



Annual Report 2023-2024



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Reflections on the Year from our 3 Statutory Partners

2023/2024 has afforded the Safeguarding Partners an opportunity to really strengthen our partnership working, building on the learning from the Early Help JTAI ([Joint Targeted Area Inspection](#)) that took place at the end of 2022/2023, and we have enjoyed a period of stability across the Designated Safeguarding Partners, which has supported this well.

We have been thoughtful about engagement with the wider partnership and made better use of the Forums and the Annual Conference to reinforce our key priorities. Surrey County Council has based the redesign of some key services, including Early Help and the Adolescent Service, on the learning emerging from the safeguarding partnership.

Surrey Police are particularly proud of the work around the neglect training and screening tool, Child Centred Policing Strategy and work on safeguarding adolescents. As a partnership we will continue to improve identification and response to child sexual abuse and exploitation in 2024/25.

The Surrey-wide ICB Safeguarding Team have continued to deliver statutory services across health, working with NHS providers, NHS England, Safeguarding Partnerships, and other relevant agencies to improve practice to safeguard children and young people.

The cost of living crisis, the increase in demand for mental health services, including neurodevelopment assessments with limited resources, and a depleting NHS workforce nationally, are issues that will continue to put pressure on the system, and we will continue to monitor the impact of these as we move into 2024/2025.

As Safeguarding Partners, we have coalesced around a small number of priority areas which emerge time and again as complex challenges for our system. These issues are evidenced in all our sources of learning, and we have used the opportunity presented to us by [Working Together 2023](#) to redesign our governance around these priorities. As a result, we have developed the role of the scrutineer to increase the independent challenge to us to improve. We are moving positively into 2024/2025 with a focus on the implementation of the new Working Together requirements including a review of our governance structures and performance accountability arrangements.



Rachael Wardell, Executive Director, Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, Surrey County Council



Audrey Scott-Ryan, Associate Director of Safeguarding Adults and Children Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System, NHS Surrey Heartlands



Gemma Morris, Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Public Protection, Surrey Police

Introduction

This annual report of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. It reviews progress against our priorities over the year, areas of strength, areas of challenge and future plans.

Purpose and Vision of the Surrey Safeguarding and Children Partnership (SSCP)

The purpose of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Surrey. As defined in [The Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#), the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) consists of three statutory safeguarding partners; Surrey County Council (SCC), Surrey Police, and the NHS Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Frimley ICB.

In Surrey, these statutory safeguarding partners are significantly supported by representatives from education, the county's schools and colleges, district and borough councils, and the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, to provide strategic leadership for our wider safeguarding children practices here in Surrey. These partners form the SSCP's Executive Group. The membership of the wider Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership however includes all those agencies across Surrey who provide support and services to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. This group represents the full breadth of interests and stakeholders involved in children's safeguarding in Surrey.

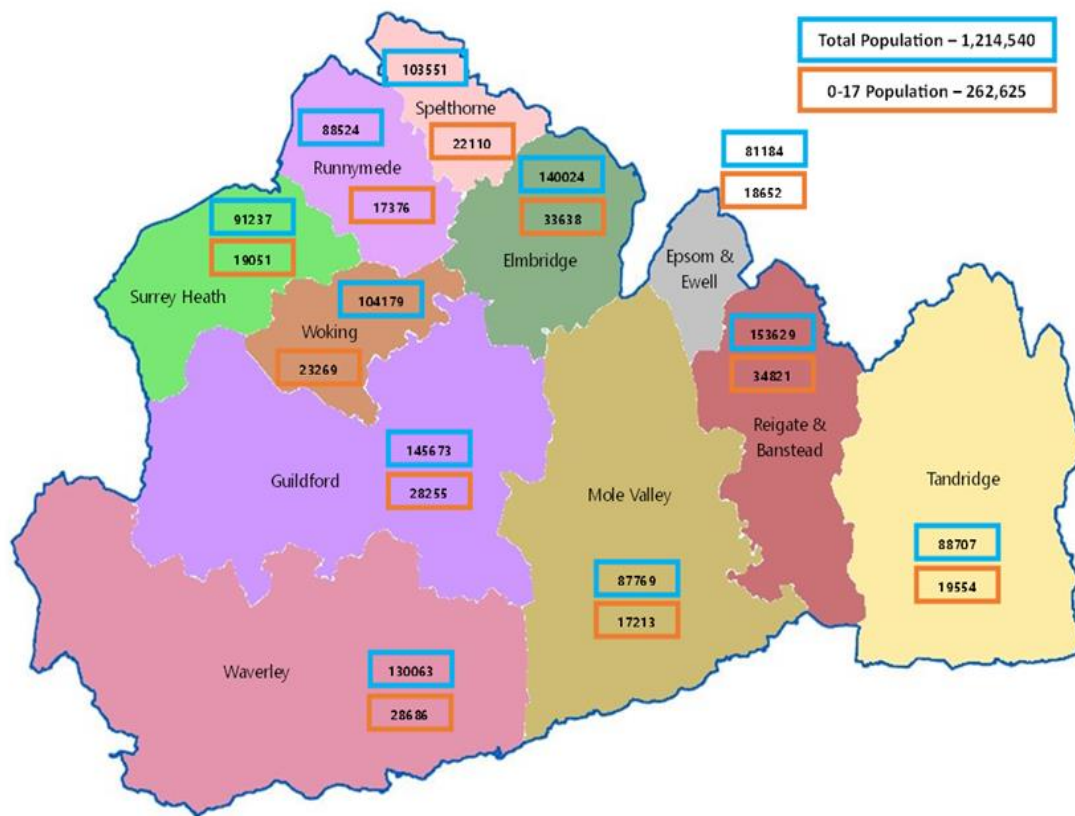
Structure of the Partnership

The full structure of the SSCP can be seen in [Appendix 1](#). The SSCP's vision is that our partnership arrangements and the work that we do together will make a difference to the lives of children and young people in Surrey. Our aim is to facilitate closer working relationships across our partner agencies and to ensure that we learn from listening to our children and families, undertaking our own local reviews and learning from national reviews and guidance so that we can improve the lives and welfare of children and young people here in Surrey. This annual report reflects on what we have learnt and what we have achieved in the period 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2024 and our aspirations for the next 12 months.

Surrey's Local Context

By population size, Surrey is one of the top 10 local authorities in England. This population is spread across 11 districts and boroughs and the composition of these ranges from significant urban areas to the north and rural areas to the south of the county. The diverse nature of our communities provides opportunities and challenges in our response to the needs and support to each area.

22% of our population are aged 0-17, which equates to approximately 1 in 5 Surrey residents being children or young people. This ranks Surrey as having the 6th highest number of children and young people across all local authorities.



Total Population - 1,214, 540

0-17 Population - 262,625

District & Borough	Total population	0-17 population
Elmbridge	140024	33638
Epsom & Ewell	81184	18652
Guildford	145673	28255
Mole Valley	87769	17213
Reigate & Banstead	153629	34821
Runnymede	88524	17376
Spelthorne	103551	22110
Surrey Heath	91237	19051
Tandridge	88707	19554
Waverley	130063	28686
Woking	104179	23269

In addition to a growing population, Surrey is becoming more diverse with a 6 percentage point increase in residents identifying in ethnicity groups other than White British in 2021, compared with 2011.

Surrey is an affluent county, which is clear when viewing the [Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index](#) (IDACI). The IDACI measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families, and in Surrey shows that only 0.42% of the county is classified as very deprived. Yet, 42.9% of households have at least one deprivation marker, highlighting that other families may need support beyond those areas and households that are the most in need.

Priorities

The Partnership has continued to focus on three priorities this year: neglect, early help and child and adolescent mental health and emotional well-being. This focus is because these are the three areas that continue to have the most impact on the effectiveness of our safeguarding practice and also continue to feature most frequently in our reviews. Strong multi-agency collaboration from our partners and a commitment to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families has led to progress across all three priorities this year.

Priority One: Neglect

Neglect continues to be a challenge in Surrey and therefore has remained a priority for the SSCP. There were an additional 128 professionals trained to use the [GCP2 Assessment tool](#) (Graded Care Profile) during the year. This tool has the capacity to be used simultaneously by involved professionals to create a fully rounded assessment of a family's situation and identify how to respond to the level of neglect observed. There are some technical issues regarding the uploading of completed assessments onto the ECINS (Empowering Communities with Integrated Network Systems) Portal which have affected the volumes registered as complete, but Children's Services are looking to appoint a GCP2 Administrator to resolve this. The Partnership has taken a view that the GCP2 Assessment Tool should be seen as one of a number of tools that can be utilised to assess the level of neglect affecting individual families.

As such, a [Neglect Screening](#) tool is also widely used by Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) when children present in health settings and neglect is considered to be a factor. Surrey Police have added the tool to officers' mobile data terminals for more immediate on the scene use. This has assisted officers in determining the level of neglect and the need to consider using Police Powers of Protection in "live" situations. Use of this tool has also been extended to the Child Exploitation and Missing Unit in Surrey Police, recognising the links between neglect and children and young people being at risk of extra familial harm, particularly for repeat missing children and victims of exploitation. In this scenario, situations involving individual children are regularly reviewed, including within Risk Management Meetings (RMM) to identify where further support for the child might be required, with signposting to relevant support or further discussions with children's services

Next steps...

A refreshed [Neglect Strategy](#) for 2024 – 26 has recently launched and we are committed to the use of language that families can understand, therefore helping professionals provide families with the support they need. Neglect Masterclasses are

planned for Autumn 2024 to share the new strategy and ensure all agencies are engaged and providing support to families to reduce the number of children that suffer neglect.

Detailed data analysis into demographics such as age, ethnicity, income deprivation and location are helping to identify signs of neglect and those who are disproportionately affected by it. This allows for appropriate support to be provided at an earlier stage where it is needed.

Increased awareness, knowledge, understanding and recognition of all forms of neglect has been addressed through bespoke training delivered to all front-line officers, staff in the PSPA (Surrey Police Single Point of Access) and the Child Abuse team, on identifying and understanding child neglect, including the definition and criminal threshold of neglect, the different forms of neglect, the impact of neglect and the neglect screening tool. Surrey Police know from daily reviews on child abuse crimes, carried out by a Review Officer from the Public Protection Support Unit, that Neglect is being identified and investigated, and that referrals for support are being made into the PSPA who triage these before making appropriate onward referrals into CSPA (Children's Single Point of Access) highlighting the perceived higher risk cases. This highlights any additional lines of enquiry, any hidden crime and ensure the voice of the child has been heard and that we are being child centred.

Surrey Police and Surrey Children's Services have demonstrated strong partnership work delivering Assessment and Intervention workshops to further increase understanding and offer support to families.

The increased awareness of neglect across the partnership has resulted in reductions in Children's Services involvements where neglect has been identified. This includes 31% fewer Child Protection plans with a category of neglect at the end of March 2024 when compared to April 2023, with a 12% drop in the number of Child in Need plans where neglect has been recorded over the same time. There has also been a reduction in the number of contacts to the CSPA that had neglect as a factor with 24% fewer in March 2024 than April 2023. However, while there has been a reduction around neglect, the progression of appropriate concerns remains with 39% more children and young people being referred for assessment in March 2024 than April 2023 and the number of completed assessments with neglect recorded as a factor has remained steady across the year.

Priority Two: Early Help

Early Help is support that is provided as soon as needs emerge. It can be in the critical years of a child's life (including pre-birth and pregnancy) and in later childhood and adolescence. As a partnership, we seek to offer support at the earliest opportunity, to best meet the needs of families and to prevent these escalating. Parents and carers are generally the best people to understand their child's needs, and asking for help is a sign of responsibility and not of failure. Parents say that support works well when they are respected and listened to by those working with them, and in most cases, it should be the decision of the parents when to ask for help or advice. Early help requires a diverse partnership and includes support from wider family, friends, and the local community. By working together and including all

family members, we can empower families to lead happy, full lives and to achieve their goals and aspirations.

An [Early Help Strategy](#) has been developed. This has been informed by the annual Early Help Systems guide self-assessment review, and the Written Statement of Action in response to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in 2023. This strategy seeks to drive the transformation in early help in response to these needs. It highlights the governance through the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive and seeks to create a more cohesive early help system through improved partnership, data, and effective communication.

There are a number of ongoing projects including CSPA Transformation and Families First. The CSPA transformation project launched in August 2023 to address areas for improvement identified by the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in March 2023. The project aims to establish a sustainable and effective front-door service that ensures children and families receive the right support at the right time. Significant progress has been made on the CSPA project, with key deliverables completed and several initiatives currently under development, as outlined below.

Key completed activities:

Activity	Description	Impact Actual – evidenced and achieved Anticipated – longer term impact or not yet measurable
Social Worker oversight pilot	Introduced robust Social Worker oversight of all critical junctions within CSPA to ensure threshold is applied effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual - Reduction in the number of internal transfers between teams. • Anticipated - Children and families are directed to the right service as soon as possible.
CSPA Open events	Delivered events for Health and Education partners with events for the third sector under development. Virtual events aimed to strengthen partnership working; improving the quality of requests for support and the understanding of consent and early help offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual - Positive feedback from partners about the series of events. • Actual - Improvement in quality of requests for support received. • Anticipated - Raised awareness of early help offer and support in the community.
System Improvements	EHM (Early Help Module) contact form reviewed and updated to reduce processing time thus improving timeliness and data to inform our practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated - Improved timeliness at this part of the process. • Anticipated - Improved worker experience to complete form.

Quality Assurance Framework	Framework with audit cycle, including partnership audits to measure the quality of service provided, celebrate success and address areas for improvement identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual - Audit activity highlights improvement in quality of requests for support.
Multi-Agency Partnership Information Sharing Protocol	Details specific arrangements and processes for information sharing, compliant with data protection and legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated - Promotes consistent, proportionate and timely information sharing.

The success of the project will be measured against four main benefits:

Benefit	Measures
Children and families receive the right support the first time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in repeat contacts • Reduction in demand into front door where those families with emerging needs who would be best supported by universal or community support
Children and families receive timely and proportionate support based on need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in referral decisions completed within timescale • Increase in MAPE (Multi-Agency Partnership Enquiry) enquiries completed within timescale
Increase in the use of Early Help Services (applying the Family Safeguarding Model)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in conversion rate from CSPA to Early Help
Reducing demand on specialist and higher cost services (which includes statutory) where needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in conversion rate from CSPA to Assessment • Proportionate increase in contacts with an outcome of progress to assessment resulting in C&F Assessment

Note – The measures outlined above may be slightly amended and evolve as a result of ongoing efforts to improve data reporting within CSPA.

A key part of the [Families First](#) work is to create an Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS).



The purpose of [Families First](#) is to help families identify and connect with the local support services that are available and helpful to them in their communities. This includes health, education, social care, and a wide range of community services. This will have the following benefits:

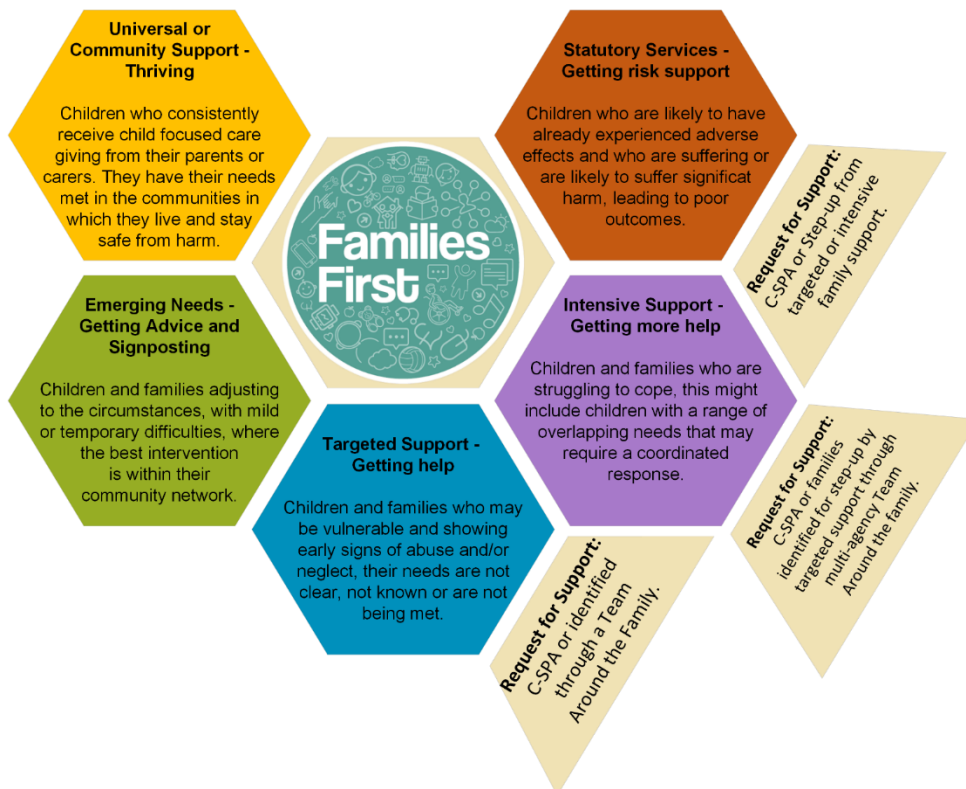
- Gives families the power to decide on what help they need to enable them to make a positive change.
- Brings partners closer together to deliver one targeted plan of support, with shared working principles.
- Provides a dedicated Family Support Service to reduce the need for families to access statutory services.

The outcomes and impact of this work so far are:

- **Families know where to get help:** Families First principles have been developed through wide consultation with partners and families. They seek to provide shared approaches and a consistent brand for any person and/or organisation working in Surrey providing early help in its widest form. The principles are written in clear language and capture some of the key aspirations from Working Together 2023, Social Work National Framework principles and local input from partners and families. Their purpose is to develop a consistent approach to supporting families across the county.
- **Children and families receive the right help at the right time:** The [Continuum of Support](#) further promotes the partnership approach for working together to support families according to their needs, aligning with the [Thrive](#) framework. This encourages families to receive the right support at the right time at the earliest opportunity, as per the Family Safeguarding Model. Embedding the [Continuum of Support](#) is a priority for the partnership.
- **Need is identified early:** In 2023, 50 staff in targeted early help teams completed a survey to analyse where partnership and collaboration was strongest and where it most required development. The results showed that staff most wanted to strengthen the partnership with [Mindworks](#) services (children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health service in Surrey) as a priority for offering help and support to children with mental health needs. In response to this, workshops with Mindworks providers and a range of local partners including Housing, Community Safety and Family Centres have been organised, following on from a prototype developed in Working in 2023.

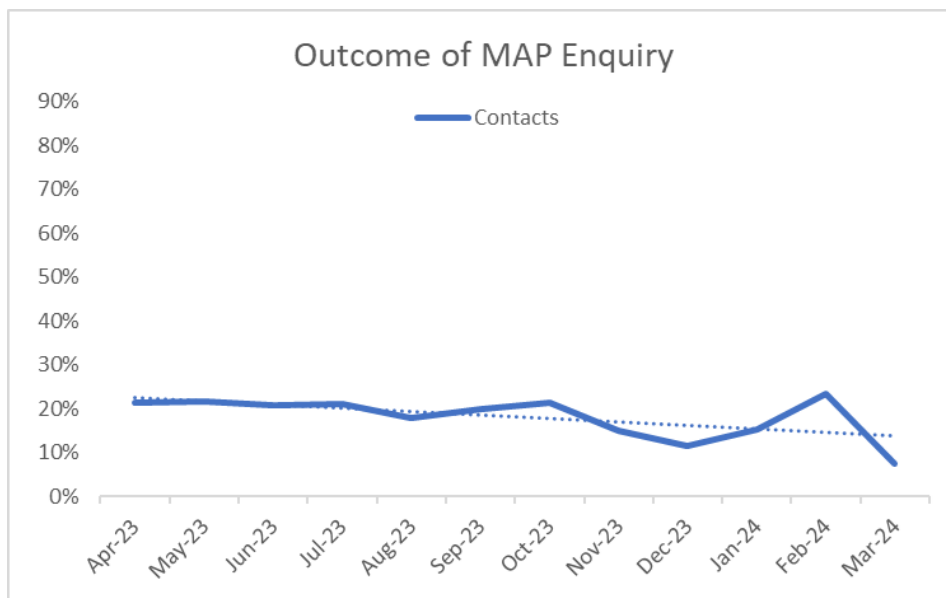
- **Partnership Support is in place for families and in the local environment:** Families will have the best access to the support they need if local services are connected. The early help partnership is committed to joining together prevention, place, and early intervention services including health, education, social care, and community services into a systemic model of delivery within a district/borough. Developing local forums/boards for early help, driven by the new Lead Providers of the Family Centres under the new commissioned model will help to enable this. Importantly, these forums will connect with wider local initiatives such as the Team Around the Community and wider collaborations through Integrated Care Systems.
- **Intensive Support is in place for families during periods of escalating need:** The creation of the IFSS will enable more opportunities for agencies to work together. The Early Help Strategic Board (EHSB) will engage with the new Complications from Excess Weight (CEW) Service in Surrey Heartlands. This is part of the NHS Long Term Plan and supports children aged between two and eighteen who experience health complications relating to severe obesity.
- **The Be Your Best programme** [Be Your Best Surrey \(bybsurrey.org\)](http://bybsurrey.org) is Surrey's wider weight management programme, aimed at families with children and teenagers and is now able to take children aged 5-17 who are above the healthy weight range.

As part of the Early Help work the Partnership has also developed and launched in January 2024 the [Continuum of Support](#) which replaces the previous Effective Family Resilience Levels of Need.



The new guidance document is for everyone who works with children and their families in Surrey, whether in a statutory or voluntary capacity and enables practitioners to recognise, report and address the needs of a family in a timely manner and intervene accordingly at an early stage. The introduction of the [Continuum of Support](#) has seen an improvement in the quality of the information received by the CSPA.

As the graph below indicates, this means that fewer of the contacts made to CSPA require additional information as part of the Multi-Agency Partnership Enquiry process to decide the appropriate outcome. This also means that decisions are being made sooner as fewer steps are being completed within the CSPA. The [Continuum of Support](#) model is evidenced based and the families are being offered the right level of support in a timely manner.



Since its launch a growing number of practitioners have accessed training and webinars. Embedding the [Continuum of Support](#) is a priority for the partnership and understanding the impact of the new framework on supporting families' needs earlier. Practitioners in health have been positive about the alignment to the [Thrive](#) model as we can have consistent language and a whole system approach to working with children and families.

The [Early Help Strategy](#) ensures:

Oversight specifically relating to the Early Help offer for families has also been the medium in which to respond to the recommendations identified in the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI March 2023).

An action plan has been developed in relation to the JTAI inspection, an example of which is the implementation of the [ICON](#) programme to support families on how to safely manage crying babies. This is an example of where early help is aimed at parents and carers with young babies.



Children's Services are also undertaking a full review of the JTAI Action Plan in relation to front door activity, including step-downs to Early Help. Initial findings suggested good progress in many areas and identification of areas for further improvement in respect of including partners in decision making and ensuring the voice of parents and children are amplified in decisions made.

All of this work regarding Early Help was reinforced by the SSCP Annual Conference held in November 2023 which focussed on "Safeguarding and Family Resilience in Surrey". The in-person event was attended by multi-agency, partnership-wide colleagues who work with or for children and young people in Surrey, including education settings, children's social care, Police, Health and voluntary/community sector organisations.

The event featured a range of informative and interactive thematic workshops throughout the day. These included:

An Introduction to Participation which included participation theory and co-production with young people; how participation can help service design and procurement; case studies of successful user participation and interactive activities.

An informative workshop exploring the Surrey Early Help and Family Safeguarding Model, how it can be used and benefits in supporting children, young people and their families.

The conference provided attendees with an understanding of the Family Safeguarding practice model in Surrey; how partners can effectively work together within the practice model, and ideas and understanding of good practice in participative techniques.

Priority Three: Mental health and wellbeing

[Mindworks](#) is now established as the children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health service in Surrey. It is delivered by a group made up of NHS and national/local voluntary sector organisations all working together.



An approach called [THRIVE](#) is used, where children and young people and their families have a central voice in decisions about their care. The Mindworks reference group provides an open and constructive multi-agency perspective, and this year has focussed on two areas of service re-design; the Access and Advice Team (AAT) and the Neurodevelopmental (ND) Pathway. A task and finish group over the summer of 2023 supported necessary changes to the AAT pathway, ensuring safeguarding concerns were heard alongside the financial and capacity issues, whilst work on the ND pathway remains a challenge with some very long waits to access support.



Ongoing work is in place to help children and families who remain on a waiting list to access the neurodevelopmental (ND) pathway. There is a schools consultation service for ND that has been implemented to ensure referrals have the appropriate information to enable discussion of the completed screening questionnaires, as well as weekly escalation meetings. It is recognised that all children, young people and families with mental health difficulties should be able to access additional support and strategies through Mindworks Surrey at any time without the need for a referral. The partnership recognises there are challenges in accessing support and work will continue to monitor this area over the coming year.

We recognise that school attendance is important in a child's wellbeing and therefore is an area that the partnership had identified as requiring particular focus. The establishment of a multi-agency Encouraging School Attendance Partnership Forum is committed to good school attendance, and was formed during COVID to encourage cohorts of vulnerable children to attend school – which was very successful. The recent national changes to the school attendance strategy [Working together to improve school attendance](#), have created an ongoing need for a multi-agency partnership to be maintained as school attendance is everybody's business.

The Forum's aims are to:

- ensure that all children benefit from the protective factor of attending a high-quality education setting every day.
- improve outcomes for children and young people by monitoring school attendance and providing assurance of the effectiveness of partnership activity.
- promote collaborative working with all agencies including local health services and school nursing teams to ensure practitioners understand attendance

requirements and responsibilities and work collaboratively with them to link families into the right support.

- identify attendance as a concern, where appropriate, for children with a social worker, by including it in the Child Protection Plan (CPP) and Child in Need (CiN) Plans, provide a formalised multi-agency approach to discuss issues around attendance.
- communicate changes to statutory responsibilities for schools and local authorities around attendance at school, alongside the development of partnership understanding of education neglect.

The multi-agency focus on the school attendance of children who have an allocated social worker, including those children on a Child Protection Plan or with a Child in Need Plan, as well as children in care, has increased the visibility of these children and the barriers they may face to their attendance. This cohort of children's attendance, educational progress and outcomes are nationally reported so that this data can be benchmarked by schools.

The Surrey Virtual School has led a multi-agency task and finish group to develop a resource for social workers focussing on key areas including school attendance. This will better support high quality conversations with schools, parents and children, and development of specific approaches such as inclusion of attendance as a key focus within CiN plans where appropriate.

The shared focus from this group on the attendance of Surrey's children in care is one contributing factor to the improvement reported by the Department for Education (DfE) for 2022-2023 since the previous year, against a national and Southeast area worsening picture. DfE data reflects that overall attendance for Surrey children in care was in line with the Southeast and Nationally, whilst severe absence (50% absence or more) was better than both England and the Southeast and unauthorised absence was considerably better than either England or the Southeast.

SSCP Forums and impact

The SSCP Forums continue to forge close working relationships across the partnership to ensure their voice and contribution to partnership working is at the forefront of the SSCP safeguarding model.

The Forums are:

- Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum
- District and Borough Forum
- Third Sector Network
- Health Forum

The Schools & Education Safeguarding Forum's (SESF) work in partnership with other agencies, including the Surrey County Council Education Safeguarding Team and the Police, has grown closer during the last twelve months, resulting in greater awareness of the role schools and education settings play within the work of the SSCP. Education is a key partner in the SSCP, with the CEO of a Multi Academy

Trust sitting on the SSCP Executive and other school leaders being members of various subgroups. Achievements of the SESF include:

- greater understanding regarding how the Voice of the Child is sought and used in safeguarding practices across agencies and settings.
- much more direct involvement of schools within the forum ensuring greater consistency of practice in relation to safeguarding.
- more effective working with other agencies leading to better outcomes for young people. An example of which is a move to implement a process to ensure secondary schools are made aware and have timely information when a young person is taken into custody and subject to arrest.
- improved awareness by school & education settings of work being undertaken by SSCP and the roles schools & education settings play in it.
- support from Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) Network is closely matched to issues/demands on DSLs in schools and education settings.

Surrey Police have been working to ensure that the way they engage with schools is consistent, effective and clear. The importance of building trust with children, young people, and their communities to help keep them safe, happy, and healthy is crucial, and they have revised their offer to schools to ensure it is consistent, relevant, trauma informed and joined up. A refreshed Youth Engagement offer for Years 4 and 7 has been developed, ensuring the content is engaging, thought-provoking and educational and the aim is for these sessions to build on the trust and confidence in the police and provide early engagement and opportunity for young people to have a positive experience and engagement with a police officer.

A pilot regarding Police Intelligence briefings in the West of the county has proved to be successful, with 140 schools taking part. The aim has been to increase information sharing and has provided improved knowledge of local issues and concerns, and as a result has increased intelligence submissions, providing an excellent example of partnership working. It is anticipated that due to the success of this work, it will be rolled out across the county.

The District & Borough Forum provides an effective way of ensuring that all districts and boroughs are kept up to date on safeguarding issues, actively participating in Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs), and provides support to those developing their safeguarding policies, ensuring consistency across the partnership. This includes:

- strengthening the arrangements for the Section 11 audit process to ensure depth and consistency across all district and borough councils.
- disseminating findings from case reviews and development of practice.
- ensuring improved knowledge of the changing models covering areas such as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Early Help.
- enabling active participation in various SSCP sub-groups including the Neglect sub-group, which in turn has provided a platform for District & Boroughs to provide input into policy development.

Providing a platform for organisations across the SSCP remains the Third Sector Networks focus, with the voice of the child a regular agenda item offering the opportunity to share current issues within communities and feed back to the partnership. Areas of work include:

- the effective sharing of information which has led to collaboration between services, both statutory and third sector, with voluntary sector organisations such as [Catch22](#) linking with [East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service](#) (ESDAS), and the Police child exploitation team, linking with [Leatherhead Youth Project](#).
- the sharing of knowledge and resources such as the [Self-Harm Protocol](#), [Suicide Prevention Toolbox](#) and the [Neglect screening tools](#) have greatly benefited organisations in their work with families. A presentation by the police regarding drugs in schools was also well received.
- direct working with safeguarding managers in third sector organisations to develop their understanding of threshold and consent issues, including the [Continuum of Support](#).

The overarching purpose of the SSCP Health Safeguarding Forum is to provide scrutiny of child safeguarding arrangements across the Surrey health community in line with statutory duties. In the past 12 months the focus has been to:

- provide a framework for the SSCP priorities, with key documents and feedback as a standing item on the agenda, ensuring work being undertaken across the system and around the SSCP priorities is shared with all health partners.
- influence the strategic direction in relation to the planning, commissioning, and delivery of services to safeguard children and young people in order to achieve a consistent and responsive approach.
- update key issues for health services and provides a forum for discussion arising from local and national safeguarding guidance including good information sharing across the Surrey wide health system, the oversight of a safe recruitment process delivered across the Surrey health system and safeguarding learning from children reviews which includes training requirements.
- review and update policies including the bruising policy and the review of processes around non-accidental injuries in infants attending the emergency department since publication of the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) Review, which is central to the work around the neglect priority.

Learning from Reviews

The SSCP published three Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in 2023-24:

- [Maple report](#)
- [Ash report](#)
- [Rowan report](#)

Themes from Maple & Ash included strengthening services to support child and adolescent mental health and emotional well-being, with specific recommendations to develop professional curiosity, critical reflection, response to neglect and

cumulative harm and the multi-agency responses to children with mental ill health, alongside celebrating difference and building belonging. Gender Identity is now included within the Children and Young People Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (CYP EWMH) Strategy, and a robust multi-agency neglect strategy has been developed in conjunction with feedback from young people via the User Voice & Participation team.

The Rowan report highlights the importance of parenting assessments, including pre-birth assessments. Recognising the vulnerabilities and additional support required for a parent who is still a child also featured.

As a result of these and other rapid reviews undertaken in the year, the Learning from Practice sub-group (LfP) has had a particular focus on the following areas:

- Cultural Awareness – recent safeguarding reviews identified the need to strengthen practice in relation to the culture and identity aspects of families and how to ensure that practitioners across the partnership are confident in routinely applying cultural competence when assessing the needs of children and their families. A task and finish group identified aspects for practitioners to consider within their work and as a result a [7 minute briefing - Cultural Literacy](#) has since been disseminated. Work in this area will continue throughout 2024.
- Pre-birth Planning - The work around Pre-birth planning ([Pre-birth assessment & intervention timeline](#)) and particularly early identification of safeguarding issues has seen clarity brought to Practice Standards within Children Social Care and has supported better understanding of activity expected within key timeframes. Clinicians can now refer in as soon as they know about a pregnancy provided the criteria of the referral are met in terms of a safeguarding need, which allows for work to begin with the family as soon as possible. The pre-birth conference should take place by the time the expectant mother is 28-30 weeks pregnant to allow as much time as possible to clarify and establish the support necessary to create safety for the baby and family once the baby is born. This gives the opportunity to work with the family, intervene and provide support at the earliest opportunity but also under a Child in Need (CiN) plan where appropriate. For some families, this timely support may mean that a pre-birth conference is not needed as the risks have been supported and reduced.
- Elective Home Education (EHE) - Following the LCSPR regarding [Ash](#), Surrey helped contribute to a National Panel briefing paper regarding EHE. The briefing paper [safeguarding children in elective home education](#) explores common themes and patterns identified across reviews where children died or were seriously harmed while being electively home educated. It shares learning from reviews to help improve the quality of multi-agency safeguarding practice and how this group of children should be better protected in the future. As a result of the [Ash](#) review, one of the recommendations by the National Panel to the DfE is a statutory register of children who are electively home educated to help safeguarding agencies have better local knowledge about this group of children. In addition, Children's Services leadership

commissioned a piece of analysis internally to look at the strengths of EHE monitoring, the presence of additional vulnerabilities and the demographics for this group of children and young people. An action plan, developed by Senior Leaders, oversees the activity and practice development regarding the safeguarding of children who are electively home educated. As a result, Surrey County Council's [EHE Policy](#) has been updated and republished, awareness training has been delivered to professionals within the wider partnership and specific training has been delivered to workers within the PSPA and CSPA. EHE Inclusion Officers have maintained regular contact with electively home educated children who have a social worker, and Surrey County Council have recruited additional staff to meet increasing demand in this area.

- GCP2 – [GCP2 Assessment tool](#) continues to be used as one of a number of identification and assessment tools for neglect. Agencies are encouraged to contribute to an assessment even if they are not in a position to complete the entire assessment.
- [The Bruising in a Non-Mobile Infant Policy](#) has been widely disseminated throughout the partnership. Practitioners are supported in implementing this policy which includes supporting families through the non-accidental injury processes. Safeguarding Supervision offers the opportunity to promote the policy and also discuss any individual cases or concerns. As part of a subsequent review, a learning event was held, and it was encouraging to note that all participants were aware of the Bruising policy and were using this to inform their practice.

In order to share learning we are flexible in the way we disseminate messaging, for example Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) training has been reviewed to ensure it covers information sharing and highlights to DSLs the importance of information sharing between schools, in particular for looked after children and those on Child Protection Plans. Training also highlights and references learning from [National](#) and [Local Learning Reviews](#), [7 minute briefings](#) and bitesize training. The use of 7-minute briefings and Reflective Practice Discussions linked to specific cases, has helped to ensure themes and practical advice are shared across the partnership. The practitioner learning events have encouraged open discussions around a range of topics that have been taken to team meetings and other forums. These events, which will be expanded on during 2024-2025, enable practitioners to not only think about the recommendations, but how they might also apply them in practice.

Another area explored was the need to look more holistically at a family's needs when a referral is received. It is now practice within CSPA to explore the full history when making risk decisions, and within the health needs assessment a 'Think Family' approach is adopted, and training has also been disseminated relating to [The Myth of Invisible Men](#) and attempts are made to include fathers in the care of families. Demographics of the family are also included in the medical health records identifying siblings within families.

In 2024-2025, a series of multi-agency events will tackle some of the more common themes arising in our reviews. One of the biggest challenges found is the concept of 'professional curiosity' when referenced in reviews. Partners acknowledge that this may have become a catch-all phrase which can often feel vague in day-to-day practice. Therefore, we have used the lens of '*re-envisioning professional curiosity and challenge*' – what it really means in practice, both for professionals and policy makers, and how we can embed learning meaningfully across all of our Surrey services. We will take this theme and apply it to various subjects to explore what it means in practice and what we would expect 'more curiosity' to look like in some of the scenarios multi-agency practitioner's encounter. The first subject we are going to address is Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI). This work will be expanded to other themes in 2024/25 and will better enable learning to be embedded into practice.

Work continues to review recommendations coming from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRS) and to increase focus and improve measurability in driving change. One of the ambitions going forward is to begin to bring in the learning from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDR) and Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR) where children's welfare and safeguarding is a parallel need to those of the adult, but where relationships and communication are not as developed between involved agencies.

Over the past couple of years, it has been the priority of both the SSCP and the Case Review Group (CRG) to improve the child review process. As well as embedding changes to the existing process the new Independent Scrutineer is undertaking a review of the Rapid Review process to ensure a robust and efficient process is in place and that we continually improve the way we carry out reviews to maximise and embed learning.

We recognise that embedding learning into practice is fundamental and as a result during 2024-2025, the Learning from Practice subgroup will look at implementing a different method to track the actions and recommendations from reviews to ensure a more thematic approach and one that offers greater opportunity for agencies to highlight any ongoing challenges or risks.

Measuring impact of the work of the SSCP

Auditing is one of the ways in which we assess impact of learning and changes in practice. These are conducted by the Learning from Practice subgroup. Audits are based on work arising from our priorities as highlighted via the subgroups, reviews, and any other areas of concern. In 2023-2024 we have sought to use an 'appreciative enquiry' model which looks at the circumstances of a smaller group of children but in much greater depth. Participants felt that the quality of the audit and the inter-agency dialogue was richer as a result.

Another way in which we measure impact is via the Section 11 process, which places a statutory duty on organisations to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The new Section 11 self-assessment process was launched

in September 2023 with a series of virtual briefings and guidance documents, and further support provided throughout the year via SSCP Forums and associated groups. The deadline for submissions is July 2024 and the outcomes will be reported in October 2024.

This year the Learning from Practice sub-group commissioned Multi-Agency Audits (MAA) which looked at neglect and suicide in young people, linked to the emotional wellbeing priority. As part of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in 2023, a multi-agency audit of selected children and young people took place which looked at the strengths of the multi-agency response to these children's needs.

MAA 1 Findings: Re-referrals made under the category of Neglect – July 2023

Surrey data for repeat referrals showed a significant increase where neglect had been identified, while referrals overall were experiencing a more gradual rise. The aim of the audit was to better understand the reasons behind this disparity.

The audit identified that partners generally have a good understanding of neglect and the need for intervention. In most cases, referrals to CSPA were timely and appropriate for accessing support from Early Help Services or Children's Services, however areas for improvement identified included:

- **Quality of referrals** – examples of limited information being provided, and children's voices not being heard which in turn led to delays in gathering more information and the incorrect application of thresholds and lack of clear understanding of the [Continuum of Support](#),
- **Inconsistent use of strategy discussions** when thresholds were met, resulting in missed opportunities to potentially work with families within the child protection arena, where it was appropriate to do so.
- **Lack of consent and poor engagement with parents** was identified as a barrier to all the children receiving the right support at the right time, and limited challenge from partners especially where there was a history of families declining support.

Work to address these issues:

As a result of the multi-agency audit on neglect and particularly repeat referrals related to re-emerging neglect, practitioners are more aware of the complexity and long-term impact of neglect. As part of the work to improve awareness of early help and the Family Safeguarding Model, decision making in response to neglect recognises that child protection processes may not always be the most appropriate route to achieve change, particularly where families may have "normalised" Children's Service involvement. Greater use of Early Help services, working alongside families to effect meaningful and sustained change is one approach being used. More effective use of the Public Law Outline (PLO) to highlight the seriousness of concerns and the need for change is another.

With renewed focus on using the Family Safeguarding Model, qualified social workers now oversee the triage stage, when contact into the CSPA is first made. There is greater clarity around decision making, particularly when it is felt that,

despite meeting threshold for child protection, families can be worked with at a lower level of intervention where it is safe to do so.

The issue of parental consent and how consent is sought has been an area for considerable reflection across all agencies. There is recognition that the offer of support needs to be presented in ways that enable families to see involvement with services as a positive step in their recovery. The roll out of Motivational Interviewing training and aligned techniques has assisted practitioners to have better conversations with parents and couch support in ways that enable parents to move beyond fear of involvement from agencies to recognising the benefits that involvement can bring.

In order to gain better understanding of the different ways neglect can present, particular focus has been on the impact of early childhood neglect and how this can present in adolescence as challenging behaviours rooted in trauma. One of the Learning from Practice sub-group's emerging themes is how to help school settings understand more about some children's difficulties and challenges within this context, and to respond in ways that recognise the root causes that some behaviours may have, giving greater recognition to this element of the child's experience being amplified through behaviour.

Recognising "affluent neglect" is another emerging theme for practice and focus has been on how to have "challenging" conversations with parents who provide material security, but where it is evident that children are, or are at risk of, suffering emotional neglect.

Conversations with practitioners on how to respond to educational neglect, particularly for children and young people who have not been able to fully return to school-based learning is another cross-cutting theme across children's social care, education and services supporting children's mental health.

MAA 2 Finding: Children and young people who have survived a suicide attempt – January 2024.

We acknowledge that deaths by suicide in children and young people have been increasing nationally and locally.

The purpose of this multi-agency audit was to test out the following hypothesis *"There is good evidence of effective multi-agency collaboration, including consultation with and involvement of parents and carers, when a child or young person has survived a suicide attempt"*.

The key points of learning were identified as:

- Lack of understanding around the lived experience of children and young people and the key factors that contribute to their vulnerability to mental health issues and risk of harm.
- A need for greater curiosity about the child's lived experience, their family history and presenting behaviours, as well as recording the voice of the child, is essential to ensure practice is more child centred.

- A need for more purposeful multi-agency meetings, combined safety plans and greater clarity regarding who is working with the child and when this intervention has ended, are all areas that can be improved.
- Reflective supervision and training opportunities are needed to promote greater professional confidence in having conversations with children and young people about diversity issues such as gender identity, neurodiversity and racism. It is essential that professionals understand each child's uniqueness.

Reflecting on the initial hypothesis set for this audit we found that whilst this practice aim was agreed by all agencies and professionals as the undoubted intention, in practice responses are often crisis driven and more fragmented in both the short and long term.

Work to address these issues is as follows:

Greater understanding of the need to provide help at earlier points when a young person's behaviours indicate a deteriorating profile is behind the proposed restructure of Adolescent Services so that help is provided at the right time by the right professionals. In Children's Services the newly formed Section 20 Panel seeks to divert children from care by offering creative responses to families that enable them to continue to care for and support their children at home. The Intensive Family Support Team which should be operational later in 2024, also seeks to provide timely and targeted support to young people and their families at earlier points of intervention.

One of the outputs from the teenage survivors of attempted suicide audit work has been a raising of awareness of the issues and making links between operational and strategic strands of this work. The audit activity reinforced the need to respond to young people's "suicide talk" as a serious issue that needs a co-ordinated response to understand how best to respond to young people's distress. Practitioners working with young people where these risks have been identified are well supported but there is still more to do to build individual practitioner confidence. It is hoped that the above developments will go some way to improving the effectiveness of responses in this area of practice.

In 2024-2025 a new subgroup, Performance Audit Scrutiny (PAS) will strengthen this area of work by testing out the progress being made against the partnership's key objectives, gather evidence of positive impact and also areas where improvements need to be made. This group will also develop a revised dataset and measures to support scrutiny of the work of the Partnership.

SSCP Safeguarding Learning Programme

The SSCP safeguarding Learning Programme provides multi-agency access to instructor-led training and e-learning, together with webinars and other online resources through the Care Knowledge online learning platform.



The annual programme is commissioned by the Surrey Children's Services Academy, with decision making on the offer being undertaken by the SSCP Learning and Development Group. This group is made up of representatives from Education, Health, Police, Third Sector, and the Academy.

As well as providing a comprehensive learning programme, which has been closely aligned to the learning reviews overseen by the Learning from Practice subgroup, the Surrey Children's Services Academy has developed an evaluation system to give practitioners the opportunity to share feedback about their learning experience. This will ensure the Academy can improve the learning offer to the partnership, and in doing so create more positive outcomes for children and their families in Surrey.

Together with in-course assessment where appropriate, learners evaluate their knowledge and confidence before and immediately after each course. Once they have had time to apply their learning to practice, a follow-up asks them to reflect on whether and how this has had an impact on children or families, and if it hasn't, why that might be.

The programme is well received, with 99%+ learners who would recommend the courses to others. There has also been positive feedback on training provided to support the SSCP priorities and improvements in pre and post course knowledge of these topics as well the intention to use what is learned in practice. More detailed information about the evaluation can be found in [Appendix 4](#) of this report.

Child Death Review and the Surrey Child Death Overview Panel

Surrey Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) reviews the deaths of all children in Surrey in accordance with the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The review by the Child Death Review (CDR) partners at CDOP is intended to be the final, independent scrutiny of a child's death by impartial professionals. Surrey CDOP reviews deaths of all children through themed panels which facilitates identification of themes and actions needed to reduce similar deaths in the future.

Examples of modifiable factors identified at case closure and notification included:

Neonatal / infant deaths	Older children / adolescents
Maternal smoking/smoking in household	Challenges for parents with access to services
Maternal obesity in pregnancy	Delay in seeking/failure to seek medical support
Maternal alcohol misuse	Initiation of treatment/identification of illness
Hazardous co sleeping	Not following guidelines/pathway/policy
Unsafe sleep environment	Alcohol/drug misuse by child and risk-taking behaviour

Overcrowding	Organisational issues: Staffing/bed capacity/equipment issues/inappropriate skill mix
Not following guidelines/pathway/policy	Use of appropriate safety equipment in vehicles
Organisational issues: Staffing/bed capacity/equipment issues/inappropriate skill mix	

CDOP learning is shared via a combination of different formats and methods:

- quarterly across Surrey via CDOP ebulletin
- one hour lunchtime learning events for professionals are held on the second Tuesday of each month on themes identified from child deaths.
- [Published Thematic Reviews of Child Deaths](#).
- Annual CDR Conference
- Surrey CDR workspace on [NHS Futures Platform](#)

The CDR team have continued to progress the areas for further development identified in the annual report 2022-2023. [A four-year report of Patterns and trends in the deaths of children and babies aged under 18years normally resident in Surrey, whose deaths occurred between 1 April 2018–31 March 2022](#)) has been undertaken to identify learning from child deaths which will help to inform commissioners, providers and partners of actions needed and opportunities not to be missed to help prevent future deaths.

Surrey continues to offer a high-quality service which fulfils the statutory requirements and most importantly, keeps our bereaved families fully engaged with the process. Parental engagement in the CDR process remains high and feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive.

During the year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, the Specialist Child Death Review Nurses have continued their excellent and invaluable work in supporting bereaved families.

An excerpt from one of the many positive comments our nurses receive from the families that they support is shown below, highlighting the positive impact the Child Death Review service in Surrey has on families when they are at their most vulnerable.

“Our CDR Nurse is a remarkable lady, and has been a tremendous support to us emotionally, practically, and in so many other ways. She has been our absolute rock and has made herself totally available to us. She has put us in touch with charities, guided us through the whole funeral process, dealing with coroners, funeral directors etc. Her level headedness and knowledge of the whole system surrounding death is incredible. Despite her role requiring her to impart information about lots of formal processes she has eased us into everything gently and extremely sensitively. She did many of the jobs for us which we simply didn’t have the mental capacity to do, such as chasing up appointments, and letting us know where we were on waiting

lists. She truly understands what we are going through and helps implement ideas and gives us options which may help us.”

Voice of Children and Young People

Having a ‘child first mindset’ is central to all the work within the Partnership, and therefore ensuring our children and young people have a voice is crucial.



Surrey Youth Voice is a partnership between children and young people in Surrey with the User Voice Participation Team (UVPT) at Surrey County Council.

They aim to bring about positive change in the services available to people aged 8 to 25 by empowering children and young people to play an important part in the decisions that affect them, and 2023 has been a busy and productive time.

The User Voice and Participation Team have five main workstreams:

- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health
- Additional Needs and Disabilities
- Care
- Youth Cabinet
- Training

They create safe spaces for children and young people in Surrey to have their voice heard and make sure children and young people’s views are shared with the right audience to influence positive change and impact.

Working with Children and Young People in Surrey - Achievements realised this year:

- [Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-25 \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk) – a joint production by the Corporate Parenting Board and our Care Council for care experienced children and young people.
- Surrey has now been approved for the National Housing Project, which is a chance for care experienced young people to have more of a say in their housing community. One young person has commented: *“By working with other young people leaving care, you make friends, get a house to call your home, and take ownership and control over your life. You have joint ownership of your Local House Project (LHP) with staff.”*
- User Perspective Training: In 2023 just over 1700 professionals were trained by young people and specifically looked at what it feels like for a child to access care services, mental health services and having additional needs and disabilities. Feedback from the training established that 99% of delegates would recommend the training course to a colleague, and all colleagues made pledges on what they would stop, start or change following the training

course, ensuring that listening to and acting on the voice of the child is central to the partnership values.

- Surrey Police introduced their [Child Centred Policing Strategy](#) this year, which ensures a consistent approach to being child focused and child centred within all the police's interactions and involvement with children. As this is a new initiative it is too soon to see the evidence of its impact, but the intention is this will be seen in reviews of investigations, where we can identify that the principles have been adhered to and within the content on Single Combined Assessment of Risk Forms (SCARFs).
- A [Co-production Charter](#) has been published, co-produced with children, young people and their families, and partners from health, education and social care. This will enable children and their families to influence the development of the services that are provided to them and the way in which those services are delivered. Since its launch in July 2023, the co-production charter has served as the cornerstone for all co-production activities of the Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership.
- The User Voice and Engagement Co-ordination Group (UV&ECG) was created in May 2023 and meets monthly, gathering together [Mindworks partners](#) to share engagement activities, good practice and collate young people, parent and carer feedback and experiences from [Mindworks](#) organisations. Their group objective is to identify key themes, as well as co-produce actions with young people and families to influence change and improvement within the system.
- During the latest [Area SEND Inspection](#) in September 2023, co-production was recognised as a “shining beacon”, with members of the ATLAS (Accept, Teach, Listen, Access, Support) participation group, being involved in “many of the recent positive changes across the Local Area” and “helping partnership leaders to understand and respond well to the current situation of inconsistency”.
- Surrey Youth Voice also run a project called Recruit Crew, where young people sit on interview panels and have an equal say on who gets hired in Surrey. In 2023, young people had their voice heard in 440 interviews.
- Publication of the [Surrey Health and Well-Being Strategy](#), where service improvements are focused on what children and young people would like to positively change about services. As a result of this collaboration, the Universal wellbeing plans to support children and young people's wellbeing was piloted in schools during Feeling Good Week in February 2024, and information about [parent/carers support groups](#) has been added to the [Mindworks](#) website, further demonstrating children and young people's ideas have weight and really impact ways of working across Surrey positively.

Further Evidence of Impact

There are many examples to show how Surrey Partners are listening to and acting upon the voice of children and young people. We have included examples from our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises sector below which help to illustrate this impact under Surrey's [Time for Kids](#) principles:

CONNECT – be crazy about the kid

[Jigsaw South East](#) provide support to bereaved young people – listen to their stories explaining how Jigsaw SE helped to guide them through the difficult emotions of bereavement after the death of a loved one. *“Young people tell us that connecting with others helps them to feel less alone”*, Charity Director of Jigsaw SE.

The Friday Night Project is run by the [Our Time Youth Project](#) in Tandridge, and is another example of how partners are helping to bring young people together, to connect with each other in a fun and engaging way.

TRUST - Provide children with a consistent relationship with at least one adult that they trust

“Sometimes a simple chat can make the biggest difference to someone’s life, and it definitely did to mine. Like looking back on things that have happened in my life I have many regrets but letting you guys into my life will never be one of them. It’s probably one of the smartest things I did because it showed me true care, understanding and empathy so thank you for that”.

A young person’s message to [Emerge Advocacy](#), a Surrey based charity that supports young people struggling with their feelings or their mental health.

HOPE - Encourage children to tell their story and learn to hope

Email received from a Mum expressing her appreciation of the mentoring service [Surrey Care Trust](#) have given to her son:

“I think the mentor is a very positive and encouraging person in my son’s life. He engages really well, he is always pleased to see him, it was a good match. He has been through a very difficult time in the last few years, and he suffers with low mood, however he always leaves his mentor laughing, joking and with a big smile on his face. I feel that my son benefits from these meetings enormously and hope they continue. With Surrey Care Trust’s support, I hope that he will begin to look forward to a more positive outlook and that he can achieve all he aspires to in the future.

Many thanks for the wonderful work you do in offering young people like my son, caring people who offer their time to listen”.

BELONG - Give children a sense of belonging and encourage them to shine

The WiSE service (What is Sexual Exploitation) run by YMCA Downslink Group here in Surrey and across the South East, supports children and young people who have been victims of sexual assault and exploitation. Last year, they worked with one young person over a period of several months, whose past trauma had led to a decline in mental health, loss of employment and ultimately to self-harming and

suicidal ideation. The safe and trusting relationship that the WiSE worker was able to build with this young person, turned their life around. By educating and exploring themes such as consent, empowerment and wellbeing, this young person is now in new employment, belonging to a community, in a stable and healthy relationship and feeling hopeful for the future.

BELIEVE - in what they can achieve

“Through our sessions, you have enabled me to truly believe in my abilities as a parent and given me many tools that can be applied to so many different aspects of life which have not only helped with my son (who referral related to) but have also fuelled positive relationships with my daughter, husband and friends. I know I may have mentioned it in our last session, but I really want you to know that you have made a HUGE difference to my quality of life. Not only have you given me the tools to learn so much about myself, but you have given me the strength needed to move from what was a survival mode last year, to a revival mode this year. For this I will be eternally grateful. Thank you so much for making such a huge and positive impact in our lives and helping us through what was a very difficult time.”

Parent reflecting on [Barnardo's](#) Parent Wellbeing Service.

Children and Young People helping to shape services

Children and young people were involved in the design and name of Surrey’s new inpatient setting for children and young people, [Emerald Place](#). This unit has been purpose built in order to accommodate Surrey children, and from across the country, who require specialist mental health interventions in a residential setting. Their considerations included:

- The area is on greenbelt and young people wanted the name to represent nature and greenery, but not to be stereotypical of nature.
- They didn’t want to define the setting as something clinical but also acknowledge it is not a home, so young people felt “place” was appropriate.

Subsequently Emerald Place commissioned Surrey Youth Voice, and the Our Perspective Training programme, to train professionals on what it feels like to be a young person accessing mental health services.

Children and young people who attend Emerald Place will be in a setting that has been thoughtfully designed for children and young people by children and young people and confirms to them that they feel listened to. The impact of this will be reviewed in 2024/2025, however it is expected that this facility will offer a bespoke service to a given cohort of children who have not been offered such a service provision before in Surrey.

One of the Consulting Youth Advisors commented: "It was nice to be a part of a project from the beginning to the end and to see it from being just blueprints and building plans to an actual building. This was a great example of participation and co-production done well. I hope for more projects that involve young people's voices as much as this did in the future."

Another area where children and young people have influenced change is the co-production of the Surrey Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy, where service improvements are focused on what children and young people would like to positively change about services. As a result of this collaboration, the Universal wellbeing plans to support children and young people's wellbeing was piloted in schools during Feeling Good Week in February 2024, and information about [parent/carer support groups](#) has been added to the Mindworks website, further demonstrating children and young people's ideas have weight and really impact ways of working across Surrey positively.

Future work and Priorities for the SSCP

Implementation of Working Together 2023

The implementation of [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) will continue to be the key piece of work for 2024, with our new arrangements having to be in place and published by December 2024. Specific activity since the publication of Working Together 2023 so far includes working with the National Safeguarding Partner Facilitators on implementation of the new guidance. We have also held a number of workshops with our Executive Members and wider partnership to establish how we act upon this guidance for the benefit of our children, young people and their families in Surrey. We will also continue to work with our schools and education partners and embed the already close relationship formed to further strengthen the involvement of schools as a partner. Our subgroups are also being reviewed in line with the new guidance and this will form the basis of a new structure for the Partnership. With the help of our Independent Scrutineer as 'critical friend', we will also continue to review the impact of learning from reviews, practice and audits, and develop a more robust performance audit and scrutiny framework to identify any emerging issues that needs action by the Partnership, to ensure that our new arrangements lead to improved outcomes for children and young people.

This annual report has been agreed by our delegated safeguarding partners (DSP) as not all our lead safeguarding partners (LSP) are in place at the time of writing. Our new arrangements setting out the roles and responsibilities of DSP and LSP will be published in December 2024 as required under Working Together 2023.

Priorities

The SSCP Executive has agreed that the priorities for 2024-25 will be Neglect, Early Help and Safeguarding Adolescents, the latter of which will include a focus on extra-familial harm and contextual safeguarding, linking into the Adolescent Service Project Board. These areas of focus are those which appear to be having the most impact on safeguarding for children and young people in Surrey based on the work that has been done in reviews, and themes emerging from practice. Our children and young people are also telling us that they value the importance of communities and a sense of belonging. They want to feel part of a community with support networks and friends, and children and young people with additional needs and disabilities would like to see the stigma of additional needs and disabilities reduced.

Whilst in its infancy, the Adolescent Service Project Board aims to improve services for adolescents in Surrey and particularly those suffering from mental health issues associated with exploitation. We are particularly keen to hold a safeguarding lens up to those children who are out of sight due to a range of situations, for example Elective Home Education, those children who are severely absent from school, or who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and have been permanently excluded. Topics such as child exploitation, adultification and those children who are missing will also be explored.

The aim is to adopt a unified 'Surrey' approach, or model that improves outcomes for adolescents who are vulnerable and victims of exploitation which is highly associated with mental health concerns. In due course the evidence will be able to fulfil the

vision which aims to develop a multi-agency hub that supports adolescents in Surrey in a holistic way, staying with them throughout their journey.

Independent Scrutineer reflections

I was appointed to the role of Independent Scrutineer midway through the reporting year and took up role alongside an Independent Chairperson who chairs the Executive and Full Partnership.

During the period covered by this yearly report, revised statutory guidance was published in December 2023; this guidance details the requirements for the content of yearly reports and sets expectations about the future requirements of the leadership provided by statutory partners through safeguarding partnership arrangements. On the basis that the guidance was introduced in December 2023, National Facilitator advice is that it is recognised that this report may need to be considered as an intermediary report in respect of meeting the requirements of revised statutory guidance. That said, some of the core requirements of yearly reports remain unchanged. It is in this context that I provide my independent scrutineer reflections.

When delegated safeguarding partners formally meet as an Executive Group, I am invited to be present; other meetings between delegated safeguarding partners and the Independent Chairperson take place in response to operational matters and/or delivery of statutory functions. I also attend the Full Partnership forum meeting which serves as a mechanism to engage and communicate with a range of relevant partners. I have provided critical friend challenge to safeguarding partners in respect of:

- Developing a multi-agency performance dataset that will provide a line of sight to front line practice and the experiences of children and young people
- The distinction between dissemination of learning from serious child safeguarding cases and taking action to implement and embed learning to change safeguarding practice and/or system
- The respective accountabilities of other strategic partnerships in relation to matters that impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people e.g. emotional health and wellbeing and the interface between SSCP and these forums

In February 2024, I was commissioned by the delegated safeguarding partners to undertake my first piece of bespoke scrutiny activity. As detailed above, this was an evaluation of the arrangements to identify serious child safeguarding cases and the associated Rapid Review process which is undertaken to distil learning and determine next steps. The rationale for delegated partners requesting this scrutiny exercise was the challenge in meeting the statutory 15-day timescale to complete Rapid Reviews. The findings were reported to the delegated partners in the first quarter of 2024-25 and a series of recommendations accepted.

I facilitated a workshop in January 2024 to support the launch of the PAS subgroup which was to meet from May 2024 onwards and as outlined above, in addition to providing critical friend challenge in respect of a multi-agency performance dataset,

through listening to professionals from across the partnership, I was able to provide feedback to delegated safeguarding partners about the need to clarify the respective roles of the Case Review Group and Learning From Practice group.

The report provides a detailed description of a range of activity that has taken place to safeguard children and young people and provides evidence that learning from serious child safeguarding cases is informing work undertaken e.g. pre-birth assessment practice standards. There are a small number of examples of impact provided e.g. better-quality requests for support to C-SPA and school attendance rates for cared for children. The introduction of the PAS subgroup will facilitate me to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangements, and coupled with a formalised annual programme of scrutiny, will enable the statutory partners to evidence the impact of the partnership arrangements on outcomes for children and young people in future yearly reports.

In respect of the changes required by statutory guidance to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, the report details some features of the current arrangements that will promote compliance with the revised statutory guidance e.g. Headteacher representation at SSCP Executive, Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum and Third Sector Network; it also outlines the issues that need to be addressed and the activity undertaken to meet the new requirements.

Finally, the revised statutory guidance, along with the children's social care national framework, detail the change programme that is to be delivered in response to the independent review of children's social care. Positively, the Families First approach and underpinning principles, set out the ambition and approach of the Partnership to work together to provide responsive and effective support to families in Surrey.

Liz Murphy
Independent Scrutineer

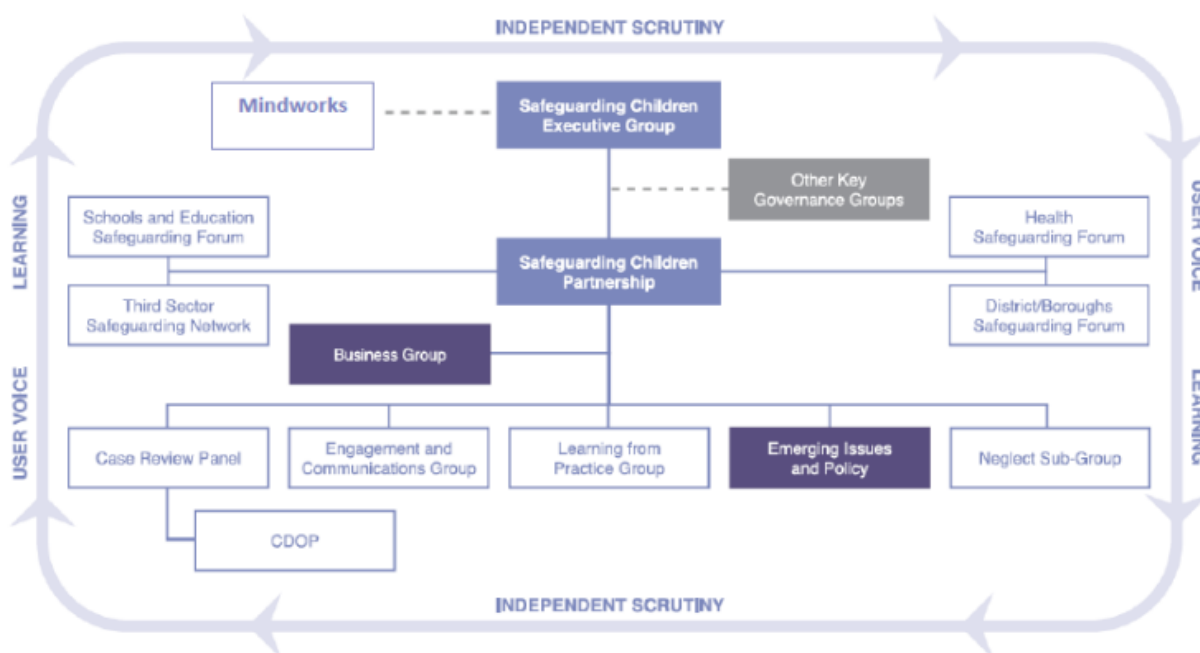
Appendices

Appendix 1: Governance Structure 2023-2024

THE SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIPS STRUCTURE

Updated 2023

Sub-Group, Forum and Network Structure



Appendix 2: SSCP Sub-groups

Each of the SSCP sub-groups have their own specific areas of focus which have contributed to the work around our three priorities in 2023/24 of Neglect, Early Help and Mental Health and Well-Being.

Sub-group	Work area for 2023/24
Case review group (CRG)	Commissioning and delivering reviews
Learning from Practice (LfP)	Learning from reviews and multi-agency audits
Neglect	Refreshed the Neglect Strategy
Emerging Issues and Policy	Updated several multi-agency procedures e.g. Preventing Homelessness in Surrey – Joint Protocol for 16 and 17 year-olds; Child Protection Medical Guidance for multi-agency professionals; Child Protection Medical Guidance for multi-agency professionals and the Levels of Need replaced by Continuum of Support.

Appendix 3: Budget 2023-2024

SCC	183,300
Police	80,103
NHS Surrey Heartlands ICB	183,000
Central Surrey Health LTD (Health Commissioned Services Providers)	30,000
Surrey & Borders NHS Partnership	4,226
Frimley Park Hospital	4,226
Royal Surrey County Hospital	4,226
Epsom & St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust	4,226
Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	4,226
St Peters Hospital	4,226
SEC Ambulance Service	<u>11,000</u>
Districts and Boroughs	
Elmbridge	1,270
Epsom & Ewell	1,270
Mole Valley	1,270
Reigate and Banstead	1,270
Runnymede	1,270
Spelthorne	1,270
Surrey Heath	1,270
Tandridge	1,270
Waverley	1,270
Woking	1,270
Guildford	1,270
Total contributions for 2023-2024	<u>526,729</u>

Appendix 4: Evaluation of Multi-agency learning

Feedback from course attendees outlines the change in knowledge and confidence of learners from pre-course to post-course, one to seven months after participation, applying their learning is very good, with over 60% confirming they have put their enhanced knowledge into practice, and over 45% feeling more confident having attended the training.

With neglect as one of the priorities, the Academy has provided training for colleagues to increase their knowledge, including a Neglect Partnership Workshop. 90% of the delegates fed back that the course met their identified aims and over half advised that they would use this learning on a daily basis.

Course attendee reflection on impact:

“This course supported and continues to support my understanding of Neglect, the impact this has on the children and young people and their families with whom I work. I was able to identify concerns of neglect with a parent and was able to discuss ways in which they could be more present for their child. This strengthened the relationship the young person had with their parent which in turn supported the child to remain living at home with their parent and not becoming looked after and being placed in the care of the local authority.”

Training regarding Effective Family Resilience incorporating Early Help Assessments provided evaluation which identified that learning would be put into practice on a weekly basis, including assurance from attendees following the training such as, *“I am more able to understand and give better support to families.”*

For training about Working with Complexity (Parents showing resistance, evasion) the following attendee reflections were captured on the impact the learning has had on their practice:

“Positive impact when working with families, [in] team meetings, [and] in reflection in supervision.”

“Following the training I was able to encourage a mother to attend parenting groups with her children and spent time with her afterwards to listen to her experiences and encourage her to continue and engage with me about her parenting experiences.”

Core training in the Safeguarding in Surrey and Advanced Safeguarding in Surrey courses also received positive feedback on impact, and just a few examples are:

“I was able to effectively and positively support a family through the initial stage of safeguarding and I felt empowered to do this positively due to the training I received. I feel this reflected on the family involved as they felt they could trust me to help them.”

“I am working as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and use the knowledge developed on the course almost daily. I have been preparing for a Child Protection (CP) conference which will be happening tomorrow. I have spoken with social workers, referred families to CSPA, and communicated with parents.”

“Working with a family who the child was at risk of homelessness from the family when he hit 18, due to risk and taking drugs. By working with this family and communicating to the father ... I was able to encourage the family to consider other ways to deal with the situation and reduce the safeguarding risks. The outcome was they had an honest conversation, and the son was able to share with him about his mental health struggles. I referred the son to Catch 22 who continue to support him to reduce drug usage, as our service only works up to 18. The father allowed his son to stay at home and live in a safe environment.”

“I implement this training in my job every day.”

Appendix 5: Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Full title
AAT	Access and Advice Team
AN&D	Additional Needs & Disabilities
ATLAS	Accept, Teach, Listen, Access, Support
BMI	Body Mass Index
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CEW	Complications from Excess Weight
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CDR	Child Death Review
CiN	Child in Need plan
CP	Child Protection
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CYP	Child and Young Person
CRG	Case Review Group
CSPA	Children's Single Point of Access
DARDR	Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews
DfE	Department for Education
DDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DSP	Designated Safeguarding Partner
ECINS	Empowering Communities with Integrated Network Systems
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
EHE	Elective Home Education
EHM	Early Help Module
EHSB	Early Help Strategic Board??
ESDAS	East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service
EWMH	Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health
GCP2	Graded Care Profile 2
ICB	Integrated Care Board
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
IFSS	Intensive Family Support Service
JTAI	Joint Targeted Area Inspection
LCSPR	Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review
LfP	Learning from Practice subgroup
LHP	Local House Project
LSP	Lead Safeguarding Partner
MAA	Multi-Agency Audit
MAP	Multi-Agency Partnership
MAPE	Multi-Agency Partnership Enquiry
ND	Neurodevelopmental
NHS	National Health Service
PAS	Performance Audit Scrutiny group
PSPA	Police Single Point of Access
PLO	Public Law Outline
QA	Quality Assurance
RMM	Risk Management Meetings
SABP	Surrey and Borders Partnership

SAR	Safeguarding Adults Review
SCARF	Single Combines Assessment of Risk Form
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disabilities
SESF	Schools and Education Safeguarding Forum
SSC	Surrey County Council
SSCP	Safeguarding Children Partnership
SUDI	Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants
UV&ECG	User Voice and Engagement Co-ordination Group
UVPT	User Voice Participation Team