and scope for a multi-agency chronology and pro-forma. All agencies needed to improve their understanding of adolescent neglect. The need for a neglect specific supervision training offer, which strengthened identification and challenges over optimism, superficial assessment, drift and supports and empowers practitioners was also highlighted. There was also a need for the C-SPA to provide consistent feedback to referrers. The self-evaluation also demonstrated the need for clear Neglect Indicators/Typology and the need to refresh the SSCP's neglect strategy.

This self-evaluation tells us that multi-agency practice in relation to recognising and assessing cases of neglect shows some signs of improvement. However, the message coming from the self-evaluation and local case reviews is that there is more work to be done. Evidence from case reviews and audits tell us that our collective response to neglect is too variable and not sufficiently robust.

### 3. Is anyone better off?

Child neglect has been a concern in Surrey for some time and there has been a great deal of activity to address neglect in all its forms; however, there is insufficient focus on the impact of our actions on improving multi-agency practice and ensuring that fewer children in Surrey experience neglect. We also know that, in cases where neglect is identified as a factor, our response is not consistently effective. As a safeguarding Partnership we are clear that multi-agency practice in relation to neglect needs to improve. We also need to focus more on improved outcomes for children and young people.

### 4. What are we going to do next?

In 2021-2022 we will seek to further develop our strategic response to neglect; we will also seek to evidence that the work we have done is having an impact in ensuring that children who experience neglect or who are at risk of being neglected receive effective help and support to ensure that they are safeguarded. Also we will seek to embed the GCP2 across Surrey. To achieve this we will ensure that the GCP2 Board maintains oversight of the quality of multi-agency practice in relation to neglect, focusing on addressing the areas for development highlighted in the self-evaluation.

The SSCP's neglect strategy is being reviewed and will be approved and implemented in 2021. We will also be seeking to communicate and implement the updated neglect strategy and will carefully monitor how this is embedded across all agencies through an agreed quality assurance framework. The work of the Graded Care Profile II Project Board will be key in ensuring that this work is embedded. Neglect will continue to be one of our key priorities in 2021-2022.

## Priority three: domestic abuse

The SSCP is determined to improve practice in safeguarding children in families where domestic abuse takes place. The SSCP aimed to ensure that there was a clear, agreed multi-agency approach to responding to domestic abuse, which safeguarded children, supported victims/survivors and held perpetrators to account.

### 1. What did we do?

Domestic Abuse is led by Healthy Surrey which is overseen by the Health and Well-Being Board and Community Safety Team. There is a good multi-agency approach to Domestic Abuse which includes, statutory services, universal services and Third Sector organisations across Surrey. There is also a Domestic Abuse Executive Group which collectively commissions and oversees the work related to Domestic Abuse. The Domestic Abuse Management Board oversees multi-agency practice.

Members of the SSCP Executive met with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Nicole Jacobs, to discuss Domestic Abuse in Surrey and the implications of the Domestic Abuse Bill; the focus of this discussion was to share with partners an understanding of what good practice in cases of domestic abuse looks like.

Domestic Abuse and our collective response are regularly discussed at a range of SSCPs safeguarding forums and networks. To help understand instances of domestic abuse and the multi-agency response, a dashboard and dataset with a narrative was submitted by health providers; this focused on safeguarding during COVID-19. As a result of this work by the Surrey Wide CCG Safeguarding team, there is good assurance that key safeguarding priorities, such as domestic abuse, are being focused on within health.

The Surrey Children's Workforce Academy offers a variety of Domestic Abuse training and workshops including:

- Domestic Abuse: Understanding the Multi-Agency Approach (One day)
- Domestic Abuse: Safely Engaging with Perpetrators (One day)
- Domestic Abuse: Working with Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (Two days)
- Domestic Abuse: Legal Framework (Half day)
- Domestic Abuse within the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual & Transgender Population (Half day).

This training is advertised widely throughout the partnership. The training also includes learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), the SSCP's thematic review of SCRs and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). Each workshop is evaluated to give an indication of how learning will be put into practice. The Surrey Children's Academy offers a free 30 minute e-learning course on domestic abuse via the [MeLearning](#) platform. The full training framework, including available courses and booking information, is available on the Surrey Against Domestic Abuse webpages here: <https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/domestic-abuse/professionals/awareness-training>. The training programme also focuses on the DHR process and learning from DHRs.

Both the partnership managers of the Safeguarding Adults Board and SSCP are now members of the DHR Oversight Board. There is also SSCP representation at the Domestic Abuse Management Board and the Domestic Abuse Executive.

The Terms of Reference of the DHR Oversight Board has been strengthened to include the link with the Safeguarding Boards and the relationship between case reviews.

As part of the action plan for the Oversight Group there is a bespoke piece of work to improve the join up between the case reviews. This includes:

- developing early alerts between all parties involved to when there is a DHR which might need Adult and or Children Service's involvement and likewise when a case reviews has evidence of Domestic Abuse and therefore might constitute a DHR.
- improving the guidance and toolkits to better show how the reviews link together
- getting some national guidance on joint reviews
- improving the recommendations that relate to Adults and Children's Services.

Ongoing workstreams on Domestic Abuse include looking at perpetrators, early intervention and health e.g. Domestic Abuse support as part of the Family Safeguarding model, introducing Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) in Surrey's acute hospital settings, the opening of a Domestic Abuse refuge, and a commitment to extend the funding for this project for a further two years.

Early help/C-SPA report the positive affect of having Domestic Abuse Workers co-located in the C-SPA. This has supported the effectiveness in triaging cases so that the correct level of support is offered. In COVID-19, this has moved to virtual/online support. A bid was submitted in October 2020 to the Transformation Support Unit to make this a permanent feature and have 2

Domestic Abuse workers in the C-SPA. This would strengthen the front door and help with the anticipated surge of Domestic Abuse referrals until Nov 2021. The C-SPA handle more than 30% of referrals relating to Domestic Abuse. The C-SPA receive between 1031 to 1760 SCARFs from the Police on a monthly basis, this represents 44% of C-SPA work.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the SSCP has maintained careful oversight of cases of domestic abuse where there are children in the households. A survey of third sector organisations during COVID identified how Domestic Abuse organisations were adapting their plans and activities to continue to support families during COVID-19. A report on the voice of children and young people reported during COVID-19 has been circulated widely across the partnership.

As noted above, an additional refuge opened during COVID-19 supported by Reigate and Banstead and YourSanctuary. [East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services \(ESDAS\)](#), circulated a briefing by the Chief Executive for partners. This briefing contained advice and information to support parents/carers and families in keeping people safe from domestic abuse and preventing homicide as a result of Domestic Abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns. The SSCP supports and oversees progress in this work through Third Sector Forum meetings and agenda planning.

The SSCP has worked closely with colleagues from Surrey Police and Public Health to ensure that there is a good multi-agency awareness across Surrey regarding coercive control and Clare's Law. In March 2020 at the Full Partnership meeting, the SSCP received a presentation from the High Harm Perpetrator Unit (HHPU) regarding Stalking Protection Orders.

The learning from SCRs and other reviews is shared across Surrey so that there is a good understanding of Clare's Law and coercive control.

The Case Review Panel Sub-Group has delivered workshops to cascade learning from the thematic review of Surrey SCRs from 2016 to 2020. Evaluations from this event provides an indication of how learning will be put into practice. As a result of the learning from recent SCRs, children in families where there is domestic abuse should be better protected from harm. There has also been some useful discussions and feedback around the impact of the new Domestic Abuse Bill at Health Safeguarding Forum meetings. Organisations have agreed to assess the impact by completing the pro-forma. Feedback to the CCGs will be analysed and where gaps are identified support and guidance will be provided. It has been agreed at the Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum that domestic abuse will feature highly in its work for 2020/21 due to the cumulative impact of lockdown on the children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse.

## 2.How well did we do it?

Our collective response to domestic abuse is improving. However, the evidence from local and national Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) is that there is more work to do. An analysis of the recommendations coming out of 70 local DHRs highlighted the following themes<sup>6</sup> for improvement:

- the need for research informed approaches and response to domestic homicides
- system capability to focus resources to provide appropriate support/responses
- assessment of risk

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<sup>6</sup> Domestic Homicide Reviews Oversight Group Update December 2020



- recording and information sharing
- the need for training and improved awareness of domestic abuse and adult vulnerability
- the need to develop specific policies.

### 3. Is anyone better off?

As a result of the work that is being done in relation to domestic abuse, the SSCP has assurance there is a coordinated response to Domestic Abuse.

The Partnership has assurance that learning is shared across all agencies in relation to SCRs, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and DHRs where Domestic Abuse is a significant factor.

All acute hospitals for example, Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust ensure that maternity services have an e-system in place that asks at each ante/post-natal consultation about Domestic Abuse/ partner involvement.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are regular local meetings to discuss how to help domestic abuse victims, aged 16 or over, at high risk of murder or serious harm. The work of the MARAC is overseen by the Domestic Abuse Management Board. The MARAC considers the victim, the family including children and perpetrators, the meeting shares information and develops plans to reduce risk. There are a number of criteria used to determine whether a case should be referred to MARAC including: DASH risk assessment score, visible high risk, professional judgement, potential escalation, harmful traditional practices and repeat cases.

MARACs also employ disruption tools and powers on the perpetrator with the aim of reducing offending behaviour and supporting associated criminal justice processes as required for example: Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Claire's Law), non-molestation and occupation orders, prevention of harassment orders, Domestic Violence Prevention Notices (DVPNs), Domestic Violence Prevention Orders (DVPOs) and Stalking Protection Orders.

### 4. What are we going to do next? Action planning

Surrey County Council and Surrey Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) submitted a successful bid and will therefore have the opportunity to work with SafeLives who will provide strategic support in developing and implementing a clear and ambitious local perpetrator strategy, including support to develop business cases and identifying funding options for perpetrator interventions.

The Domestic Abuse Executive Group endorsed the roll out of Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVAs) across the Surrey's A&E settings as part of the 'Recovery Phase' to Covid-19. The IDVA's will be based in A&E settings and will be working across the Trust for example in the Maternity and Paediatric departments. The programme team are working with the following Trusts to implement IDVAs: Epsom Hospital, Royal Surrey Community Hospital, Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust and Ashford and St Peter's Hospital. Frimley Park Hospital have already commissioned this service, and therefore, will not require the same level of support from the programme team. However, the programme team will be working closely with Frimley to ensure the same delivery of services and shared outcomes.

The Partnership is developing a **readiness assessment in preparation for the new Domestic Abuse Bill** which will impose significant new responsibilities on the public sector.

The new coercive control workstream is jointly chaired by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Children's Academy but ensuring that there are links to the adult world as well. The terms of reference have been developed and membership reviewed to ensure we get those involved that can really make a difference to survivors.

SCC Commissioners met with our Refuge Partners to agree on a collaborative approach on how Surrey's Refuge Needs Analysis will be carried out. Findings from the Community Impact Assessment will also feed into this project, together with the Safe Accommodation part of the DA Bill to ensure that this whole area of work is joined-up.

## Priority four: contextual safeguarding

### 1. What did we do?

The SSCP will work to increase our understanding of contextual safeguarding and related risks across all agencies.

Statutory guidance ***Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*** and ***Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)*** now make reference to and provide a definition of Contextual Safeguarding. This has supported a conceptual framework for the multi-agency understanding of contextual safeguarding and supports agencies with assessing and reducing the risk of harm from outside the family home.

***Working Together 2018*** notes,

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse, or exploitation from outside their families. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and influence of extremism leading to radicalisation.<sup>7</sup>

***Keeping Children Safe In Education 2020*** states,

**All** staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. **All** staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.<sup>8</sup>

Surrey's approach to Contextual Safeguarding is based on research and extensive trials in multi-agency safeguarding hubs, led by Dr Carlene Firmin, Principal Research Fellow, University of Bedfordshire.

Surrey is continuing to develop a strategic, multi-agency response to adolescent safeguarding which includes research and data analysis to enable agencies to better understand the risk profiles of children and of those who exploit them within the extra-familial context.

<sup>7</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), paragraph 33

<sup>8</sup> Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020), paragraph 21, p.8

## Contextual Safeguarding working group

A multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding working group has been established, which meets monthly and is attended by key partners from the children's workforce.

Representatives from Surrey Police attended the Bedfordshire University training on Contextual Safeguarding to enable a detailed understanding of the contextual dynamics of extra-familial harm and how these interact with adolescent development. The aim of this training was to develop experience of using 'Context Weighting' activities to assess the welfare of young people at risk of harm beyond their homes and to understand and be able to describe the core features of a Contextual Safeguarding approach. This training will also enable agencies to have experience of using key resources from the Contextual Safeguarding network to support the development of responses to extra-familial harm and to be able to identify opportunities for implementing a Contextual Safeguarding approach in Surrey.

Surrey is continuing to develop its approach to Contextual Safeguarding beginning with Early intervention and Safeguarding through the work of the family safeguarding teams Targeted Youth Support and Safeguarding Adolescents Teams. Surrey also works closely with the Community Safety Partnerships in each district and borough, using Community Harm and Risk Management Meetings, Joint Action Groups, and in Licensing processes to think and act contextually. In addition, we work closely with Parents and carers and with education settings including schools, pupil referral units, and alternative provision.

Surrey is committed to disruption of exploitation and enforcement of the law including the prosecution of perpetrators. In order to support this work, the Police have dedicated child exploitation and missing units within each Division, there are active investigations on each case where a child is identified as experiencing exploitation, all children offered Single Point of Contact, there is effective sharing of partnership intelligence and information and there are in place Districts and Boroughs joint action groups.

The SSCP is working hard to ensure effective integration and closer working by reduce the amount of silo across services. We are developing our Trauma-informed approach with a recognition of the role and impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and ensuring that there is a multi-agency understanding of the lived experience of children and their families.

As highlighted above, the SSCP is continuing to learn from research and the analysis of local data by working to ensure that all agencies recognise and intervene at 'teachable moments' (such as point of arrest, presentation at A&E departments and with children who are at edge of school exclusion).

## 2. How well did we do it?

What is the quality and impact of safeguarding – auditing.

The evidence from current practice is that our work in relation to contextual safeguarding is developing. There are some examples of good practice, and practitioners in Children's services, Health, Education and the Police are growing in their understanding of adolescent vulnerability including trauma informed approaches and our collective understanding of ACEs. However, it is also clear that this work needs to be developed and embedded across all key agencies in Surrey.

There is good evidence that our developing approach to contextual safeguarding is making a difference in keeping children safe. This evidence includes:

- a growing awareness and understanding of contextual approaches to safeguarding adolescents
- increasing examples of good multi-agency practice of safeguarding adolescents in contexts beyond the family and home
- we are beginning to map areas/contexts of risks and vulnerability
- we are now able to identify when children and young people are at risk and have a profile of local vulnerability.

### 3. Is anyone better off?

#### CASE STUDY: Operation Hillmead

Operation Hillmead relates to child sexual exploitation that is suspected to have occurred at the Travelodge at Woking.

In October 2019 four females were found in a Woking hotel. Two of these females were 18 years of age and believed to be the hooks<sup>9</sup> and two other girls were aged 15-years-old. It was suspected that sexual activity was taking place in the hotel room and drug packages being passed within the hotel. Operation Hillmead uncovered that a number of other hotels were being used. The operation investigated the criminal exploitation (drug running/ fraud) alongside sexual exploitation.

In terms of outcomes nine suspects were arrested and eleven victims identified and supported. This was an example of effective joint working between the Police child exploitation and missing unit, Children's Services, Libertas Children's home, the Hotel Chain Representative, the Woking Safer Neighbourhood team, Woking Council, Education providers, and colleagues from Health. Ongoing support to safeguard children included frequent complex multi-agency strategy meetings to oversee the safeguarding and disruption plan.

### 4. What are we going to do next? Action planning

In Surrey we want to embed a culture of understanding about the complexity of Safeguarding Adolescents where we identify adolescents as children first and we understand the developmental needs of adolescents. We also want to ensure that we understand the needs and risks for adolescents with SEND and understand the range of influences in adolescents' lives, including those outside the family context. In doing this, we will maintain a focus on the risks that adolescents are exposed to in contexts outside the family, and that we respond with the right kinds of conversations and the right actions at the right time; we will also consider the positive and negative impact of risks adolescents take in exploring their growing independence. As a Partnership, we want to ensure that we value the diverse range of experiences of adolescents across Surrey and respond to the needs of adolescents of all genders, ethnicities, sexual identities and beliefs.

To achieve this vision we will work with all agencies to consider the multi-faceted issues of adolescent development and safeguarding and respond to these issues in a comprehensive way. We will also work together to respond to peer networks, pull factors, and the influence of

<sup>9</sup> Usually younger attractive males or influential females who have the ability to impress potential victims with money, lifestyle etc. before passing the victim on to others.

individuals and groups that cause harm to adolescents and can lead them to make choices that increase the risks they are exposed to. We will ensure that all agencies act to reduce the gender bias reinforced by traditional approaches, particularly around harmful sexual behaviour, child sexual exploitation and gangs. The SSCP also aims to respond effectively to the needs of adolescents with SEND who may be at a higher risk of abuse due to physical frailty, early levels of communication, a lack of understanding of social boundaries, or limited sense of agency and/or self-esteem.

In developing our approach to safeguarding adolescents, we will also work to respond to the risk factors that can have negative impacts on adolescent outcomes including substance use, negative social media use, and poor mental health issues. We will do this through the provision of a consistent and flexible practice framework and workforce development plan that creates a culture shift in the way we deliver services for adolescents. We will also support practitioners across thresholds and disciplines to be brave and innovative, to hold and manage risk, and to eliminate language and responses that blame and stigmatise adolescents.

In response to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report on criminal exploitation, *It Was Hard To Escape*<sup>10</sup>, the SSCP has developed a self-evaluation tool which has been sent to all agencies. The tool identifies key learning points which includes:

1. **problem identification**
2. **supporting your staff**
3. **service design and practice development**
4. **quality assurance.**

The SSCP Executive will use the returns from this self-assessment tool to benchmark current understanding and practice in relation to criminal exploitation in Surrey. The self-evaluation tool is due to be completed by key agencies by 31 January 2021.

## Priority five: emotional well-being and CAMHS

### 1. What did we do?

The SSCP recognises that there has been a lot of work undertaken during 2019/20 to redesign and recommission services to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health. Mobilisation of the new service model has started and will continue throughout 2020/21. The new service model includes use of the Thrive framework to ensure that all agencies focus on promoting children and young people's resilience and are aware of the support that is available for emerging, mild and moderate mental health difficulties (with clinical CAMHS focussed on helping those with severe and enduring mental health problems). The new contract includes significant additional investment in early intervention services so that children and young people are not left without support when they do not reach the threshold for clinical CAMHS help.

The Emotional Wellbeing Mental Health Strategy for Children and Young People in Surrey was developed in February 2019 and was updated in early 2020. The ambitions outlined in the Emotional Well-Being Mental Health Strategy are as follows:

- to develop a new **culture** around children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health that promotes resilience, whilst ensuring access to specialist services when needed.

<sup>10</sup> [The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel - It was hard to escape - report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914247/Child-Safeguarding-Practice-Review-Panel-It-was-hard-to-escape-report.pdf)

- to develop how we **support** children and young people with their emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- to develop appropriate emotional wellbeing and mental health **services** for children and young people.

The Strategy will be reviewed in 2022.

The SSCP has played an active role in informing and influencing the recommissioning of the CAMHS. This has included high level challenge from the SSCP Executive regarding the sufficiency and timeliness of services to children and young people. The SSCP has also worked with commissioners and key stakeholders to ensure that they were fully sighted on the learning coming out of serious case reviews, local child safeguarding practice reviews and scoping reports for Rapid Reviews. This work includes ensuring that the recommissioning of the new CAMHS contract includes the learning and recommendations emerging from these reviews.

In September 2020, the SSCP published a Thematic Review of Adolescent Suicide in Surrey. The thematic review was completed in partnership with the Child Death Review Team. The thematic review included analysis of key themes and learning from the suicides of 12 young people from 2014 to 2020. The review found that:

- 92% of parents included in the review were aware of the (ACES) including trauma
- over two thirds of the young people were adolescent boys
- 58% were diagnosed with attention deficit disorder or autistic spectrum disorder
- 50% of the young people who were considered in the review were known to children's social care
- 45% were accessing CAMHS at the time of their death
- 50% of the young people were using social media in a way that caused concern
- 33% of the young people had medication started or increased within a month previous to their death
- 25% of the children included in the review were accessing privately funded therapeutic services
- 8% of the children included in the review did not meet CAMHS' thresholds for support.

The Thematic Review has been shared across all key agencies and strategic groups in Surrey including the Health and Well-Being Board, Safeguarding Adults Board, the CCG, Surrey Police. In addition, the Case Review Panel has delivered workshops to cascade learning from the suicide thematic review and a SSCP Suicide Prevention Toolbox<sup>11</sup> has now been published on the SSCP website, which contains multi-agency resources to help prevent suicide and support partners/Carers, Children/Young People and practitioners dealing with critical situations. The evaluation forms will give an indication of how learning will be put into practice. The Thematic Review is supported by an action plan which seeks to ensure that the recommendations of the review are implemented across Surrey. The Thematic Review Action Plan is closely monitored by the Case Review Panel Sub-Group.

As a result of the learning from several cases involving probable suicide by adolescents, the potential risks for vulnerable young people should be better managed resulting in fewer such cases in Surrey and elsewhere if the learning is shared on the NSPCC site.

A Mental Health and Wellbeing Task and Finish group has been set up. There are discussions regarding how the £158,000 given to the local authorities can be used to embed the mental

<sup>11</sup> [Surrey Safeguarding Partnership Toolbox December 2020](#)

health toolkit across Surrey; this work includes looking at building additional capacity into frontline mental health practitioners in terms of a phoneline. The Third Sector is looking into providing cover in different localities. This is work in progress at the Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum (SESF).

The Primary Mental Health Team have increased their presence with and in schools from the beginning of term and are offering consultations, direct assessments and short-term treatments through a revised pathway. Training packages are now available online for schools. As part of the 'Emotional Wellbeing Return to School' COVID Grant, Primary Mental Health Teams (PMHTs) will be working closely with colleagues from other targeted and universal services to deliver specific online training for schools around emotional wellbeing.

Early Intervention Locality Meetings have started and are supporting new ways of working with colleagues in universal and targeted services. This work is already being praised by the wider system and education for providing more joined up ways of working and linking up of school-based support in each area.

Surrey Heath and Surrey Heartlands have been successful in their bid to host 3 Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in Surrey. These teams can offer early intervention mental health support to parents of primary and secondary aged children and directly with secondary aged young people with mild mental health problems. They will also work closely with the school staff to embed the 'Whole School Approach' Training for the teams will be provided by Sussex University from mid-November and then to start their training in the school setting in early 2021. Each team will work with a small number of schools initially and then gradually increase to serve up to 8,000 primary and secondary children.

The Partnership is working with all relevant agencies to seek assurance that each agency has in place an effective agency response to adolescent mental health, self-harm and suicide prevention. In order to do this, the SSCP is in a process of developing a self-harm protocol which will be signed off and implemented in early 2021.

The SSCP has worked with the Children's Workforce Academy to ensure that Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Responses are part of all relevant multi-agency training. We are assured that an understanding of ACES and Trauma Informed Responses is being embedded across all agencies including Surrey Children's Services, the Children's Single Point of Access, Education, the CCG, Surrey Police.

The new Early Intervention Funding (EIF) was launched in April 2020 and is managed by the Early Years Governance Panel, which is made up of multi-disciplinary professionals from Education and Health teams. The funding is a supplement of Early Years Funded Entitlement and is designed to address the barriers to young children reaching their full potential. This includes special educational needs and disabilities as well as environmental factors such as early trauma and social and economic deprivation. The funding can be used to enhance the staff ratio, to provide training for the workforce, to support transitions into school and for other specific interventions all of which are focused on closing the attainment gap between the most disadvantaged and their peers.

As outlined in section two and throughout this report, the SSCP has worked closely with key agencies to seek assurance that there is a package of support to children and young people whose emotional and mental health have been adversely affected by COVID-19. COVID-19 Education Recovery cells have fed into the key areas of work of the Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum.

## 2. How well did we do it?

From the report of activity, it is clear that during 2019 to 2020 a great deal of work has been undertaken to ensure that the support for children and young people with emotional and mental health challenges is appropriate, timely and effective. Much of this work has been focused on working with commissioners on the commissioning of the new contract for CAMHS. The SSCP acknowledges that there has been a significant amount of good work to support CAMHS needs across Surrey. We are also aware that nationally CAMHS are facing increasing pressure on limited resources. The waiting times for children and young people to access higher tier services is too long and this also accords with the national picture.

Our work this year has shown that the current CAMHS contract does not meet the needs of Surrey's children who need support:

- thresholds and support pathways are not understood
- the response to children and families is too variable
- there is not a shared understanding of risk and children and families do not receive a timely response to requests for support.

The SSCP have raised these concerns with commissioners and providers.

## 3. Is anyone better off?

There is strong evidence that mental health and well-being are areas of priority across all agencies. In addition, there is a greater understanding of the need for effective and timely support to ensure the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people in Surrey. Through reporting via commissioning of our Mental Health Services, and local learning reviews, alongside a similar national picture, the SSCP remains concerned that we are still not consistently getting it right for children suffering mental health issues. Still too many children do not receive the support they need in a timely way. Practitioners and providers share with us some examples of good practice, and some children receive good outcomes from interventions. However, the system is not able to report on this effectively and still too many children do not receive the support they need.

We have worked with children and families to ensure that their voices and concerns have been fully considered in the commissioning of the new CAMHS contract to be delivered from 1 April 2021.

The SSCP remains concerned regarding the efficacy and timeliness of support to children and young people who present with acute mental health needs. We are also concerned regarding the increasing numbers of children who are presenting with eating disorders, self-harm and suicidal ideation. There is growing evidence nationally and through local reports that COVID-19 has exacerbated these forms of harm and it is essential that we further develop and embed robust multi-agency responses, which address all levels of need and harm as a result of mental ill-health in children and young people. The SSCP has raised this concern with commissioners and providers and will prioritise this area of work for 2021-2022.

## 4. What are we going to do next? Action planning

The SSCP will continue to work with Commissioners and providers to ensure that arrangements are in place to monitor the effectiveness and the delivery of the new contract.

The emotional and mental health and well-being of adolescents including well-being online continues to be a priority for the partnership. Throughout 2021-2022 we will give focus on the



work being done across all agencies to ensure that children's emotional health and well-being is supported; this includes ensuring that there are pathways of support which are aligned to the Effective Family Resilience Model and offers timely and appropriate support at every level of need.

## Priority six: children with SEN and disabilities

Our concern is that we are not confident about capacity, access, timeliness and consistent quality of opportunity. It was agreed that there would be a review of the whole pathway for Children with Disabilities to ensure that the child's welfare and safeguarding is incorporated at all stages by all services.

### 1. What did we do?

The SEND transformation programme Reset in July 2019 to underpin delivery of the SEND strategy, owned by Surrey SEND System Partnership. This work was informed by exploratory work with families and services to identify the state of the system. Building the foundations of a strong system, the focus has been on:

- improving both culture and behaviours
- restoring trust between agencies
- improving relationships with families.

The SEND Prevention and Early Help Pathway has been reviewed and improved to ensure that children's SEND needs are identified and responded to early, that support is received at the point of need and that families are equipped with all relevant information and tools. In addition, health, schools, early years settings and the local authority share responsibility for providing support; also educational settings have been equipped with capacity, knowledge and skills to deliver a graduated response.

In relation to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP), the focus has been on working alongside families to improve children's outcomes. In addition, this work included improving the effectiveness of multi-agency decision-making and practice with an increased focus on ensuring value for money through effectively navigating and managing the provider market. The purpose of this work is to ensure that children with SEND are able to effectively engage in education. The Surrey SEND System Partnership has ensured that the SEND pathways are aligned to the Effective Family Resilience Model so that the SEND pathway delivers an appropriate level of support whilst maintaining focus on resilience and independence for both child and family, there is also a stronger process for early identification of need. There is now in place a means for ensuring that the system is effective in helping schools continue to develop the capacity and skills required to embed the graduated response.

### 2. How well did we do it? and 3. Is anyone better off?

The SEND Partnership has strengthened the system through regular meetings and focussed mini workshops. As a result, the timeliness of new EHCPs has improved steadily to 76% in July 2020, and 88% as at 26 August 2020. Quality assurance has also been strengthened so that complaints and enquiries regarding SEND are reducing.

In response to COVID-19, the Surrey SEND System Partnership have used technology to develop new ways of working and innovative methods for engaging young people, including undertaking annual reviews and providing therapies.

The Surrey SEND System Partnership has also introduced a Learners Single Point of Access (LSPA). This has improved the experience of parents 365 out of 500 calls in the first month were resolved on the first contact, signposting to early support has also been strengthened.

There has also been the development of a streamlined Key Stage Transfer process for 2021. There has also been the introduction of an advocacy service for young people with SEND.

SEND services and support will continue with its journey of improvement and transformation. There is a partnership SEND transformation programme leading this.

Our progress against our improvement has been noted by Ofsted and CQC in December 2020 where they reported back that they will be ceasing their close, formal monitoring of our SEND system with regards to absence and exclusion, communication with partners including parents re. our approach and measuring impact of our work. This is because fewer children are missing school due to persistent absence; mainstream school attendance has improved over time. Surrey is able to provide support and challenge to schools through the attendance monitoring, looking at trends overall and identifying particular issues. In addition, there has been a reduction in absences in Secondary school pupils with EHCPs. Medical conditions have been cited as the main reasons for absences for children with SEND. Fixed term and permanent exclusions have fallen since March 2019. Surrey has seen a reduction in Education health and care (EHC) assessment requests. This is due to the introduction of initiatives such as the learning 'single point of access' (SPA), and a focus on early intervention and the graduated response team providing early intervention support for vulnerable learners. Also, Surrey is working hard to engage with parents and holds regular meetings to bridge the knowledge and support gap, reaching a wider number of parents; there has also been joint working with parents during the COVID 19 pandemic and this has been positive. Partnership working with colleagues in health is established and there has been an improvement in the timeliness of EHCPs, at 79%.

In addition Surrey has achieved the following:

- creation of 200 additional specialist places for 2020/21 reducing the need for out of county placements
- increased opportunities for post 16 placements and internships
- Autism Strategy under consultation
- 0-4 Review completed and strategic action plan in place
- graduated response reviewed by system partners and embedding throughout Surrey
- introducing an early years inclusion fund focussed on outcomes and not additional hours support
- special school funding review is underway and principles following consultation in September 2020

In relation to safeguarding SEND children in COVID-19, there has been a coordinated response across schools, the local authority and health. The top 800 Vulnerable Learners in residential accommodation have all been jointly risk assessed, and emergency action plans agreed. There has been a risk assessment of children and young people in Surrey with an EHCP in conjunction with schools, health and care. In addition, there has been a targeted use of funding to maintain sustainability of placements, early years settings and transport. There is ongoing support for our most vulnerable cohorts; which includes doorstep visits to check and assess their well being. The response has also included delivering learning packs to those who have no access to IT and delivering laptops to vulnerable students.

This support included encouraging vulnerable students to attend school and monitoring their attendance. 23% of Surrey children with an EHCP were attending school settings in July 2020 compared to 16% nationally. Food parcels were supplied via 1215 (SCC provider). There has been the delivery of flexible learning and therapies virtually. There has also been the provision of QWELL – mental health support and counselling for parents and carers of children with SEND.

## 4. What are we going to do next? Action planning

The next steps for the SEND Partnership are to ensure the improvement for vulnerable cohorts of learners by an improved focus on those who are missing education (CME), children who are educated otherwise than at school – alternative provision, receiving tuition or on part-time timetables or children who are electively home educated (EHE). Ensuring all of our Children Missing Education have an action plan for their return to education.

Going forward, the priority will include identifying and focusing on vulnerable cohorts who may have one or more vulnerability for example those with an EHCP who are known to the Youth Offending Service, Looked After Children, families who Electively Home Educate their children, and Children Missing Education. This will include working more closely with Children's Services through introducing a Designated Social Worker for SEN.

The Surrey SEND System Partnership wants to continue using the innovation of the L- SPA to address the levels of request for an EHCP when targeted support could meet needs helping to create a sustainable response close to home. We also want to establish robust processes for ensuring all our EHE pupils receive an annual monitoring visit and those with an EHCP an annual review.

We will be focused on implementing the recommendations of the Alternative Provision review and renewing the PRU estate. We also want to align the review of SEMH provision in Education with the focus on vulnerable adolescents in social care. Finally, we want to bring services together to create Teams around the Quadrants to refine our working together arrangements as well as service delivery for our vulnerable families and young people.



# Section 3:

Journey of the child  
through the  
safeguarding system

**This section provides the local context in Surrey and the safeguarding of children in specific circumstances.**

## Children Services' Improvement

The SSCP still retains a role in relation to the monitoring of Children Services' improvement through the Ofsted Priority Action Board (OPAB). Following Ofsted's judgement in 2018 that Surrey's children's services were 'inadequate', Ofsted conduct regular two day 'Monitoring Visits' to assess our services, frontline practice and the delivery of key improvements. SCC have so far had four of these visits and only one in the reporting period of this Annual Report in October 2019. The next visit was scheduled for April 2020, and it could not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All inspection activity has been suspended, except where there are immediate and urgent safeguarding concerns.

Children's services are continuing to deliver the improvement priorities and as part of this have established a detailed quality assurance programme to identify and address practice weaknesses. We have also welcomed the external review of our progress both from Ofsted, our improvement and peer review partners Essex County Council, and Cornwall County Council, who were appointed by the Department for Education as the Commissioner and, welcome feedback from inspectors when Ofsted confirm the next steps for the inspection programme.

Over the 2021-2022 period, all remaining transformation work planned as part of the Family Resilience programme is expected to be fully implemented. This includes:

- **Getting to Good:** The next iteration of the improvement plan - the 'Getting to Good' plan - has been developed over the summer with input from all services through a collaborative approach and with strong buy-in from across the management and senior leadership team. The plan goes beyond the inspection findings from 2018; Effective Family Resilience is an entirely new practice model and therefore a more ambitious and innovative improvement plan is required to 'Get us to Good'.
- **L-SPA & C-SPA Integration:** Children's Services are merging the Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) and the Learners Single Point of Access (L-SPA) to ensure there is one route for families to contact us, where there is a concern about the child or young person's needs, whether safeguarding, Early Help, learning and/or developmental needs. The C-SPA was set up in Spring 2019 and has been working successfully; SCC has built on this and the lessons learnt to help launch the integrated L-SPA in summer 2020 alongside a relocation of these services to a larger workspace in Woking.
- **Emergency Duty Team (EDT):** SCC have evaluated the impact of the model of delivery introduced in 2020, researched other counties' EDT models and have agreed a new service model that enables SCC to continue the extended level of out-of-hours support as our business as usual model.
- **Universal Youth Work:** In June 2020, SCC's Universal Youth Work consultation concluded after running for over 6 months and as a result SCC have agreed that:

*We enable the community, voluntary and faith sector (CVFS) to use the youth centres for the benefit of young people at little or no cost. We act as an enabler and facilitator of open access universal youth work rather than providing the service directly. The SCC expertise that is valued by residents - and in particular young people - can then be remodelled to continue to support specific vulnerable groups.*

## A note on data

In order to ensure that SSCP performance is benchmarked across national indicators and those of our statistical neighbours as comparators, the reporting period for key statistical information related to early help, children in need, child protection, looked after children and care leavers relates to data as of 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

### 1. Early Help

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, Surrey had 3,993 early help contacts. This is a significant reduction from the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 in which Surrey had 7,023 early help contacts. This demonstrates that there is a greater understanding of thresholds for support across agencies.

There has also been a significant reduction in the numbers of repeat contacts in early help. For example, in the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, there were 4,035 repeat early help contacts. In the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 there were 1,715 repeat contacts. There was also a significant improvement in the conversion rate from early help contacts to early help assessments. In the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, the conversion rate was 55% of early help contacts resulting in an early help assessment. In the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, the conversion from early help contact to an early help assessment was 59%. As of 31 March 2020, there were 722 early help open cases; this is a reduction of 459 cases in 2018 to 2019.

### 2. Child in need

In the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, there were 8,519 Child In Need (CIN) referrals to children's social care. This is a reduction in the number of referrals for the same period in 2018 to 2019, when the number of referrals for CIN were 10,635. This is below the national average for children in need referrals which was 14,259 and the averages for Surrey's statistical neighbours which was 12,381.

We also saw a four per cent reduction in the numbers of re-referrals in a 12-month period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020; this is a drop from 26% in 2018-2019 to 22% in 2019 to 2020.

In the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, there were 8,724 CIN assessments completed in Surrey. The percentage of assessments where children were assessed as not needing support was 6%. This is a 50% reduction in the percentage number of assessments where children were not deemed to need support in 2018-2019, where 12% of assessments resulted in no support needed. This is also below the national average and the averages of Surrey's statistical neighbours which was at 29% respectively. Thirty per cent of these children have been on CIN plans for a period of two years. This is a reduction of 4% in 2018-2019 and is 2% below the national average which was 32% as of 31 March 2020.

As of 31 March 2020 there were 2,020 children on CIN plans, this meant that the overall number of children in need open to Children's Social Care was 5,751.

### 3. Children on Child Protection Plans

As at 31 March 2020 there were 685 children on child protection plans in Surrey. This is a reduction from 959 children being on child protection plans as at 31 March 2019. This represents 26% per 10,000 of the population. This represents a 10% reduction from 31 March 2019 when the percentage rate was 36%. This is below the national average of 47.7% and our statistical neighbours where the rate was 35.6%.

In the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, 714 children started on child protection plans. This is a reduction in the number of children who started on child protection plans in 2018-2019, which was 1,136. The number of Surrey's children starting on a plan in 2019-2020 is below the national average, which was 1,461 as at 31 March 2020 and Surrey's numbers of children starting on child protection plans for our statistical neighbours which was 1,264 as at 31 March 2020.

In the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, there was an increase of the number of children who was on a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time from 10% in 2018-2019 to 15% in 2019-2020. Colleagues in Children's Social Care are working to understand the reasons for this increase. We are pleased to say that the numbers of children who are on child protection plans for a period of two years or more is reducing from 10% in 2018-2019 to 7% in 2019-2020. This figure remains slightly above the national average which was at 6% at 31 March 2020; however, this figure is below the average number for our statistical neighbours which was at 9% as at 31 March 2020.

Break down by category of abuse at initial child protection conference as at 31 March 2020

Neglect	461
Emotional Abuse	154
Physical Abuse	17
Sexual Abuse	27

#### 4. Children looked after by Surrey

As at 31 March 2020 the overall number of children looked after by Surrey was 981. The number of children who became looked after during the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 was 381. The number of children who ceased to be looked after during this period was 370. The percentage of children with three or more placements in the 12-month period from 1 April 2019 to March 2020 was 8%. The percentage of children who remained in the same placement for two years or more was 67%. This represents a two-percentage point increase on the number of children in the period for 2018-2019. Surrey is now only 2% below the national average of 69% and 2% below our statistical neighbours who are at 69% for looked after children who have remained in their placements for two years or more.

The percentage of Surrey's looked after children who are placed more than 20 miles outside of the county during this period was 31% as of 31 March 2020. This is 3% below the number of children who are placed more than 20 miles outside of the county as of 31 March 2019. However, this is significantly above the national average, which was 15% as of 31 March 2020, and below the percentage of Surrey's statistical neighbours which was 26% as of 31 March 2020. Some of these placements relate to the breadth of Surrey as a geographical area.

We are working hard to reduce the number of our looked after children who go missing from home. In the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, the percentage of young people who went missing was 14%. This was a 2% reduction from the previous year; yet this is below the national average of 11% for this period and our statistical neighbours which is 13%.

To support the work that is being done to support our looked after children and foster carers, Surrey have developed two key strategies: No Wrong Door and Mockingbird. These developments are summarised below.

## No Wrong Door

In 2020 SCC Corporate Parenting teams started developing a local 'No Wrong Door' service, a well-evaluated short term residential model that was first developed in North Yorkshire in 2015 and offers an integrated approach to supporting some of the most vulnerable teenagers who are either in care, or at risk of coming into care. The service will be up and running by April 2021 and will initially operate from two of our current children's homes before two purpose-built hubs are completed in 2022 under a capital development programme.

## Mockingbird

Following implementation of the new Mockingbird Family Model for fostering in October 2019, in the midst of COVID-19 restrictions, the third Mockingbird Hub was launched in August 2020, and feedback from those foster carers involved indicates that it provides a truly supportive network to the benefit of both children in care and their carers.

### 5. Care leavers

As of 31 March 2020 Surrey had 656 care leavers aged 18 to 25 years old. 514 of these young people were aged 19-21. This is below the national average, which is 652 and above our statistical neighbours, which was an average of 455 care leavers as of the 31 March 2020.

The percentage of care leavers in touch during this period was 83%. This figure has dropped slightly from 87% in 2018 to 2019. This is below the national average, which is 93% and Surrey's statistical neighbours is at 92%.

The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation as of 31 March 2020 was 78%; this is a significant drop from 86% in 2018-2019.

The percentage of Surrey's care leavers in education, training or employment is at 53%. This is slightly above the percentages for the national average and our statistical neighbours which were both at 52% for 2019-2020.

The data shows:

- pathway plan completion has improved to 99% overall. 53% of all looked after children have a pathway plan completed at 16 years and 3 months or having been in care for 31 weeks
- 96% of 19-21-year olds are in suitable accommodation and 71% are in education, employment or training (EET). For 17-18-year olds, 89% are in suitable accommodation and 70% are identified as EET.
- the recording of EET status & Suitable Accommodation has reduced slightly in the last month. Of the 17-18-year olds there remain 25 young people for whom we hold no information.

Areas identified as Strengths include:

- SCC has increased capacity this year with an additional Personal Advisor being appointed to each team. In addition, a dedicated Asylum Team for 18+ Care Leavers has been created
- the organisational changes leading to one Service Manager with responsibility for Care Leavers and Looked After Children has improved working relationships and the awareness of issues impacting Care Leavers amongst LAC social workers
- Independent Living Allowance payments have increased to £60 per week, enabling Care Leavers to access all of their financial entitlement. During the pandemic, additional



financial support has been provided to Care Leavers and regular contact has been maintained by Personal Advisors

- SCC updated and published the Care Leavers Offer and the Care Leavers Finance Policy
- Care Leavers Forum in place alongside existing Care Council meetings
- improvements to the recording system and further reporting developed to support practice and enhance understanding of key areas of focus.

Areas for Improvement / Priorities for 2021:

- SCC accommodation offer has been reviewed and we've started to identify sufficiency needs however the development of an affordable local accommodation offer for Care Leavers remains a priority
- To improve the preparedness of young people for independence, using the Independent Skills Programme with a pilot commencing in January 2021 and a full roll-out by April 2021
- To develop a Care Leaver welcome pack which sets out clearly what Care Leavers can expect from their Personal Advisors in terms of contact, communication and their role and responsibilities.

## Safeguarding of children in particular circumstances

### Children at risk of exploitation

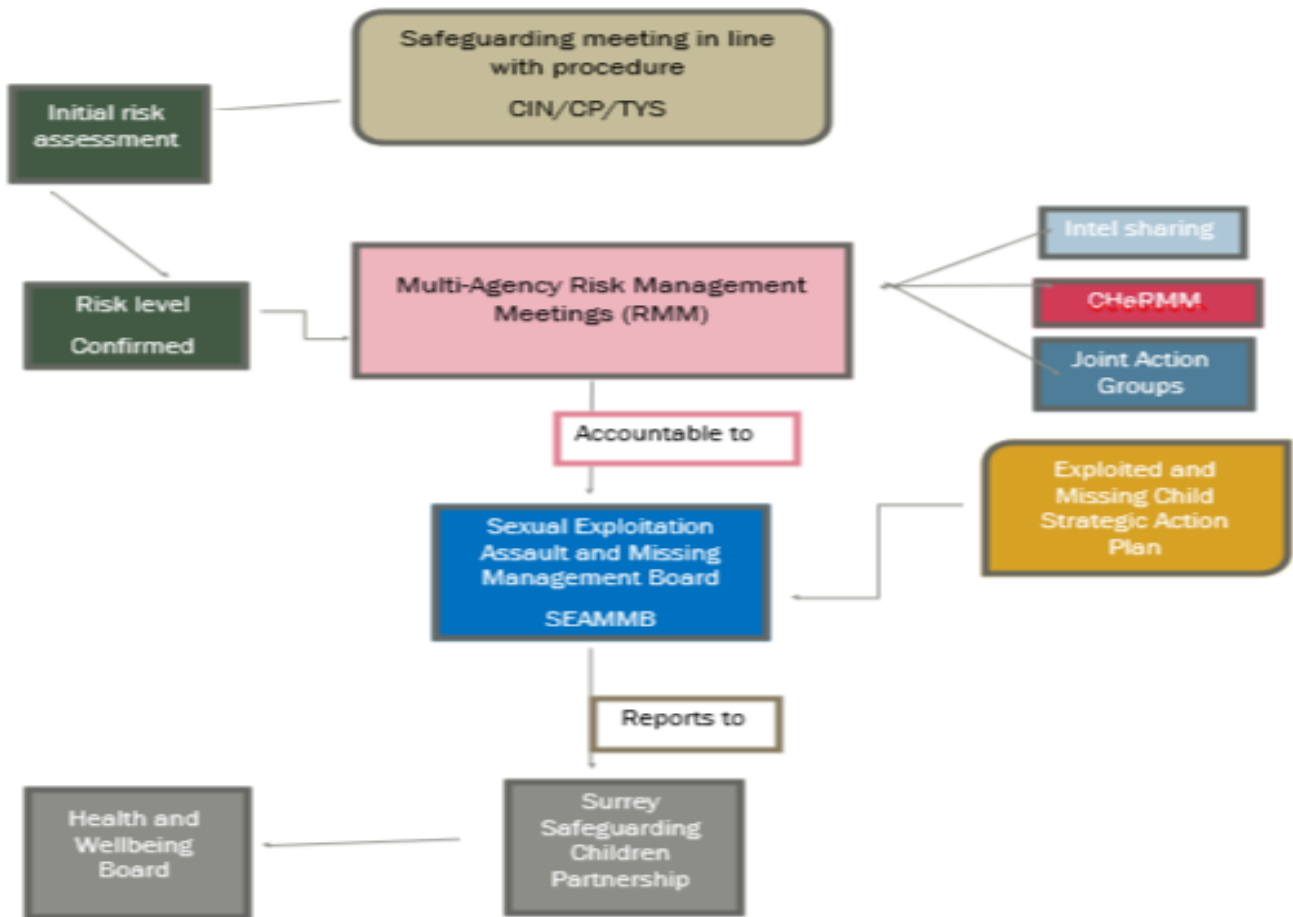
#### **Exploited and Missing Children Oversight Group**

The Child Exploitation and Missing Delivery Group has become the Exploited and Missing Child Oversight Group. There is a new Terms of Reference along with a new two-year multi-agency strategic action plan. All members of this oversight group have been allocated actions to achieve and there is an expectation that in-between meetings, activity takes place across the partnership.

Surrey has mapped the Contextual Safeguarding risks across all 11 districts and boroughs in Surrey. We are developing our intelligence regarding the numbers of children at risk and we have been able to map the profile of children.

Surrey now has in place a governance structure to oversee the work in relation to children going missing, child exploitation, serious youth violence and context-related harm. This is detailed below:

#### **Child exploitation governance structure**



There is a total of **154** children on the Child Exploitation list

### Gender

- Boys **83**
- Girls **69**

### Type of exploitation

- **40%** considered at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation CSE
- **60%** considered at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation CCE

### Risk rating

- **21** Experiencing harm (**14%**)
- **42** Significant harm (**27%**)
- **82** Emerging harm (**53%**)

### Age of children

- 10 -11yrs (**2**)
- 12-13yrs (**13**)
- 14-15yrs (**56**)
- 16 – 17yrs (**73**)

- 18yrs (8)

### Vulnerability

- 27% are children looked after
- 15% **child protection plans**
- 25% child in need
- 19% **Early Help**
- 14% not known/closed

### **Children missing education**

The number of children missing education cases on 31 March 2020 was 224. This is a slight decrease in the number of children reported on 31 March 2019 which was 233. These children are broken down by gender as follows:

CME Male	141
CME Female	83
CME with EHCP or SEN Support	120
Breakdown only available from March 2020	
Average Time missing Education (months)	4.3
Breakdown only available from March 2020	

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

In the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, no children were identified as being at risk of FGM. During this period, 10 individuals were identified as having FGM through maternity services. Each person identified was advised of the health implications of FGM and of the illegalities and harm to children of FGM.

### **Prevent**

The Surrey arrangements regarding Prevent cases are part of the South East England Regional Arrangements.

In 2018-2019 there were 742 Prevent Referrals in the South East region.

In 2019-2020 there were 867.

During 2018-2019 there 133 cases discuss at the South East Channel Panel.

In 2019-2020 this figure rose to 133.

In 2018-219 74 cases were adopted as a Channel Case.

In 2019-2020 72 cases were adopted as a Channel Case.



# Section 4:

Learning from Serious  
Case Reviews (SCRs)  
and Local Child  
Safeguarding Practice  
Reviews (LCSPRs) and  
Section 11

In September 2019, the former Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board left the legacy of a backlog of approximately 23 case reviews. This included statutory case reviews and partnership reviews; all of these reviews were in various stages of completion with no quality assurance process in place to ensure the quality and timeliness of reviews.

A key priority of the **SSCP** was to develop clear processes for managing the commissioning, oversight and publication of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. This guidance was approved in January 2020 and updated in September 2020.

## Key Learning from reviews in this period

### Domestic Homicide Reviews

The SSCP has worked with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to publish an executive summary of a Domestic Homicide Review in respect of a person identified as Doris. This Executive Summary outlines the process and findings of a joint Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) and Serious Case Review (SCR) undertaken by East Surrey Community Safety Partnership and Surrey Safeguarding Children Board into the tragic killing of Doris, the injury to Lee and the emotional wellbeing of Sam. The review began in July 2016 and concluded with a submission of the report to the Home Office in July 2019. The Home Office requested some amendments in March 2020, and that the report should be published in a fully anonymised format.

#### [DHR Doris Executive Summary](#)

This DHR is available on the SSCP's website.

### Rapid Reviews

From September 2019 until 31 December 2020, the SSCP has conducted 8 Rapid Reviews in respect of serious safeguarding incidents which were notified to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in accordance with statutory guidance **Working Together 2018** and the **Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: practice guidance** April 2019. Three of these reviews did not meet the criteria for a local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) ; one case met the criteria for a LCSPR; however, the rapid review process identified the key learning and practice improvements in this case, obviating the need for further review. Two cases resulted in a LCSPR. Two other cases met the criteria for a LCSPR, however, the decision was taken to include these cases in thematic reviews and not to commission LCSPRs.

### Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The SSCP has commissioned two local child safeguarding practice reviews which are due to be published in early 2021: these are the Child Z LCSPR and the Family B LCSPR.

### Serious Case Reviews (SCR)

Throughout 2019 and 2020, the SSCP's Case Review Panel Sub-Group has worked diligently to clear the backlog of serious case reviews. During this period, the SSCP has published the following SCRs:

- SCR Child A: Executive Summary
- SCR Child D
- SCR Child G
- SCR Executive Summary in relation to three children HH, II & JJ

- SCR Baby KK
- SCR Baby LL
- SCR Family M.

These reports are available on the SSCP's website.

The Case Review Sub-Group and the Learning from Practice Sub-Group are working closely to ensure that the learning from these reviews are integrated into practice. The SSCP also works closely with the Surrey Children's Workforce Academy to ensure that the lessons from reviews are widely disseminated.

The SSCP completed an additional SCR which is part of a parallel Police investigation; decisions are being made regarding publication.

## Implementation of the recommendations of SCRs and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

When commissioning local child safeguarding practice reviews and other safeguarding reviews, the Case Review Panel Sub-Group works with Independent Review Authors to ensure that, where possible, that the learning and recommendations are specific to agencies and areas of practice, that they relate to measurable improvements in the quality of practice and that there are clear timescales for the implementation of these recommendations.

The SCRs and LSCPRs published in 2019-2020 include a total of 52 recommendations. To ensure that all recommendations and their implementation are tracked, the SSCP keeps a log which outlines:

- the name and year of the review
- the recommendation theme or area for improvement
- the key or lead agency
- timescale for implementation
- the RAG rating for progress.

This plan is reviewed at every meeting of the Case Review Panel.

## Thematic Reviews

As noted above, the SSCP published two thematic reviews:

- SSCP Thematic Review of Adolescent Suicide 2014-2020
- SSCP Thematic Review of Surrey SCRs and Case Reviews 2016-2020

The cases reviewed in the ***Thematic Review of Surrey SCRs from 2016-2020*** included children subject to a range of safeguarding risks and the cases identified that there were a number of risks present including:

1. chronic neglect
2. domestic abuse including coercive control
3. emotional abuse
4. physical abuse
5. sexual abuse
6. adolescent Vulnerability and Safeguarding
7. parental mental health
8. parental substance misuse.

The practice themes highlighted in the Thematic Review included:

1. listening to the voice and experience of children
2. assessment planning and intervention
3. special guardianship orders
4. effective multi-agency working
5. information sharing
6. the need to 'Think-family'
7. issues of escalation and professional disagreement including stepping down (de-escalating concerns).

Other issues identified in the Thematic Review of Surrey's SCRs included:

- Professional curiosity
- Disguised compliance
- Authoritative practice
- Multiple referrals and re-referrals
- Parental Capacity
- Understanding lived experience of the child.

The work of the SSCP in relation to reviewing serious safeguarding children cases has been transformational. The local authority is notifying the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in a timely and proportionate way. Rapid Review meetings, following notifications, are held within statutory timescales and in most cases the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel have agreed with SSCP decision making regarding the commissioning of LCSPRs. It is appropriate to express the SSCPs gratitude to the Case Review Panel sub-group for their diligence and the hard work that has been done to clear the backlog of SCRs and develop effective processes for commissioning and publishing SCRs and LCSPRs.

## Listening to children and families

In the past twelve months considerable efforts have been made to refine how SSCP engages with children and understands their thoughts, concerns and ideas. The Engagement and Communication Sub-Group has been central to the partnership work and having a voluntary sector co-chairperson has demonstrated a clear commitment to operating differently. This has brought about clear benefits and there are reports of greater accessibility, different mind-sets and increased challenge.

Significant work was undertaken to engage with children and understand from them how they were affected by COVID 19. There was good engagement with a wide number of children from different backgrounds and as well as providing valuable information, it demonstrated the willingness of the partnership to listen and respond.

The Case Review Panel sub-group has an excellent focus on the voice of the child through its engagement with families of children who are subjects of reviews. It has achieved good levels of engagement and through positive relationships has gathered key information to assist reviews. The health leadership of the group has enabled dedicated professionals to have the time and space to develop these relationships and as a result they have gathered information that has enriched the reviews.

The Engagement and Communication Group has enabled the voice of the child to become more tangible and a young person spoke at the Executive Group during the Autumn of 2020. This had a significant impact on Executive Group members, highlighting issues regarding online

safety for them to consider and has caused them to reflect how they can build on the opportunity to further safeguard children in online spaces.

The Engagement and Communication Group has identified a difference in how children, in particular adolescents, communicate and how that differs from adults involved with child safeguarding. This has developed into a key piece of work for the group, looking at the best way of communicating key information to children.

## Section 11

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory requirement on organisations and individuals to ensure they have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. ***Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTG 2018)*** defines a range of standards that need to be considered and met, when putting these arrangements in place.

Every two years, the SSCP requires its partner agencies to complete a self-assessment against the WTG 2018 standards, to provide evidence and reassurance to the SSCP to show that each agency understands their safeguarding responsibilities and have the necessary arrangements in place to meet them. This enables the SSCP to assess the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements within Surrey. The SSCP provides its partners with an audit tool to enable them to carry out and record the outputs from this self-assessment.

The last two self-assessments were carried out in 2016 and 2018 and were undertaken using an online tool provided by PHEW, a software solutions company. PHEW also currently host the SSCP website and SSCP procedures platform.

The Surrey Section 11 self-assessment process was launched on 1 October 2020 and is due to run until 31 October 2020. For the first time this year, non-statutory agencies have been invited to participate in the full S11 assessment alongside Statutory organisations. In total there will be around 70 reports submitted for scrutiny.

As in previous years it is proposed that the Scrutiny Panel will be made up of Senior Managers from the three Lead Partners - Police, Local Authority and Health, along with members of the SSCP team, the Independent Chair of the SSCP, the SSCP Lay Member (NEW for 2020) and a representative from the Third Sector (NEW for 2020):

- Independent SSCP Scrutineer and Chair
- SSCP Partnership Manager
- Director of Safeguarding CCG
- Head of Quality and Improvement SCC
- Safeguarding Lead - Surrey Police
- CEO of Surrey Youth Focus (Representing Non-Voluntary Organisations)
- SSCP Lay Member.

## Stage 1

A meeting (or meetings) of the Scrutiny Panel will be arranged to work through each report focusing on the aspects outlined above.

## Stage 2

A meeting will be arranged by the SSCP Business Support Team between the Head of Service for that agency, the S11 lead and nominated members of the Scrutiny Panel.



## S11 (2020-2021) final report

Once all stages of the S11 scrutiny process have concluded, a summary report will be produced and presented, in the first instance, to the SSCP Learning from Practice Group for discussion and approval. The final report with recommendations agreed by the Learning from Practice Group will then be presented to the Executive Group in March 2021. Agency actions will be tracked throughout 2021-2022 and a summary of the Section 11 findings will be reported in the SSCP Annual report for this period.

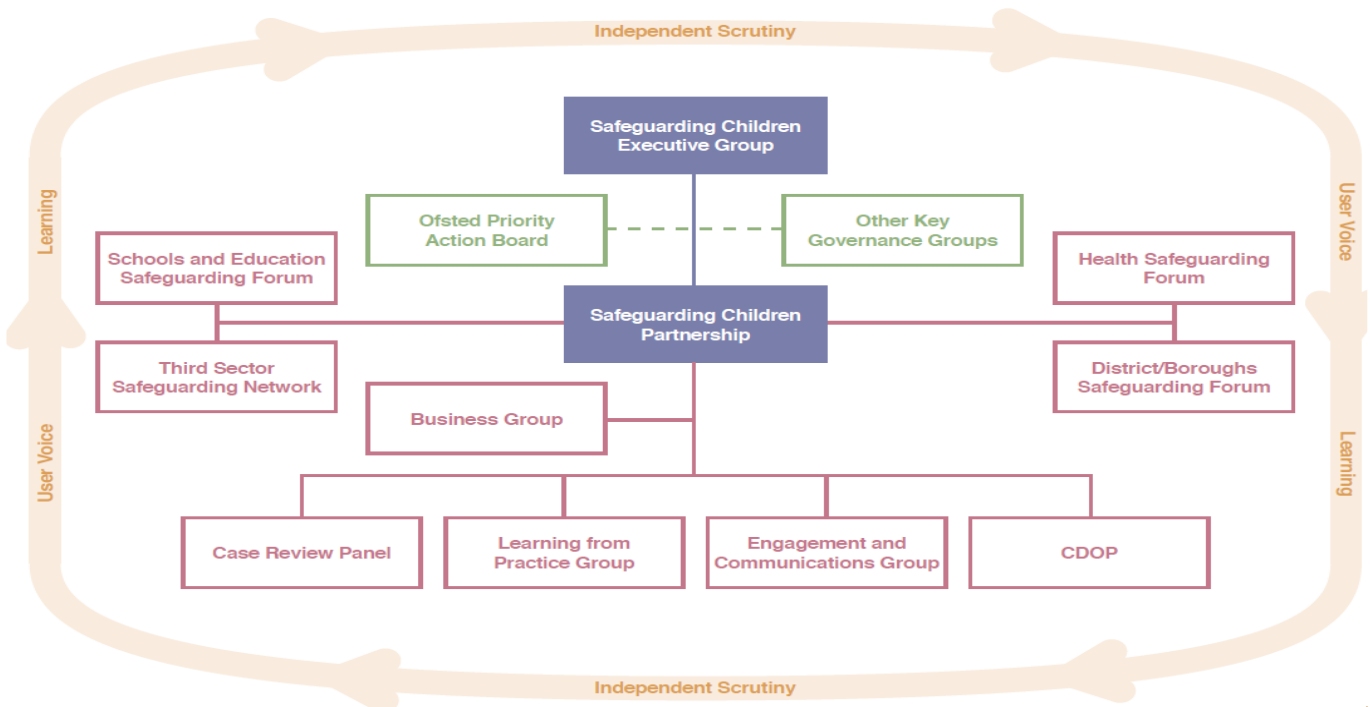


# Section 5:

## The effectiveness of SSCP arrangements

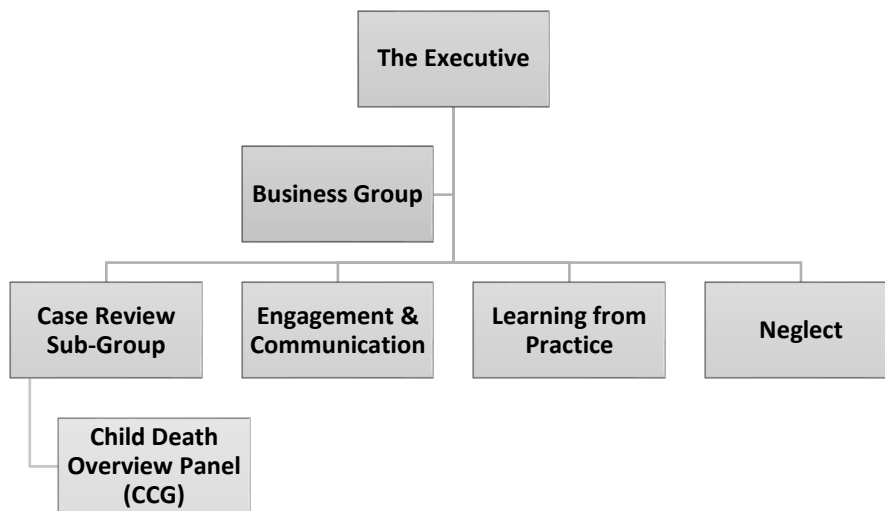
# SSCP structure

## THE SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE



## SSCP Sub-Groups

The above structure outlines the proposed Sub-Groups of the SSCP at the time the SSCP’s arrangements were published. In the process of delivering our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, the SSCP determined that the Partnership would consist of the Sub-Groups as follows:



### Case Review Panel Sub-Group

The Case Review Panel Sub-Group meets on a monthly basis. The Sub-Group has an agreed membership; they have agreed their terms of reference and have recruited a lay member to sit on the Sub-Group.

The Sub-Group inherited a backlog of serious case reviews (SCRs) and non-statutory, partnership learning and improvement reviews and there were historic issues of late notification

of serious incidents. The Case Review Sub-Group has been very effective in clearing the backlog of case reviews inherited from the LSCB. In addition, the Case Review Sub-Group has approved guidance which ensures that statutory notifications are made, serious incident notification processes (led by the local authority) and rapid review processes (led by the SSCP) are held within statutory timescales, and the recommendations of the rapid reviews are sound, as demonstrated by confirmation of decision-making by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. LCSPRs are commissioned appropriately, managed by a case review panel of senior managers, completed within appropriate timescales, quality assured and published. The recommendations of SCRs and LCSPRs are implemented, and this is monitored by the SSCP, although this is an area for further development.

The key achievements of the Case Review Sub-Group are detailed as follows:

- work to complete reports where there have been significant delays. The backlog of SCRs has been effectively cleared with publication decisions pending
- effective engagement with families in review processes, this is a particular area of strength, with excellent support being provided by the Child Death Review Team and Surrey CDOP
- recruitment of a lay member
- the publication of the Thematic Review of Adolescent Suicides
- the publication of the Thematic Review of Surrey SCRs
- the development of a Suicide Prevention Toolbox which includes advice and guidance for practitioners, parents and children
- organising a series of Learning events to disseminate learning from the thematic reviews
- work being undertaken around development of a Pool of Independent Review Authors
- seven reviews published between March 2020 and May 2020
- rapid reviews undertaken within timescales
- links with the Surrey Safeguarding Academy to share learning and good practice from case reviews
- development of robust processes for commissioning and managing reviews
- positive alignment of the panel's assessment of cases with the National panel judgements.

The Case Review Sub-Group reported good attendance and engagement with the SSCP Case Review Panel Sub-Group agenda, and effective and robust work undertaken by task and finish groups; this has had the impact of ensuring key project work is developed and driven forward as the key enablers of effectiveness.

## Engagement and Communications Sub-Group

The Engagement and Communications Sub-Group meets on a bi-monthly basis. The Sub-Group has agreed its membership and terms of reference and has a work plan in place, which is aligned to the priorities of the SSCP and the SSCP's Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan. The Sub-Group is co-chaired by the CEO of Surrey Youth Focus, a third sector charity working across Surrey, and the County Council's Children, Families & Learning department's Assistant Director for Quality Relationships. The Engagement and Communication Sub-Group noted that co-chairing by two different organisations, with different knowledge and perspectives, created a synergy which, they considered was enabling effectiveness. The Sub-Group has been effective in championing the voice and experience of children and families in Surrey.

The achievements of this Sub-Group include:

- Supporting the User Voice and Participation (UVP) survey: “Our Voice Matters Surrey”. The response rate included 1,207 children and young people. The findings will be used to agree future priorities for the group.
- The UVP team manager is a standing member of the Engagement and Communication Sub-Group and supports the attendance and direct participation of children and young people, when this is relevant and appropriate. Feedback and action cards from children and young people accessing services in Surrey are shared and workers are then deployed to support specific projects.
- The COVID-19 voice work led by Surrey Youth Focus and the User Voice and Participation Team made excellent use of the partnership to collect a wide range of voices via different agencies and to distribute the findings out to a wide range of partners. This resulted in three qualitative reports published in July and August 2020 by Surrey Youth Focus:
  - Report 1 – COVID-19 - the views of children & young people in Surrey
  - Report 2 – COVID-19 - Listening to parents with young children in Surrey
  - Report 3 - COVID-19 - Listening to children & young people with special educational needs & disabilities and their families.

These reports were shared with the SSCP Executive at its COVID-19 Contingency Planning Meetings and formed part of the SSCP’s report to the Local Resilience Forum.

- The Sub-Group also leads the work in raising awareness across the SSCP regarding how and where children and young people are accessing information in order to form their social and political views about a wide range of issues including race, gender, politics, mental health and emotional well-being including suicide and self-harm. This work included updating the Executive regarding the risks of unverified and ‘fake’ news which proliferates across social media. A report and presentation were provided to the Executive in October 2020.
- The Sub-Group has also worked to bring together the communications leads from different agencies on a regular basis for better partnership working and to coordinate essential information to safeguard children and promote their welfare.
- The Sub-Group is focused on developing an approach to drive engagement with children and families across the safeguarding partnership’s strategic priorities.
- The Sub-Group has also commissioned a social media task and finish group.
- The Sub-Group is also initiating the creation of a new Practitioners Engagement Forum.

## Learning from Practice Sub-Group

The Learning from Practice Sub-Group has met five times since October 2019. The Sub-Group has in place the group’s terms of reference and agreed its work plan for 2020-2021 and this is aligned to the SSCP’s priorities.

In relation to its achievements, the Learning from Practice Sub-Group has:

- Completed a multi-agency audit on thresholds on children stepping down from a CP plan, this was a detailed audit. This audit included all sub-group partners (including Health, Education, Social Care and the Police); this allowed their overview and contributions in undertaking a review of 100 children, resulting in a detailed report and briefing that has recently been signed off at the partnership. Group attendance is good at each meeting and a forward planner and series of learning events are currently being planned.

- Completed the SSCP multi-agency performance management and quality assurance framework and dataset. This has been approved and will be presented, with analysis to the Executive in November.
- Designed and agreed the Section 11 process and maintains close oversight of its implementation.
- Agreed the multi-agency audit plan for 2020-2021.

## Neglect Sub-Group

The Neglect Sub-Group meets on a bi-monthly basis and has met five times since October 2019. The Sub-Group is well attended and has agreed its membership and terms of reference.

The achievements of the Sub-Group over the last year are detailed as follows:

- worked with Partners and relevant agencies to ensure that there is a clear framework for the assessment and action in cases of neglect
- the Neglect screening tool is now ready for sign off
- overseen the work of the GCP2 task and finish group; GCP2 virtual training sessions and communications around this are ready to be rolled out
- completion and evaluation of GCP2 pilot in the SE quadrant
- new Project Manager appointed to oversee the GCP2 roll out and a Project Board set up to monitor this
- ECiNs<sup>12</sup> identified as a storage platform for GCP2 and work is ongoing to ensure a data storage solution is in place that is easily accessible for all key agencies to record and update assessments
- the neglect self-evaluation tool was completed to ensure that appropriate quality assurance activity takes place in each agency and that relevant findings are analysed and acted upon as necessary
- the information in the self-evaluation, GCP2 and neglect screening tool plus a community impact assessment on BAME and GRT communities will feed into the Health Needs Analysis work on neglect due for completion start October
- group has maintained awareness of national developments in the field of neglect and will ensure that these are incorporated into our key documents and plans; there is now a working group set up to refresh the Neglect Strategy
- public Health completed a profile of Child Neglect that was shared at conference November 2019
- secured agreement to commence NSPCC GCP2-antenatal pilot January 2021.

The Neglect Sub-Group reported that the awareness and understanding of neglect as a safeguarding concern across agencies was a barrier to progress. The Sub-Group also raised the fact that the recruitment of a Project Manager was a particular challenge. However, this person has now been recruited.

A review of Sub-Group functioning and effectiveness was commissioned, by the Business Group in September 2020, as part of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership's commitment to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) has been in existence for 12 months. The first year has been focused on

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<sup>12</sup> ECiNs is a secure, GDPR compliant multi-agency case work database and information storage system which is used in Surrey

developing effective patterns of working including agreeing terms of reference, membership, patterns and frequency of meetings, and aligning work plans with the SSCP's priorities.

The terms of reference for this review included consideration of Sub-Group:

- functioning
- culture
- voices of children and young people
- reporting
- impact

The evidence of this review is that all Sub-Groups are functioning in that each Sub-Group has agreed its terms of reference (which sets out the purpose, membership and priorities of the Sub-Group); each Sub-Group has a regular pattern of meetings which are well-attended. Each Sub-Group has developed a work plan or a draft work plan that is, to a greater or lesser extent, aligned to the priorities of the SSCP.

## SSCP forums and networks

### The District and Borough Network

The Districts and Boroughs (D&Bs) purpose is to ensure strong and effective partnership working in child protection and safeguarding practice across the county and to promote the continuous improvement of these services. The Forum is focused on information exchange and on addressing issues where district and borough councils can play important roles in shaping and implementing safeguarding policies and practice at a local level. Through the connection with Partnership Governance arrangements the D&B's Forum is influential in forward planning, co-ordination and determination of safeguarding priorities. Through representation, the Forum should contribute to and influence the work of the Partnership and Executive. Members of the Forum should contribute to other lead areas of work aligned to the Partnerships strategic priorities and enjoy full engagement with partner organisations as outlined in the "New Surrey Safeguarding Children Arrangements 2019".

The Districts and Boroughs Safeguarding Forum has met two times (February and July 2020). A planned meeting for November 2020 however this was postponed in response to parts of Surrey moving into tiers three and four.

### The Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum

The role of the Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum is to:

- promote and influence effective safeguarding practice in all educational settings from Early Years to post 16
- ensure that the partnership priorities are reflected in the work plan
- promote effective inter-agency working that keeps the child or young person at the centre of everything we do
- be responsive to local and/or national emerging needs and patterns.

The responsibilities of the Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum include:

- ensure that the statutory obligations of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, set out in the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (as updated on 21 February

2019), are fulfilled and that the priorities of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership are met

- provide a forum for communication, learning and improvement for members to discuss initiatives, identify good practice, identify and address issues of concern relating to inter-agency working and to share the outcomes of discussions with the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership
- report on education and schools-related safeguarding issues and matters to the Partnership
- undertake initiatives which promote safeguarding in education; consistent with the requirement to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of the Children Act, 2004
- assist Surrey County Council in managing the compliance of schools and settings with the audit of statutory duties under sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act, 2002
- assist Surrey County Council in ensuring actions resulting from the sections 157 and 175 audits are implemented and
- assist in the dissemination of lessons learned from serious case reviews, monitor the completion of recommendations from each serious case review action plan and ensure outcomes are communicated with staff.

The School and Education Forum met three times in 2020-2021 (February, June and October). As part of the COVID 19 response:

- an updated Appendix to the Schools Safeguarding Policy was circulated to all schools.
- risk assessment templates to identify vulnerable learners was drafted and circulated to all schools
- joint promotion with schools to ensure that the most vulnerable continued to attend during lockdown or to ensure home contacts were made
- Non-attendance of vulnerable children process was implemented by Education in collaboration with Childrens Services to ensure that non-attendance by vulnerable children expected to attend was followed up by Vulnerable Learners teams and Social Workers
- targeted work with parents and carers to increase the number of CIN/CP pupils attending
- targeted work has been undertaken by the Vulnerable Learners team with SEND pupils and their families not attending and likely not to re- engage
- supported settings to ensure that pupils could return in greater numbers safely from 1 June.

At the meeting in May the forum looked at the changing patterns of referrals. Using this intelligence a Task and Finish group has sent out comprehensive training and support details to schools around a wide range of issues including emotional resilience, recovery curriculum work and Domestic Abuse webinars. BAME pupils and families have also been considered in this work. In response to the suicide thematic review, school nursing provision over the summer holiday has been reconfigured and advice to parents regarding the Mental Health and Well-Being of their children has been circulated to schools to share.

The forum has a work plan that includes a response to the thematic reviews, the adolescent strategy, Children Missing Education and Children Missing from Education.

## The Health Safeguarding Forum

The Health Safeguarding Forum is a group within the structure of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP). Its overarching purpose is to provide scrutiny of child safeguarding arrangements across the health community in line with statutory duties under



Section 11 of the 2004 Children Act and Children and Social Work Act 2017. The forum will enable the lead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to engage Surrey's other health stakeholders in contributing to the priorities of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The role of the forum includes:

- provide strategic oversight, challenge and ongoing monitoring of all Section 11 processes undertaken by Surrey CCG's and health providers which are reported back to the SSCP
- to address and take appropriate actions of the SSCP priorities in respect of health agencies
- share and monitor the implementation learning from child safeguarding practise reviews / partnership reviews / domestic homicide reviews / audits / deep dive activities, CQC and Ofsted inspections
- discuss key health issues to ensure consensus of the "health voice" presented at the SSCP
- review safeguarding systems and processes and make or recommend changes as appropriate to the Surrey Safeguarding Executive Group and the SSCP
- discuss national guidance and new initiatives, informing SSCP responses to government and regional consultations and sharing best practice
- influence the strategic direction in relation to the planning, commissioning and delivery of services to vulnerable children in order to achieve a consistent and responsive approach to meeting the needs of all children and specifically those who require safeguarding interventions and to provide a forum for discussion of key issues for health services arising from local and national safeguarding guidance.

The Health Safeguarding Forum met three times in 2020-2021 (in January, July and October). The Health Safeguarding Forum. Each meeting has been focused on progressing key aspects of the SSCP's key priorities. The Membership of the Health Safeguarding Forum consists of Executive Leads and Heads of Safeguarding from Surrey CCGs, NHS England, NHS Providers, Public Health, Dentistry and representation from the Surrey Wide CCG Safeguarding Team.

## The Third Sector Forum

The Third Sector Safeguarding Network is part of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Safeguarding Children Partnership feeds into the Surrey Safeguarding Children Executive Group made up of Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and Surrey Heartlands, Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group. The purpose of the Third Sector Safeguarding Network is to contribute to improving the health, wellbeing and the safety of children and young people in Surrey. The network will reach out and engage with as many third sector organisations as possible. The network will help third sector organisations in Surrey who work with children and young people in the following ways:

- supporting each organisation's understanding of their responsibilities for keeping children and young people safe and promoting their welfare.
- sharing good practice across the sector
- informing the work of the Safeguarding Children Partnership from the Third Sector perspective
- disseminating important information and learning from the Safeguarding Children Partnership across the sector.

The core aims of the Third Sector Safeguarding Network are as follows:

1. to increase awareness of safeguarding across the Third Sector
2. to encourage the adoption of high safeguarding standards across the sector through training and sharing good practice
3. communicate the experience of the Third Sector organisations and the children and young people they serve to the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership
4. communicate the work of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership across the Third Sector
5. encourage and drive system-wide change to ensure children and young people are safe and have the best possible outcomes in Surrey, by identifying concerns and sharing innovative practice
6. contribute to strategies and action plans relating to safeguarding as appropriate.

The Third Sector Safeguarding Network meets quarterly. Despite only holding the first meeting in May 2020 the network managed to meet four times during the rest of the year. The meetings are well attended by a wide range of third sector organisations. It has quickly become established as a valued forum for Designated Safeguarding Leads from voluntary sector organisations across the county to come together to share experiences, increase knowledge and understanding, build relationships and share concerns.

The network has established terms of reference, a workplan and forward plan that are aligned with the SSCP priorities. Each meeting aims to focus on a specific priority of the SSCP that the Third Sector can contribute to. To date meetings have focused on contextual safeguarding, thresholds and emotional health and wellbeing with a specific focus on suicide. Achievements to date include:

- Working with the Early Help Partnership team to ensure that third sector organisations are consulted and included. Early Help Partnership has agreed to promote good practice to ask the family/child/young person about any involvement/engagement they have with the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector so they can be involved in any future work which could include a TAF. In addition the Early Help Partnership will add to the TAF one-minute guide and the one min Guide for virtual TAFs to consider the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and invite to the meeting where appropriate.
- To develop minimum safeguarding training standards for third sector organisations in line with the requirements set out by the Surrey Skills Academy.
- To provide clarity for third sector organisations regarding access to safeguarding training from the Surrey Skills Academy.
- To explore the need for peer support for designated safeguarding leads in the Third Sector with a view to developing a model to provide this.
- To open the Third Sector Safeguarding Network Meeting up to the wider SSCP for a discussion on supporting young people and schools following a suicide in the context of the thematic review of adolescent suicide. This discussion was led by a third sector organisation to share their experience and expertise.
- Set up a small working group to explore approaches for supporting schools and young people post suicide that could add value to the resources already available within Surrey.
- Inclusion of the third sector in the full s11 audit.

## Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The Child Death Overview Panel reports to the SSCP Executive. Child Death Review (CDR) is the process to be followed when responding to, investigating, and reviewing the death of any child under the age of 18, from any cause. It runs from the moment of a child's death to the

completion of the review by the CDOP. A CDR must be carried out for all children regardless of the cause of death.

The new CDR arrangements came into operation on 29 September 2019. Following substantial investment from SCDRP, Surrey CDR team are now able to offer a 7-day week service (9-5pm) for any child death that requires a Joint agency response (JAR), and all families are now allocated a CDR Nurse to support them throughout the CDR process.

Achievements in 2019-20 have included:

- the introduction of eCDOP, a secure, flexible and web-based solution which is accessible 24/7 and enables practitioners to promptly submit child death information
- the CDR team have established links with the LeDeR process in Surrey with the CDR process being the primary review process for children with learning disability
- all families in Surrey are allocated a CDR Nurse who fulfils the role of keyworker
- annual CDR training sessions are offered and delivered across the partnership
- an audit of the JAR covering the timeframe 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020
- CDOP Learning Event held in January 2020. Theme: Asthma
- challenges in 2019-20 have included
- Surrey CDOP and Neonatal CDOP membership
- impact of Pandemic COVID-19.

Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, Surrey CDR Partnership was notified of 81 deaths of which 53 were children who were resident in Surrey. While the number of child deaths in 2019-20 is lower than the same period in 2018-19, it should be noted that these child deaths were more complex involving safeguarding concerns so required a greater amount of input from the CDR team. Of the deaths notified to date, 26% (14) required a Joint Agency Response (JAR). Surrey CDOP held eight meetings in the past year (including three neonatal panels). 54 deaths were reviewed in that period. Of the 54 Surrey child deaths notified to CDOP between 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020, 24% (13/54) of the deaths have been identified to have potentially modifiable factors.

It is planned that the 6-month update to this annual report due at the end of the year will include national data if available. We approached the geographical neighbouring counties of Hampshire, Berkshire, Sussex and Kent to request their data to allow for comparison. We received a response from Hampshire, which is also one of our statistical neighbours in time for inclusion in this report. Please note, this report contains limited finalised data regarding modifiable factors and learning for 2019 - 2020 as not all deaths have been reviewed and closed at CDOP. To date, there are potentially 17 preventable deaths with modifiable factors between April 2019 and March 2020 relating to Suicide, Road Traffic Accident (RTA), Sudden unexpected deaths (SUD) and infection.

Following each child death, any immediate action needed to ensure the safety of other children is taken and any potential for practice learning is disseminated. Final categorisation including modifiable factors and any further learning from the death is identified once a case has been discussed and closed at CDOP panel. Following each CDOP meeting, the CDR team produce a CDOP Learning Bulletin highlighting national and local learning including Regulation 28 reports which is shared with all the multi agencies across Surrey for further dissemination to staff.

During this period identified learning points to be considered from child deaths and recommendations made to member agencies of the SSCP included learning from sudden

unexpected deaths in infancy, road traffic accidents, deaths associated with measles, asthma and referrals relating to safeguarding concerns.

Identified learning points to be considered from neonatal child deaths included communication between professionals, use of steroids in preterm labour and the process to be followed when a neonate requires a review by a senior professional.

The new CDR process is working well within Surrey with good engagement by all agencies. The process of expertly reviewing all children's deaths is grounded in deep respect for the rights of children and their families, with the intention of preventing future child deaths. In Surrey, we have a high-quality service which fulfils the statutory requirements and most importantly keeps families central to the CDR process.

## Training and the Surrey Children's Workforce Academy (SCSA)

The SCSA, launched in January 2019, went live on 1 April 2019. SCSA aims to be '*a hub for all learning and development for everyone working with children and families in Surrey*'.

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Academy, both in preventing planned face-to-face training from going ahead but also in hindering the planned development process. It was originally envisaged that this development would take two to three years and it is still at a comparatively early stage of development.

### The learning offer:

The SSCP on-line training programme offer includes a wide range of available courses.

The SSCP Training Pathway (July 2020) identifies the need for:

**Level 1** – basic safeguarding training; the agency has the responsibility for providing this training (either Face to Face or by e-learning) and the Surrey CC provided e-learning package is available to staff and partners, for refreshing every 3 years.

**Level 2** – Module 1, Multi-agency Safeguarding Children-family Resilience and e-learning training is provided for frontline staff working predominantly with children, covering areas of CE, DA, Neglect, Prevent and HBV.

**Level 3** - Module 2: Child Protection Conferences, Plans and Core Groups is provided for Senior Officers/Managers/Deputy/Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs).

Single agency training is not the SSCP responsibility, although the pathway appears to suggest that:

- the SSCP is responsible for ensuring that single and inter-agency training is provided and that it is reaching relevant staff within organisations
- the SSCP is responsible for quality assurance.

### Aims:

- to share knowledge and explore understanding of their differing roles
- to understand how safeguarding operates in Surrey by sharing good practice, resources and processes - this includes Effective Family Resilience and Family Safeguarding model
- to learn from each other's experience and practice in terms of safeguarding and delivering positive outcomes for children.

### Attendance:

The Academy report prepared for the Executive in October indicates that 2019/20 had been a busy and productive year for SCSA:

- the training programme delivered 241 training courses/workshops to practitioners on 48 different safeguarding areas
- it delivered workshops/training to 5318 practitioners across the partnership
- demand for partnership training remained high with attendance at 87%
- positive engagement and take up of learning from a range of partner agencies including Surrey County Council, Early Years, Education and Health
- proactive engagement with the third/voluntary sector to ensure maximum uptake.

It remains a challenge for the Academy to meet the learning needs of all organisations, due to the number of professionals employed across the range of statutory, voluntary and independent organisations in Surrey. Many agencies disseminate SCSA learning to practitioners through single agency training, including DSLs.

The Academy provides evaluation of the effectiveness of stated objectives, course learning, experiences and course content, using the Kirkpatrick four-level evaluation model. Pre and post course questionnaires are mandatory for booking and certification.

Post course mandatory responses of 40.5% remain low for this reporting period.

A further 90-day questionnaire to provide evidence of changed practice is not mandatory. It has been the intention to also provide focus groups where practitioners can discuss the long-term impact of learning on practice, however this has been impossible due to COVID 19.

## Evaluation of the impact of work of the Partnership and Safeguarding Statement

In order to have an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of our Partnership arrangements, the SSCP commissioned a peer review led by Cornwall and the Isle of Scilly in Autumn 2020.

The review of our arrangements focused on the following five priority areas for the review:

1. Has Surrey SSCP addressed the required improvements identified in the 2018 inspection of the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board?
2. Have the new governance arrangements of the SSCP enabled delivery against priorities in an effective way?
3. How effective are the working arrangements with the local authority and three statutory partners?
4. How effective is the role of the Independent Chair?
5. How effective is the supporting structure and supporting arrangements for the Partnership?

An additional area was identified for consideration as the review began:

6. How well is SSCP engaging and understanding the voice of the children and young people in Surrey?

The peer review addressed these questions through six key lines of enquiry:

1. leadership
2. partnership

3. reviews
4. Quality Assurance and Scrutiny
5. multi-agency learning
6. the Voice of the Child and Young People

In relation to the effectiveness of the Independent Chair and Challenge, the review found:

- Governance, oversight and constructive challenge from the Independent Chair are welcomed; he has provided clear expectations and has demonstrated his engagement, interest and involvement, for example by attendance at forum meetings; 'a force to be reckoned with'. A good example was provided by the children's mental health services report provided to H&WBB; this report reflected that the current child and mental health services were not thought to be credible nor reflective of lived experience. Thus, the SSCP successfully provided a far more robust challenge than had been brought previously.<sup>13</sup>

In relation to the SSCP Structure and the functioning of the SSCP and Sub-Groups the peer review found:

- Feedback from the meetings with Sub-Group chairs and partners indicated that there had been a 'positive streamlining, revisiting, refreshing, clarity in strategies'. It 'feels more organised' and the sense that 'no stone is unturned' was missing before. The structure facilitates a clear reporting line from the subgroups, via the business group and to the Executive. There are 'the right people round the table' to resolve issues at the Executive group.<sup>14</sup>

In relation to the effectiveness of partnership working, the peer review included the following direct feedback from partners

*'The partnership feels more visible – information and guidance and engagement. A cultural step change and a massive shift towards strategic improvement; inclusive working relationships and improved trust and respect with partner agencies, 'feeling an equal partner'. Better understanding of progress of work in other agencies.*

*The new partnership arrangements are much better than previously. However, there are still on the ground concerns around Voice of the Child and despite more diverse engagement, including the third sector, work is still needed to engage agencies e.g. probation, rights and participation team. However, it feels that the child is at the heart of the discussions.*

*Reporting has changed with a clear work plan and continuity and a focus on priorities; guidance and support is more available. Partners considered that complex issues could be fed back to Executive for discussion.'*<sup>15</sup>

The report found that the organisation and structures of the SSCP are helpful and expectations for inter-agency working were clear, to:

- model good practice
- challenge poor behaviour
- show mutual respect, and

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<sup>13</sup> Surrey Peer Review Report

<sup>14</sup> ibid

<sup>15</sup> ibid

- provide leadership within own organisation.

In relation to the work to clear the backlog of SCRs and other reviews, the peer review found:

The partnership, through the work of the Case Review group, has successfully addressed the SCR backlog. This has been achieved through a focus on producing two thematic reports – the *Thematic Review Deaths of Children and Young People through probable suicide 2014 - 2020* and *Serious Case Reviews 2016-2020 Briefing Paper*.

This was an effective route to collate the learning from a number of cases and share that learning across the partnership.

The learning from both thematic reviews was widely disseminated through newsletters, seven-minute briefings and a programme of webinar workshops, provided jointly by the SSCP and Surrey County Council; this also included learning and good practice from other DHRs, reviews and audits.<sup>16</sup>

In relation to the effectiveness of quality assurance and scrutiny, the peer review found that the SSCP has in place a range of methods and processes for seeking assurance and scrutinising the quality of the multi-agency work to safeguard children and promote their welfare. This includes:

- Section 11 self-assessment by individual organisations
- Section 175/157 Education Act 2002 self-assessments by individual schools and colleges
- multi-agency case auditing
- single agency case auditing
- analysis of performance data.

However, the peer review found that most of these processes were too focused on process and compliance and not sufficiently focused on the impact of activity and improved outcomes for children. The peer review report noted

***SSCP has made progress with quality assurance and scrutiny and recognises it has work to do. From an external perspective it is not clear what difference is being made to the lives of children and their families. There does not appear to be a focus on outcomes, rather one on processes, compliance and outputs. It would be useful for SSCP to review how it uses the significant resources deployed for quality assurance and scrutiny in the best possible manner.***<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

# Section 6:

Next steps: SSCP  
priorities for 2021-2024



The overarching priorities are key actions which will deliver systemwide improvement in a critical area of multi-agency safeguarding practice. These proposed priorities have been informed by the work that has taken place across the Partnership over the last 12 months. Subject to consultation with children and young people and other key stakeholders, the proposed priorities for the SSCP for 2021 to 2024 are:

1. Early Help and thresholds
2. Child and Adolescent Resilience and Support – this priority includes the following work streams
  - a. promoting the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people and ensuring the CAMHs contract delivers effective and timely support
  - b. supporting child and adolescent well-being in online spaces including social media platforms
  - c. further developing our response to Contextual Safeguarding
  - d. Safeguarding children with SEN-D
3. Improving and embedding better practice in relation to neglect.

Our proposed priorities are outlined in detail as follows:

**Thresholds are clearly understood, and consistency applied, with effective multi-agency working and clear pathways for support.**

A great deal of work has been done in relation to our thresholds and there is some evidence of improvement. However, there is still more work to be done. We want to ensure that

1. There is a shared understanding of thresholds with clear evidence of effective partnership working across all agencies
2. Levels of need and pathways of support are clearly understood and consistently applied across our system. There is evidence from practice (including audit), feedback from children and families and partners that this is working to keep children safe and promote their well-being
3. Threshold decision making is truly multi-agency with the voice of all partners being heard
4. Threshold decision making is transparent and consistent
5. The escalation process is effective in keeping children safe and resolving professional disagreements and there is strong evidence to support this

**Child and Adolescent Resilience and Support (including Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Well-being, adolescent resilience in online spaces and contextual safeguarding)**

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Well-being**

The concern regarding the re-commissioning of the CAMHs contract. The SSCP will have a keen interest in ensuring that this contract works for Surrey's children. To achieve this we will:

1. work with commissioners and providers to ensure that processes are in place to monitor the effectiveness of delivery of the contract
2. we will ask commissioners and providers to provide evidence from parents, children and partners, that the CAMHs offer is working and that children receive the help they need when they need it
3. we will develop and approve a self-harm protocol and will seek evidence that this protocol is working to improve practice and support to children and families where self-harm is a factor.

## Contextual Safeguarding

The SSCP will continue to develop and embed its response to adolescents who are vulnerable to safeguarding risks beyond the home including peer on peer abuse, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and other forms of harm related to context. We will:

1. ensure that multi-agency staff have a Practice Guidance document that gives guidance and practical tips on how to plan, assess, formulate a hypothesis with a family, develop a plan of work with a family and professional network
2. ensure that multi-agency staff have Training and practice support sessions for staff to support implementation
3. ensure that there are clear pathways and dedicated work streams around Mental Health, Contextual Safeguarding and Family Relationships and improve multidisciplinary working with our partner agencies
4. ensure that multi-agency practitioners have practice toolkits to support their working with either Mental Health, Contextual Safeguarding or Family Relationships
5. ensure that multi-agency practitioners have access to systemic Family Therapy clinics across the quadrants to support the development and embedding of Motivational Interviewing and systemic practice and give access to systemic Family Therapy to families in a timely way.

## Online Safeguarding

Evidence from our thematic review of adolescent suicides and presentations to the Executive have highlighted the need to support children and young people to stay safe online. We will:

1. work with children, families, schools and key agencies to develop effective multi-agency responses, tools and approaches to address online risks and keep children safe
2. we will also work with children, families, schools and key agencies to develop tools and approaches that promote the emotional health and well-being of children and young people in online spaces. This may include access to online therapies, peer support, sites that promote emotional health and well-being.

## Supporting Children and Young People with SEN-D who may be at risk

Evidence from the *Thematic Review of Adolescent Suicides in Surrey 2014-2020* and national reports on child exploitation and adolescent safeguarding highlight the fact that having a special educational need, or a disability can be an additional risk factor. Children with social, emotional and communication conditions like Autistic Spectrum Disorder can be at a higher level of risk particularly of various types of exploitation and in online spaces.

1. We will ensure that our approach to adolescent safeguarding includes the need to understand and to respond to a child's special educational needs.
2. We will ensure that the autism strategy includes information and guidance on safeguarding autistic children.

## Neglect

Neglect remains one of the most prevalent forms of harm experienced by children in Surrey. 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. We want to:

- achieve full implementation of GCP2 by the partnership; the utilisation of an evidence-based tool in cases of Child Neglect in Surrey
- evaluate, monitor and challenge the impact of the GCP2 partnership response (including GCP2A an antenatal pilot) through the use of a multi-agency platform 'ECINS' and data capture for Neglect. Impact is also to be monitored through SSCP audit and independent scrutiny. The Surrey Academy will ensure that the learning is taken forward across the wider partnership
- Surrey multi-agency professionals are trained and confident in utilisation of the GCP2 tool (and the screening tool which sits alongside it for professionals who have brief interventions with children and families)
- to improve awareness and understanding of Neglect within communities (public, voluntary services, community services for example) to share preventative messaging so that early identification can be achieved
- development of a Neglect communication strategy to be led by the SSCP partnership team
- an increased understanding and a shared narrative of Neglect across the partnership through the adoption of an evidence-based model and typology for Neglect.

The above proposed priorities will be evaluated on an annual basis.

## Business as usual

The SSCP will continue to give conspicuous oversight of the continuing improvement in Children's Services so that the issues identified in the 2018 Ofsted inspection are fully addressed and we make progress towards getting to 'Good'.

We will continue to focus on the following areas of multi-agency safeguarding practice.

## The journey of the child

- Early help and promoting good developmental progress and well-being for all children
- Children in need including SEN-D
- Children on CP plan
- Children looked after by the County Council
- Care Leavers

## Specific safeguarding concerns

- Domestic abuse
- Children at risk of exploitation
- Children missing from home, school and care

## Scrutiny and quality assurance

- Strengthening the ability of the Partnership to demonstrate improvement in practice and impact on safeguarding children

## User voice and influence

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

## Practitioner voice and influence

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



Appendix one:

Budget for 2019-2021

## SSCP budget for 2020-2021

	Proposed budget £
<b>Staffing</b>	
Direct	218,100
Indirect	146,100
Total staffing	364,200
<b>Non-Staffing:</b>	
Independent Chair/Scrutineer	40,000
Training (Staff Development)	5,000
Venues	2,500
Miscellaneous	2,500
Subscriptions	1,500
ICT Development and Phones	5,000
Independent Case Reviews	72,000
Innovation Budget	20,000
Staff Travel	3,200
<b>Other (balancing figure)</b>	<b>107,280</b>
	258,980
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>623,180</b>
Partner Contributions 2020/21	-269,091
SCC Contribution	-183,300
Partners carry forward	-71,394
SCC Carry forward	-59,396
Training Income	-40,000
<b>Income</b>	<b>-623,181</b>
<b>Shortfall/(Surplus)</b>	<b>0</b>

Appendix two:

SSCP team

## SSCP Partnership Development Team

Senior Administrative Officer:  
Business Support Coordinator

Partnership Development & Engagement Officer  
Partnership Development & Engagement Officer  
Partnership Development & Engagement Officer

Board Manager  
Partnership Development Manager

Vikkiey Scott-Mitchell  
Mikaela George

Liz Cassini  
Maggie Pugh  
Dr Sharon Young

Ruby Lam  
Paul Bailey

