



Croydon Safeguarding Children Board Annual Review 2014/15



Acknowledgements

This annual report contains contributions from many of our Board members. It is an example of our ongoing work together, a demonstration of the collaboration and drive that Croydon Safeguarding Children Board members consistently show in their commitment to safeguarding Croydon's children.

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<http://croydonlcsb.org.uk/>

Approval process

This report has been circulated and will be submitted for approval by Croydon Safeguarding Children Board members at their meeting in September 2015 and will be presented to the Council's Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in October 2015. The report will also be presented to the Health and Well Being Board, the Clinical Commissioning Board and the Chief Executive Group in addition to a number of other forums.

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1. Foreword

Independent Chair – Catherine Doran

I formally started chairing the board in Sept 2014 and I want to thank everyone for being so welcoming and helping me in my first year. I particularly want to thank Maureen, Rose, and Nia, our Board team, all of whom were also new to Croydon Safeguarding Children Board. A lot has been accomplished against a challenging landscape with still much to do.

Last year saw the board review its sub group structure and our first task was to ensure all groups had business plans and objectives. I now have very regular meetings with chairs of all sub groups and senior partners across the partnership. Quarterly governance meetings have been established between the Chief Executive, Executive Director of People, the Children's Lead Member and the Leader of the Council and me. I believe the Board is well supported by a renewed governance structure and has a strong interface with the Health & Well Being Board, the Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership.

The Board has been very busy on a number of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), and Learning Reviews; of which three have been completed this year. We have also introduced a new quality assurance framework (QAF) commissioned three audits whilst ensuring learning from single agency audits has been regularly cascaded across the partnership. We are now successfully using our data set, audit information and lessons from SCRs to help us drive improvements. We have a full audit programme in place for next year which is directly related to emerging themes. Our training has been well received by staff across all agencies and we hope its impact on practice is more evident. For example, a previous SCR and recent audit have identified the need to improve pre-birth planning for vulnerable families. A joint response has been to set up Vulnerable Families led by Midwifery which works collaboratively across agencies to ensure improved identification and planning for new-born babies likely to be at risk.

We have robust section 11 processes in place and a rolling programme through out next year to assist the Board analyse the quality of safeguarding practice. We are working in tandem with commissioners to ensure that all contracts are cognisant of section 11 requirements.

Some of our most significant work has been on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children. This has led to much better coordinated responses in protecting young people and the tightening up of our tracking missing children. As an exception, and in order to kick-start the service we worked with social care to commission the NSPCC to undertake Return Home Interviews for missing children. This service is now fully operational and has been

augmented by a new resource funded by the Railway Children charity and implemented by an exciting partnership of NSPCC and Safer London, assisting with focussed work with those children repeatedly missing and deemed at risk of CSE.

The Board has had great collaboration with the Police-led Operation Makesafe which targeted specific perpetrators, locations of concern, vulnerable young people, schools, local hotels, taxi firms, and shopkeepers which has greatly enhanced local knowledge and awareness of children at risk of sexual exploitation. March 18th National CSE awareness day saw us staffing a stand in the town centre with Police and voluntary sector colleagues where we engaged with hundreds of local people to give them information about CSE and what steps they could take to identify concerns and where to get relevant help.

Operation Raptor brought significant collaboration between local and national agencies in identifying and supporting twenty highly vulnerable girls identified as the highest risk of sexual exploitation. This has provided ongoing safety and support to those young people. Organised crime with groups of older men exploiting children was not evidenced, but we do have grave concerns about peer on peer abuse and how we can intervene early with those at highest risk of committing those offences alongside protecting and supporting victims. The MsUnderstood Charity undertook an audit of Croydon's response to peer-on-peer abuse and was able to engage with staff and young people to give us a comprehensive picture and help design service response for 2015/16.

Our well attended annual conference this year focused on how our partnership can better support and protect our young people in our schools and community. There was very positive feedback and we will build on this. This year we have seen the recruitment of additional posts appointed to coordinate our response to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and CSE, which will help us drive those agendas forward at a quicker pace. We have also seen the increased focus being given to early help leading to more active engagement of professionals and the focused piece of work on 'Best Start'.

In the last year, I have undertaken a series of front line visits to partner agencies, including Health Visiting, Social Care, Early Help Services, Head Teachers group and voluntary sector providers. I would like to thank all staff involved for their insight and I will be continuing my programme of visits this year.

Our Learning and Development team (L & D) have been instrumental in setting up conferences to maximise the numbers of professionals able to access specific learning sessions which were very well received, in addition to the numerous courses throughout the year for staff across the partnership:-

- Dr Danya Glaser presented to a conference on Fabricated and Induced Illness
- Two sessions on Introduction to Human Trafficking
- Private Fostering
- Children of Prisoners: Supporting Children and Families Affected by Parental Offending in Croydon
- As well as the numerous courses throughout the year for staff across the partnership

Our communication strategy is still under development but improving. We have produced 4 newsletters over the last year and the web site is now up and running. Over the next year we will do a lot more work on promoting and developing useful tools for professionals, parents and young people through the web. We will be working with the youth council on this and on better engagement with young people. We do use feedback from young people to inform our work and practice development as part of our quality assurance framework, however I hope this work will take a stronger profile next year.

I can see the progress we have made as a safeguarding board, and know how hard front line practitioners and managers are working to improve the lives of children and young people in Croydon; although I do feel there is more that needs to be done.

Our biggest challenge is the growing child population in Croydon and the growing demands within a difficult economic climate and the challenges that brings to us as a board, within the context of a widening remit for boards.

Next year we will continue to drive the focus on early intervention and support the ‘Best Start’ work. We are aware that improvements are needed to ensure that early intervention is effective and that families can often be referred to social care without prior coordinated intervention by other services. Serious Case Reviews and audits have also highlighted the variable quality of multi-agency working in early intervention and the assessment process. We are, therefore, sponsoring the initiative to reshape early intervention around social care and assessment in order to ensure more families access effective intervention and ongoing intervention as appropriate.

Through our training and development programs we will relentlessly reinforce the need for closer multiagency work including a board induction day for new practitioners.

We will work more closely with adult services and providers to ensure that specialist services supporting very vulnerable parents are more aware of the impact on children lives. The new joint department and stronger joint commissioning arrangements will assist enormously in that process.

We will use our local expertise and national research to promote the importance of fathers in assessments and intervention.

We will ensure the local and national learning on child deaths, FGM, Preventing Extremism and CSE is used effectively to improve practice locally and offer greater protection to our children and young people. I am delighted that the Local Strategic Partnership is focussing on both DV and CSE in their Congresses this year.

We are aware of the significant challenge that workforce issues, such as recruitment of permanent staff and high turnover of agency staff, can bring, especially within the context of acute staff shortages in London There is a subsequent knock on effect upon timescales for assessments, the average for Croydon in 2014/15 came in at 71.9% being completed within 45 days, which needs improving.

Turnover of staff means that children may have more changes of allocated staff than would be preferred. Croydon has achieved high success with the recruitment of social work staff via the Frontline Project and is actively recruiting for the second year. I have commented later in the report on our ongoing challenges in more detail.

Our overall measures of success are

- As a safeguarding partnership we achieve our key performance indicators
- We hold individual agencies to account
- We identify the key factors inhibiting best safeguarding practice
- We identify priority areas to improve safeguarding practice such as work with pre-birth and children under one and the need to develop Early Help
- We are also measured on the quality of our professional relationships and strategic linkages so that our objectives and prioritise are mutual and collective.
- We are also measured against our commitment to improving the quality of front line safeguarding practice, and we are collectively held to account over this objective.
- That we regularly scrutinise the quality of practice and that we measure our effectiveness by our progress to improvements and that we share our performance data especially about our most vulnerable children such as those going missing and those subject to CSE.

And of course we will continue to keep on improving on our everyday service to children and their families!

What is so heartening for me is the openness, determination, honesty and commitment to improve all services to children and young people, from Senior Politicians, Chief Executives of all the partner organisations, Senior Staff right through to the dedicated front line staff that I have met in my first year in Croydon.

I have no doubt that everyone will be continuing their hard work and that this time next year we will see even further improvements as a Board.

Catherine Doran, Independent Chair

2. Sufficiency statement

In September 2015 Catherine Doran, in her new role as Independent Chair of the CSCB, was able to engage with all partner agencies and obtained their reassurance that they had sufficient resources to ensure they were able to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children.

Summary comments include:

Croydon Council maintains sufficient capacity to provide safeguarding services for children and young people - these are developed/managed to ensure sufficient services are provided and are kept under regular review.

CCG Safeguarding Team works to provide necessary assurance to CCG Governing Body that safeguarding arrangements across the Croydon Health Economy are in place and fit for purpose.

Reassurance is provided in relation to sufficient capacity to provide safe services in Health Visiting, School Nursing and Named professionals supporting staff within the trust in their responsibilities to safeguarding practice.

3. Statutory Framework

The Croydon Safeguarding Children Board is a vibrant and effective strategic body. Members of the Board take their roles very seriously, engaging with the full business of the Board and bringing a wealth of knowledge and expertise alongside creative ideas and helpful challenge.

The Board is a statutory body with defined roles and responsibilities which are set out Section 14 of the Children Act 2004¹.

The specified objectives for each Local Safeguarding Children Board are:

- **To coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area and;**
- **To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for these purposes.**

The specific requirements of the Safeguarding Board are further detailed within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' which was updated in March 2015. Strict guidance regarding Serious Case Reviews, the Child Death Overview Panel, Learning & Improvement Framework, Section 11 audits as well as the requirements of agencies and the Independent Board Chair, are all contained within Working Together.²

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcome.

¹ <http://im.croydon.net/services/slacqa/cscb/Resources/Children%20Act%202004.pdf>

²

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

The Board's range of roles include: - developing policies and procedures which will promote scrutinise and challenge local safeguarding practice.

Each of the partner agency members on the Board has their own statutory duties and obligations to safeguard children and promote their welfare for which they remain fully accountable. The additional role of the Board is to ensure that agencies are working together to ensure effective coordination and to provide guidance, support and challenge to ensure we can get the best outcomes for Croydon children.

There is effective collaboration between the children and adult safeguarding Boards with each providing representation on the other Board, as well as annual review between the Chairs and Board staff. The Boards have worked together to jointly respond, for example to the FGM consultation and have been able to share common themes and work proactively together such as with Modern Slavery and the Prevent agenda.

The Board also benefits from internal and external connections; externally both the Chair and Board manager attend the London Safeguarding Boards forums; the Chair is a member of the Association of Independent LSCB Chairs (AILC) with access to regular Newsletter and updates. London Councils also provide regular Safeguarding updates.

Internal within Croydon the Board has representation on the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Early Help Board, as well as key strategic partnerships with the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Families Partnership, Safer Croydon Partnership and the annual Review is presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.

The Board is made up of representatives from:

- ❖ Police
- ❖ Health
- ❖ Mental health
- ❖ Probation
- ❖ Voluntary Sector representation
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Social care
- ❖ Community Safety
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Early Help
- ❖ Adult Service
- ❖ Public Health
- ❖ UK Border Agency
- ❖ London Ambulance Service
- ❖ Lay members
- ❖ Legal Services
- ❖ CAFCASS (Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service)

Representatives of other partner agencies attend Board meetings as and when required and many are active members of the various sub-groups. For example several Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) organisations have made presentations to the Board, in addition to being regular members of the CSE and Missing sub-group.

The Board is facilitated by an Executive Steering Group and a range of sub-groups³.

- ❖ Child Death Overview Panel
- ❖ Serious Case Review sub-group
- ❖ Health
- ❖ Education
- ❖ MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
- ❖ Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children
- ❖ Quality Assurance Practice and Performance
 - Learning and Development
 - Editorial Board

The Board is currently in discussion with the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB) to draw up a proposal for a joint Board's sub-group to give a strategic overview to issues relevant to adults and children especially challenging the interface between them.

The focus would be on radicalisation, FGM, domestic violence, parental mental ill-health, learning difficulty, alcohol and substance misuse; all of which can impact upon both children and adults. Work has been ongoing in these areas but a joint group will strengthen the governance of that work.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards are now subject to formal review through Ofsted Inspection of local authority safeguarding children services.⁴

The Board has undertaken a development day each year to ensure that agencies can fully contribute in the planning for the Board and identifying key priorities. The Board has also been piloting a new style Board meeting in response to feedback; we operate 'cabaret style' and have round table discussions as an intrinsic part of the format following some formal presentations. This gives the opportunity to take more comprehensive feedback and challenge from partners. The Board promotes and models a culture of open challenge and dialogue. The new format is evoking considerable comment and will be formally reviewed in September 2015.

Development day comments:

'Excellent venue, allowed open discussion, very worthwhile time spent!'

'I feel I know people and feel more confident to challenge/speak'

³ *'Room layout was good and aided discussion and networking'*

⁴ Ofsted inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards

What is the Board and what does it do?

An important element of the work this past year has been to ensure that the Board is highly visible and that staff from all agencies understand the statutory role and what can be expected of the Board. This has been facilitated by front line visits to different agency staff groups, presentation given on the work of the Board and on SCRs in particular. The Annual Conference was very well received and gave great prominence to the work of the Board. This is being reinforced with regular Newsletter about the work of the Board and will be an important element to ensuring the Board's work and role is well-known.

4. Executive summary

This Annual report describes a wealth of work undertaken by committed partners in our collective effort to improve the quality of safeguarding services to the children of Croydon.

This year witnessed Catherine Doran's tenure as the new independent chair of Croydon Safeguarding Children Board supported by a new Board manager and a new administrative and learning and development team. The Board has embedded a new sub-group structure and implemented a new quality assurance framework, (QAF), commissioned three independent evaluations which have informed, along with other methods, a new Learning and Development curriculum which has been successfully implemented. This activity and energy has created a momentum which has driven the Board and its sub groups. The fundamentals are in place and the mission this year has been to advance basic practice, compliance with safeguarding procedure whilst raising awareness and developing skills. This work is being undertaken in an increasingly complex environment of continuous growing demand, an increasing youth population many of whom are living in disadvantage and marginalised situations evidenced by the Strategic Needs Analysis commissioned by the Board in June 2014.

In this annual report we hear from young people about their views and experiences about child sexual exploitation in Croydon. We have gathered the views of children who have returned from going missing about why they go missing. We have also gathered children's' views about their experiences of the child protection and Looked After systems. Their parents tell us that they are concerned as to what their children are looking at on the web as they are often more technical astute than their parents.

The Board seeks to ensure that the child's voice is at the heart of our work and remains our focus moving forward. In September the Chair attended the Youth Council meeting in order to seek the views of young people and to establish how they can influence the work of the Board. The timing of the November 2015 Board has been changed to allow representation from young people.

The Board has two lay members both long standing residents, parents and both are committed to Croydon and are keen to involve themselves and provide a community perspective. Both lay members are highly skilled and offer the Board insight as well as act as 'critical friends'. They have both offered a personal and articulate description of the Board and their perspective of its work and function and they play an important role in the function of the Board and its sub-groups.

During the year the Board has published two serious case reviews and commissioned three others as well other independent management reviews. These activities, alongside learning from SCRs nationally, and implementation of the QAF has informed the Board's learning and development framework as well as led to system and practice changes. For example; we have learnt to better identify and intervene with children who go missing. The SCRs have also informed the work of the quality assurance framework and specifically led to multi – agency audits of 73 young people identified to be at risk and a multi-agency audit of infants

under one. The SCRs, coupled with the Pre-Birth and Under One audit has informed us we need to improve how we engage fathers and how we intervene, assess and plan jointly as a partnership and as early as possible.

The work of the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) has proved crucial in the analysis of 5 years' worth of data which has assisted the Board identify trends, themes and emerging patterns in child deaths. The quality of data gathered about the deaths of children has improved; there has been improvement in partnership working for example with the Coroner's office, and improved representation at the wider London CDOP which in turn has led to better dissemination of learning all of which has led the Board to highlight issues to professionals about improving their awareness surrounding dangerous dogs, co-sleeping and the use of baby slings.

Health professionals are working in partnership with local authority colleagues in developing and driving forward the Best Start agenda which seeks to identify and address issues of concern earlier with families. In recognition of this, the health sub group has provided a forum where progress is discussed – this includes the need to strengthen health's contribution to early help processes by increasing referrals in order to improve outcomes for children and families. The safeguarding case reflection model for GP practices has been embedded across Croydon and as a result, there has been an increase identification of vulnerable children at an earlier stage with referrals made to early help and MASH. The health needs of Looked after Children and the improvement of health interventions has been identified as a work stream by the Designated Looked After Children Professionals and progress will be monitored at the sub group. Croydon CCG has funded a Project Consultant for FGM who will lead on a whole system approach in improving health outcomes for women and girls who are affected and facilitate the development of robust, multi-agency safeguarding pathways and arrangements for mandatory reporting. The health sub group will co-ordinate the Boards response to FGM by ensuring that all partners (including statutory, voluntary and community) are involved in the development of this work, have oversight of progress and provide regular reports.

There has been a significant drive to maintain the focus on children's safeguarding in schools. The termly forum for 'safeguarding leads' disseminates the latest guidance and ensures new and best practices models are shared with schools whilst the pilot model of group consultation on safeguarding for safeguarding leads supports designated teachers to analyse threshold and child protection dilemmas. The LADO Service continues to play a crucial role in safeguarding children in education and a systematic feedback loop has been developed so that all learning can be fed back to education providers. The S.11 audit has provided the Board with insight into current safeguarding practices and informed the Board

that it will be crucial to focus on specific issues such as CSE, Missing, possession of knives and radicalisation in the coming year. The Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) have been particularly responsive in identifying and working with CSE, there has been an increased awareness from schools about safeguarding including a significant increase in the numbers of referrals to Children Social Care. There is consensus that schools, colleges and alternative education providers will need to support and commit to earlier intervention by implementing the lead professional role via the Early Help module and actively supporting 'the team around the child' process.

MASH has been implemented, there is greater co-location of key partners and thresholds are operating appropriately and in a timely manner as evidenced by an independent audit and new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). However the activity generated by the QAF as well as the MASH audit informed the Board that there is significantly more work to do to develop early help especially the need for a systematic 'step up and step down' process with partners taking greater responsibility by becoming lead professionals and members of teams around the child. The MASH audit, the wider QAF and the Multi-Agency Under One audit informed the Board we need to urgently improve our early intervention, pre-birth and assessment work whilst, from a more whole system perspective, improve the way we work together.

Significant focus nationally and locally has been placed on children missing and children at risk of child sexual exploitation. In Croydon we have seen a significant investment in services as we develop a response and further our understanding. New partnerships have been developed with the Third sector who are now co-located with Children Social Care and Police so we better coordinate our response and intervention. The Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel coordinates and monitors specific interventions whilst collecting intelligence to inform Operation Makesafe and other police led operations as well as the 'softer targeting' strategies. The Missing Children Panel coordinates interventions and we have seen better identification, recording and awareness of intervention to children who go missing including the new Return Home Interview Service. However gaps remain in identification and recording of young people at risk or subject to CSE whilst interventions with boys and young men in terms of sexually harmful behaviour remain embryonic.

The Quality Assurance, Practice and Performance sub-group (QAPP) has a particular role; to drive forward improvements in practice and performance and assist the Board identify gaps, themes, risks and strengths in practice. The QAPP sub-group has overseen the implementation of the Board's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). QAPP have coordinated both multi-agency and Board commissioned independent audits. The QAPP has analysed learning from all quality assurance activities and produced a range of protocols, procedures, practice guidance and implemented action plans as well as contributed to the Board's learning and development plan curriculum in addition to informing the wider Board of good practice and gaps in safeguarding practice.

The QAF has provided the Board with multiple sources of data which has informed us that:

- our thresholds into children social care are generally appropriate,
- we need to develop our multi-agency assessments and interventions especially with under ones and pre-birth
- improve our joint approach to addresses the needs of vulnerable adolescents.

It could be argued that the QAPP's wide portfolio is a disadvantage, and this will be addressed by the executive group. The QAPP still need to ensure we operate a systemised approach to the process of quality assurance, further embed how we record the views of children, families and professionals into the quality assurance framework and into service design.

The LADO report shows the significant improvement in referrals, in particular from schools and coordinated intervention as a result. This has been responded to with increased capacity with an additional member of staff joining the service

There are a number of cross-cutting themes identified by the different authors of this annual review in particular; the increased demand and need and complexity in the borough, es, the need for greater integration and earlier intervention especially with pre-birth and under twos and vulnerable adolescents improve multi-agency assessments and improve recording The challenge for the Board will be to ensure that the learning from audit processes can be optimised and embedded in current practice.

These emerging themes from each sub-group report will be addressed under their own work plan as well as addressing the over-arching objectives of the CSCB Business Plan.

This annual report describes a Board and a group of people driving forward new practices, strategic developments and a quality assurance framework that is identifying gaps and areas of development. The real test for the Board is now whether using the systems, processes and structures we have established whether we can really bring about systemic improvement in an increasingly complex environment of reduced resource yet greater need.

5. Key issues and objectives for 2015/16

The CSCB annual Business Plan is developed by reviewing the key issues that have emerged from the Board, each of the sub-groups, audits and Serious Case Reviews, in addition to any relevant legislation or guidance along with acknowledgement of local demographics and national issues. These are documented throughout the review, with a summary below:-

1. Early Help

Ensure that we know the children that need help and that they are able to access appropriate help; that help is effective and improves outcomes for children; that all agencies are actively promoting and supporting the Early Help agenda.

- Ensure that Best Start Pilot is implemented
- Evidence improvements in effective Early help
- Establish Lead DASV professional in schools
- 'Step-up and Step-down' processes established and implemented
- Increase completion of Early Help assessments
- increase in Team Around the Child/Family meetings
- Align Early Help Hub with the MASH process
- Implementation of Early Help IT Module
- Higher proportion of quality referrals to MASH

2. Multi-agency working

We need to ensure that the child is at the heart of what we do and that is evident in our actions and in outcomes for children, with particular focus on improving practice to Pre-birth and children under One – recent Serious Case Reviews and audits have identified this as high risk area that requires specific attention and support

- Ensure Pre-birth and Under One multi-agency project established
- Deliver increased identification and assessment of Pre-birth and children under one at all levels
- Ensure Fathers engagement, assessment and intervention project established
- Evidence improved engagement with fathers at all levels
- Evidence closer working with Adult services and providers to support vulnerable parents

- Increase Joint assessments, a priority to ensure that agencies work together to undertake assessments
- Performance manage areas of concern and escalate when necessary, in a timely manner e.g. non-engagement of certain agencies and individuals.
- Improve the MASH online referral form and the capacity of the professional consultation line to manage the volume of calls / queries.

3. Skilled workforce

We create a culture which encourages learning which effects change, such as the lessons from our SCRs and audits being widely known and embedded into everyday work.

- Implement Supervision trial for designated education safeguarding leads
- Provide Board induction to new practitioners
- Ensure practitioners are aware of the impact of parental behaviours on children's lives, e.g. alcohol or drug use, Domestic Violence, Mental Ill Health
- Monitor workforce stability, number of Social Work / Health Visitor per case, agency.
- Monitor ratio of staff to cases
- Evaluate training needs and training courses, effective supervision, Multi-agency training and opportunities to network effectively
- Ensure there is sufficient capacity to carry out the job safely
- Improve analysis of feedback and the impact of training from multi-agency training. Lessons from Serious Case Reviews to be actively shared and reflected upon in all sub-groups
- Themes from SCRs and audits disseminated
-

4. Safeguarding priorities and interface with adults – collective issues that impact upon children and adults, such as Female Genital Mutilation, Trafficking, DASV and Radicalisation, also focus upon CSE and Missing.

- Awareness raising campaign; engage with stakeholders
- Peer on Peer abuse, identify those at risk of committing offences in addition to supporting victims
- Continued use of Operation MakeSafe and exploration of repeat of Operation Raptor
- Improvement of data link between children missing education/children missing/children at risk of CSE
- Actively promote the PREVENT agenda in schools and raise awareness in the community
- Provide further CSE training to staff across the partnership

- Track missing children and ensuring all YP have appropriate follow-up.
- Ensure that all young people, where there is a concern, are supported and protected
- Develop a sexually harmful behaviours strategy.
- Embed FGM practice and awareness across the partnership.
- Ensure that FGM risks are identified and acted on appropriately in a timely way.

6. Local context

Croydon has the largest population of children and young people of any London borough.⁵

It is estimated that in 2013 Croydon was home to 96,500 children and young people under the age of 19, with the largest 10 to 17 year population of the London boroughs at 37,411. This population is continuing to grow rapidly, which is in part due to a substantial increase in the number of live births in the borough; this has risen by 18.1% over 10 years.

Croydon's population is becoming increasingly diverse over time. In 2011, 57.5% of children and young people aged under 19 in Croydon were from BME backgrounds and the GLA predict this will rise to 67.9% by 2021. In 2014, 34.1% of children in state-funded primary schools in Croydon had English as an additional language compared to 23.3% in state-funded secondary schools.

Croydon has some wards with low levels of disadvantage and others which are the most deprived in England. The borough is ranked 107th out of 326 most deprived local authorities in England and 21st out of 33 London boroughs in terms of overall deprivation (Source: IMD 2010). Croydon is more deprived in the north of the borough than in the south, and there are also areas of high deprivation in the east of the borough in Fieldway, New Addington and the Shrublands estate in Shirley.

Latest Public Health figures from 2012 show that 23% of children aged under 16 in the borough were living in low income families, the current proxy measure for child poverty. Although the proportion of Croydon children under 16 in low income families has been falling in recent years, our large child population means that we have the fourth largest number of children in low income families in London. Again the proportion of children living in poverty varies by ward from 7.5% in Sanderstead to 39.4% in Fieldway. **(see figure 1)**

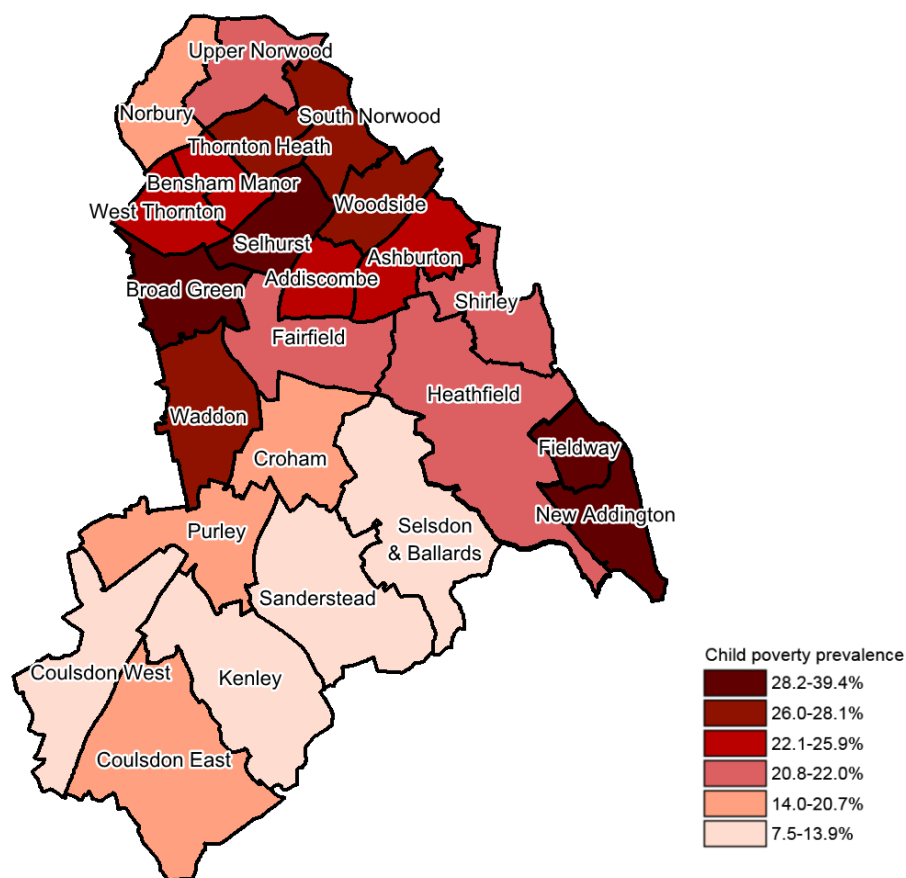
Croydon is a borough of contrasts; the population also has a varying health presentation which reflects the differentiation between those at high levels of disadvantage and those with high levels of affluence.

- Whilst reports of Tuberculosis in Croydon are significantly better than the London average, conversely they are significantly worse than the England average.
- Public Health measure 'Smoking status at time of delivery' in order to determine the effectiveness of campaigns to reduce smoking in pregnancy. The figures have gone down overall – from 8.5% in June 2013 to the lowest of 6.3% on June 2014, although for each quarter thereafter the figure has risen. Latest figures note 6.9% in Sept 2014 and 6.8% in Dec 2014. The London average is 5%.

⁵ Demographic data is drawn from the ONS 2011 Census and subsequent GLA population projections incorporating birth rates and migration.

- Under 18 conception rates have seen a 14% increase on 2011/13 figures, Croydon in a snapshot of Quarter 4 data in 2012/13 is showing 36.6% as opposed to the London average of 21.8%, with only one London Borough having a higher figure than Croydon.⁶
- Repeat termination rates amongst women aged under 25 have risen from 36% (2012) to 39% (2013). Croydon has the highest rate in London. The average for London is 33%. The England average is 26.9%.

Figure 1: Map of children aged under 16 living in low-income families, Croydon electoral wards, 2012⁷



⁶ ONS (Office of National Statistics) <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/quart-conc-to-women-und-18/index.html>

⁷ Source: Data is a snapshot at 31st August 2012, HM Revenue and Customs

Housing pressures have significantly increased in Croydon, with a 1000 more households in temporary accommodation in just 3 years, 1749 in 2011/12 to 2772 in 2013/14. Households with dependent children or pregnancy remaining in Bed and Breakfast (shared facilities) in excess of 6 weeks, has risen from zero in 2013/14 to 46 in March 2015. This is being followed up by the Board Chair.

Factors influencing these trends include: - rising homelessness demand, difficulties in securing private rented sector accommodation due to high rents, Housing Benefit changes and acute housing supply and the current economic climate. Croydon is undertaking intensive work to develop options and solutions to the homelessness problem which includes adding capacity and resources, although securing suitable accommodation continues to be a challenge. The 2014 Strategic Needs Analysis in Safeguarding identified that it is anticipated that the forecast trend is for further increases in the short term before improvements can begin to be seen.

The Gateway programme and service is based on Croydon's approach to redress the issues presented through welfare reforms that were implemented in April 2013.

Croydon had over 16,000 residents that were affected losing over £8million in total.

Over two years on and the service has helped over 5,000 households.

The aims are to provide household stability including maximising income, money management (budgeting and debts), securing current tenancy, assisting to move where appropriate, and training to find work and establishing employment.

The programme is now expanding to include proactively helping customers who are presented or already known to the council. In particular households known to one or more service may have debts outstanding, high care needs or be at risk of losing their home.

Phase 1 has focussed on temporary accommodation; pilots to date have confirmed we can reduce the amount of presenting as homeless by 20% with reducing those in the short term accommodation and their length of stay by over 10%.

There is a correlation between areas of high deprivation and crime rates in Croydon; more crime is committed in the north of the borough. There is a higher population density, more areas with multiple deprivation as well as being the location for Croydon's main transport hubs and routes

The Metropolitan Police have a high level of, and successful collaboration with, partner agencies within Croydon. Joint operations such as Operation Nidth in December, a proactive deployment to tackle gang nominals and drug dealing around West Croydon, saw 15 individuals convicted, receiving significant custodial sentences. This demonstrated strong partnership working between local police, Operation Trident and the local authority sending a clear message to offenders and supporting the community in this area.

Croydon continues to record the highest volume of Domestic Violence allegations in London but by working in partnership the local police have achieved the highest number of detections.

This partnership working is crucial in achieving safety and significant lifestyle changes for our troubled families. We have worked hard with the police and other key partners to develop the Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Strategy launched this year and which is a priority for us all.

Whilst overall levels of youth crime are reducing, levels of serious youth violence remain high: - In 2014/15 there was a spike with 351 serious youth violence offences, this almost matches the 2009/10 figure of 350 but the intervening 5 years being between 10 – 15% lower. Alongside this there has been a reduction in the number of young people involved in youth violence. , in 2014/15 this stood at 101 young people which was a 12% reduction on the 2012/13 figure. The vast majority of youth crime is peer on peer and as a result Croydon has a high number of young victims of crime. As a consequence Croydon commissioned MsUnderstood to undertake a project surveying and analysing the peer on peer abuse in Croydon, with a comprehensive action plan in place as a result.

There is a high correlation between those that commit crime and those that are victims, i.e. the perpetrators of these crimes are highly likely themselves to be victims of crime.

Croydon Youth Offending Service has the highest volume of offences in London at 900 plus offences, although the number of young people coming to the attention of YOS has reduced and is approximately 600 young people per year which represents 1.6% of the 10 to 17 year old population.

Overall 80% of offenders are male with 65% from a BME background.

The average length of an order has increased slightly to between 9 and 12 months with 42 young people sentenced to custody and between 30 and 40 young people involved in gangs.

The Youth Crime Action Plan notes that overall figures are coming down, although reoffender rates continue to be a pressure. (Re-offence within 18 months) The YOS have seen a continued decline in re-offending rate which stands at 45%, although above the London average of 42.4% with the target being 41%. The YOS has been commended by the Youth Justice Board for implementing the Reoffending Toolkit.

Early Help

Croydon has a growing population of children, the birth rate is increasing and Croydon is seeing consistent migration into the borough, in that increasing numbers of children and their families are moving to Croydon. This increase in numbers of children within the context of a challenging economic climate means that resources are likely to be under severe pressure.

It is well documented that early intervention can make significant difference to the outcomes for children, but the investment to engage families at an earlier level remains a challenge in the face of economic pressure. Croydon has embraced this challenge and has committed to launch the Best Start Programme in October 2015.

Best Start is a multi-agency service transformation that will bring together health visitors, social care, children’s centres, early years and family support into a single workforce and integrated outcomes framework.

It aims to ensure that every child has the best start in life and that babies and their families are supported from conception to five with an emphasis on ensuring high quality universal services, with early help and targeted support based within children’s centre communities.

The new model will be ‘soft launched’ in October 2015 and formally begins in April 2016 with blended teams of universal and targeted support in place.

Figure 2 Numbers of children and young people aged under five⁸

Locality	North	South	East	West	Central	Croydon
No. children aged under five	6,649	5,883	2,953	6,458	6,606	28,651
No. children in 20% most disadvantaged LSOAs	1,659	315	2,084	3,838	2,299	10,195

⁸ Source: ONS 2013 mid-population estimate

Early intervention services are designed and delivered as a 3 stage intervention model.

Croydon's children's centres deliver Stage 1 universal services to families with children aged under five years from a range of access points and outreach centres. Figure 3 gives details of families accessing children's centres

Figure 3 Number of families accessing children's centres⁹

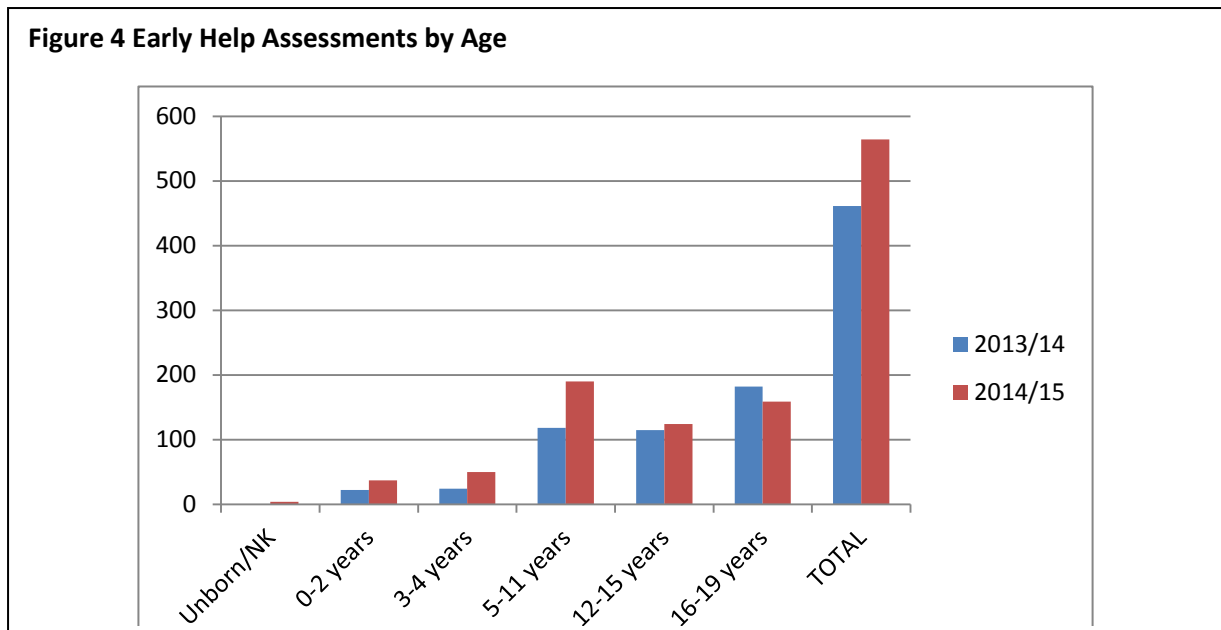
	North	South	East	West	Central	Total 2014-15	Total 2013-14
No. families registered with children's centres	2115	2229	2496	3478	2909	13227	12269
No. BME families	1795	955	1000	2508	2049	8307	6295
No. lone parent families	339	186	403	508	416	1852	1350
No. fathers	299	268	366	682	275	1890	1681
No. teenage parents	33	26	51	85	50	245	199

January to March 2015 saw Health Visitors achieving 83% of face to face new birth visits with mother of infants who had turned 30 days old within the quarter.

Stage 2 services: Early help assessments have been on an upward trajectory and increased 23% from 461 in 2013/14 to 564 in 2014/15. There has also been some success in assessments being undertaken at increasingly earlier age, to identify issues as early as possible to make effective changes.

⁹ Early help data provided by LB Croydon

Figure 4 shows the age profile of children and young people receiving early help assessments responding to the focus of earlier intervention on younger children, with increases in all age groups apart from 16+ which shows a slight decline.



Early help assessments have been predominantly initiated by Education (52.8%) and Early Help and Children’s Centres Family Support (32.3%). Reasons for undertaking the assessment: -

53.2% centre upon Emotional Social & Behavioural,
 30.8% evenly split between Family & Environment and Housing, Employment & Finance.

The Family Engagement Partnership (FEP) has seen 473 referrals of children under 2 during 2014/15.

Stage 3 services: In 2014/15 537 families achieved a Troubled Families outcome. 2588 individuals were helped by the Family Justice Centre and 354 referrals were received by the MARAC. Each service has seen an increase in referrals on 2013/14. The Stage 3 allocations meeting provides a focussed forum for discussion on more complex step-down cases ensuring that there is swift provision of targeted services such as Family Resilience Service.

Early Help Pathways. During 2014, partner agencies worked together to re-design the Early Help Pathways Operational Guidance, which was launched in June 2014. The guidance sets out the local arrangements for identifying and supporting babies, children and their families where a need for early help is identified. It clearly defines what the response of practitioners should be at each stage and what services and support are available.¹⁰

Governance of early help takes place through the Early Help Board, which brings together all partner agencies across Croydon. This board has a support and challenge functions and oversees improvements in the embedding of early help pathways and analyses performance through the Early Help Dashboard. The Chair and key members of the Early Help Board are members of the CSCB and Executive Steering Group.

Social Care

Numbers of Children in Need over the year has seen some fluctuation although from a start of 3736 children worked with in April 2014, the year ended with 3624 in March 2015. Croydon has worked with 6392 children in need throughout the year.

Working figures for Social Care 2014/15¹¹

Croydon Social care conducted 3536 assessments in 2014/15 of which 71.97% were completed within 45 days. There has been a 22% increase of assessments completed on 2013/14 figures.

Questions remain in respect of the proportion of assessments that do not subsequently lead to ongoing work within social care which is being addressed within the children in need project.

Establishing the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, the high use of their Consultation Line and implementation of Early Help Pathways have all contributed to more appropriate referrals for support from social care.

The CSCB audit of MASH thresholds found that over 70% achieved good for decision making on referrals.

¹⁰ www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk.

¹¹ Social care data is as at 2014/15 unless specified and provided by LB Croydon

Child in Need Project

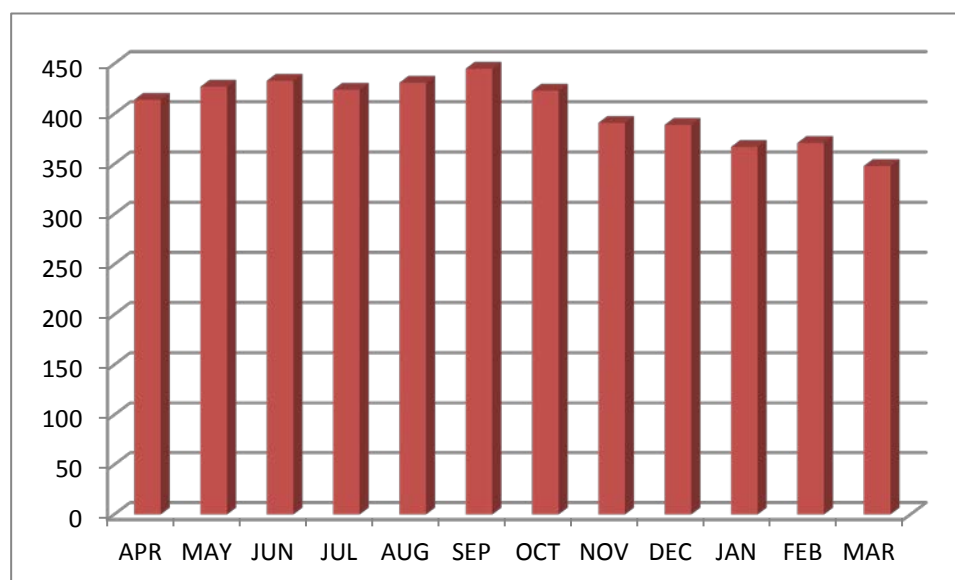
The Child in Need project is a council project covered by Croydon Challenge to deliver services in a more effective way. The Board has agreed to be a sponsor of the project.

- On initial analysis 70% of assessments do not lead to any further intervention therefore the system needs examination
- Ensure the right person dealing with each case within a team around the family environment.
- The Board has requested this project regularly reports back and that no change is implemented unless it receives Board approval.

The key area of the project and the principle of intervening earlier is to provide a better response to families. The expectation is that social workers will be based within early help settings so that there is a team around the family approach which draws from different skills sets and disciplines. A pilot will start within Best Start and discussions have begun on this. If the benefits of this new model are tangible and this is felt this to be a positive innovation it could be replicated in other parts of the service in the future. This type of intervention has been successfully tried in other areas.

Child Protection Plans

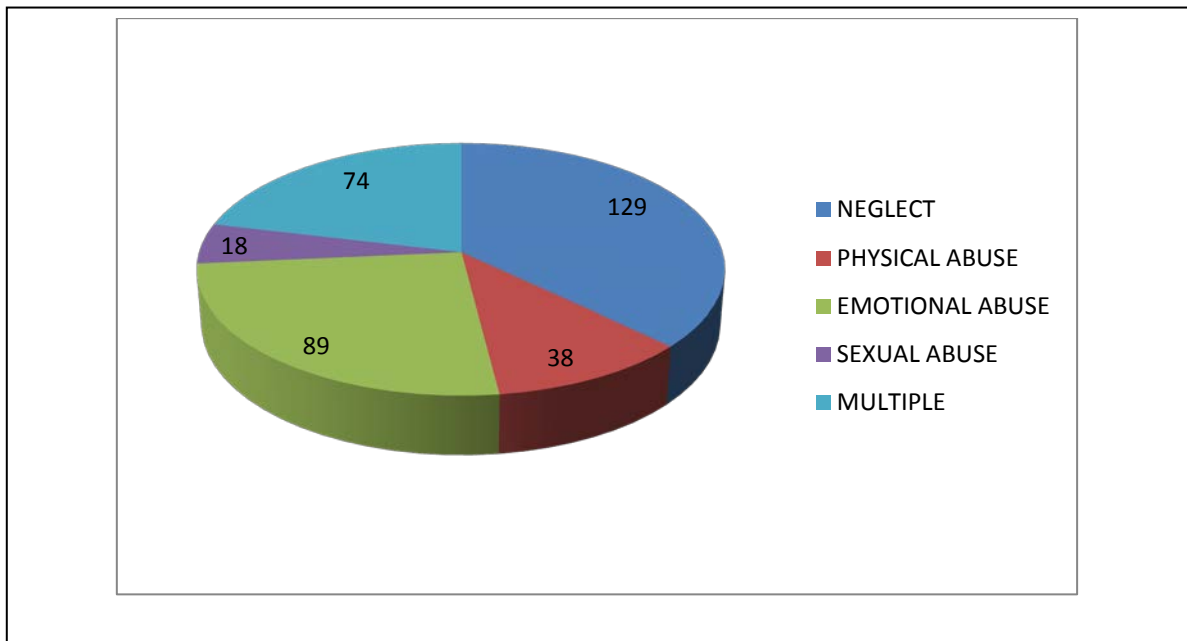
Figure 5 Child Protection Plans April 2013 to March 2014



The number of children with child protection plans is decreasing, although the numbers of children newly registered remains at a steady level. The main changes to the numbers are the decreased number of children with child protection plans lasting 2 years which has dropped from a 12.6% high in 2012/13 to 4.3% in 2014/15.

The other reduction is in the number of children with a repeat child protection plan. The percentage of child protection plans reviewed within timescales has consistently remained over 99% for the past 3 years.

Figure 6: The March 2015 figure of 348 children with Child Protection plans is made up of the following designated abuse categories:



At 805, Croydon has the largest number of Looked after Children in London, with over half being Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) 91% of whom are aged 15-17 and over 80% being male.

The two groups of looked after children (LAC) have seen very different trajectories. The local LAC has steadily decreased from 443 in April 2014 to 397 in March 2015, whereas the UASC have risen over the same period from 358 to 408. Croydon remains committed to keeping as many children as possible within family placements with 79% currently in foster care.

Half of Croydon's UASC are all boys aged over 14 from Albania; Croydon has worked closed with the Home Office and local services to seek to ascertain the particular issues for this group of children and are building links to Albanian Social Care to determine how they can be best assisted in the future.

Figure 7: Numbers of Looked after children 2014- 2015

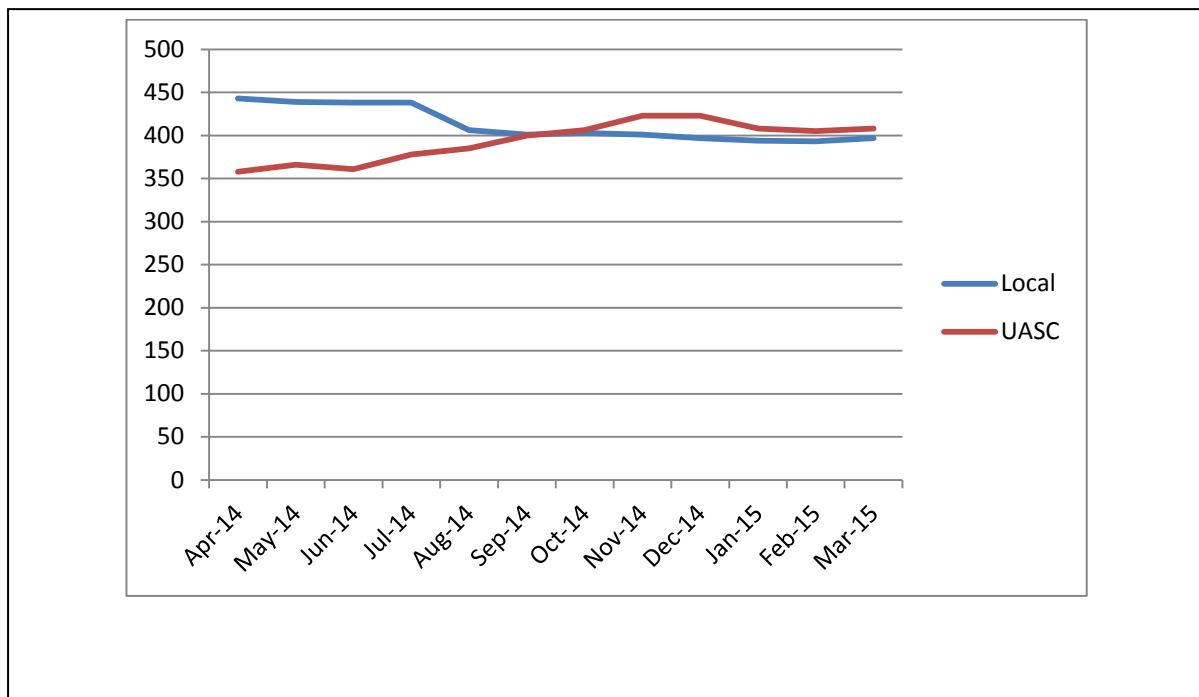
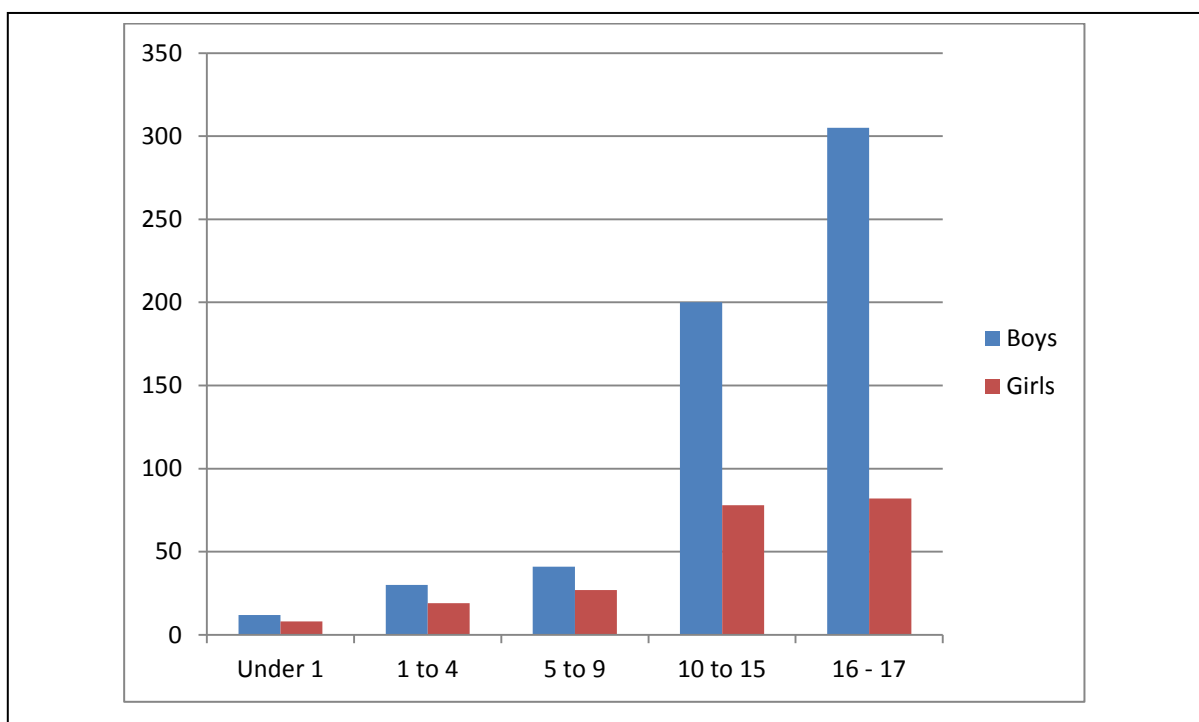


Figure 8: Age and gender of Looked After Children 31.03.15



A particular safeguarding concern to Croydon is the high number of Missing Children. As a large London borough with high numbers of young people is also the home to 400+ Looked after Children from outside of Croydon. Therefore we have our own population of vulnerable children and many hundreds of children from other boroughs. The Board exceptionally gave a one-off payment to support a project with the NSPCC to conduct Return Home Interviews (RHIs) for missing Croydon children. The Board has not yet been able to be assured that all children are receiving RHIs; increased capacity has since been provided by Safer London, funded by the Railway Children Charity, with those children most at risk are being targeted first. The Chief Executive of LB Croydon wrote to fellow CEOs of boroughs with more than 8 children placed in Croydon and senior representatives from many of those boroughs have come together to seek to address this particular issue.

Six authorities are currently engaged in ongoing meetings. Agreement has been reached regarding responsibility for Return Home Interviews, which will sit with placing authorities. The authorities have agreed to share information on providers across South London, particularly in the semi-independent sector, with a view to improving standards. The overall principle that has been agreed is the collective responsibility to safeguard children placed within Croydon. Meetings have taken place across the region of Missing and CSE co-ordinators to look at areas of increased risk within the Boroughs. YOTs have also been involved in this combined work as these children are amongst those at greatest risk.

Local Context - The views of young people in Croydon

We have several specific examples of consulting with Croydon's young people and how we are taking account of their views. RW – put in the examples of how views are being taken into account Croydon's Youth Council surveyed 691 young people age 11-19 years from across the borough to find out what issues they felt were most important. Ranked in order they were: Crime, Bullying, Education and Employment, Health and Activities.

Following the death of a Croydon young person by another young person the Gangs team helped a group of associated young people to share their feelings about his Murder and to turn this into a positive action in their filming of canvassing the views of Croydon youth in the town centre.

The predominant themes that emerged from those discussions were about employment for young people and activities. This film has been shared very widely and is being actively used by agencies in seeking solutions.

The Return Home Interviews (RHI) have given us the views of young people and from their comments identified a variety of push and pull factors which they feel have influenced their behaviour. The common themes relate to relationships with carers, parents and current living arrangements. Nearly all of the children interviewed by RHI worker have reported having issues at home that they are not happy with. The variety of pull factors included wanting more contact with friends or family and others openly discussing issues including peer pressure, substance misuse and sexual exploitation.

Croydon Social Care commissioned Safer London to consult with 100+ Croydon young people in order to

- To capture the voice and view of young people in relation to CSE
- To develop an improved understanding of the profile of CSE in Croydon
- To develop an improved understanding of the needs of young people in relation to CSE in the area

Young people's views were also key in the CSCB audit undertaken into vulnerable adolescents which showed us their views that more should be done to prevent family breakdown and improve relationships. They felt this would have been beneficial and improved their circumstances.

These significant examples of children's views helped the Board to determine the theme of Safeguarding Young People for the 2015/16 annual conference.

Partnership in Croydon in 2014/15

Working with schools, health services and other partners, the local authority implemented the requirements of the Children and Families Act for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This included publishing a Local Offer to improve the understanding families and practitioners have of what services are available in Croydon. Good progress has also been achieved from partnership working with schools to transition the first phase of children with statements to education, health and care plans. This is a requirement of the act, which places a greater emphasis on improving children's outcomes in partnership.

New Early Help Guidance was developed by all partners and endorsed by the Children and Families Partnership and the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board. The Guidance was launched in June and the Locality Early Help team is providing support, training and advice on its implementation to all those working with children and families. The embedding of the guidance and application of the thresholds is the responsibility of individual agencies and an Early Help Dashboard has been developed to track improvements in the quantity and quality of Early Help Assessments (CAF).

The Troubled Families programme was successful in meeting its target of turning around the lives of 285 families. The local programme, which is delivered by the Family Resilience Service together with local partners, has been confirmed as an early adopter of phase II of the programme. Phase II offers a more flexible approach than previously – this will enable the council and partners to develop new ways of working according to a think family approach.

Croydon Clinical Commissioning group has funded the appointment of two specialist asthma nurses to join Croydon Health Services' Children's Hospital at Home team. Following a period of induction, the nurses will work across the partnership: their role will include training GPs and practice nurses, working with pharmacists, school nurses and schools with the objective of reducing avoidable Accident and Emergency attendance as a result of asthma attacks.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) awarded Croydon £1.48m to support transformation across the Best Start partnership. The Cabinet was supportive of the development of this programme, bringing together services for the 0-5 age group into a single seamless and integrated service from September 2015.

The Crossfire project educated over 20,000 children and young people, as well as working with families and older people. Crossfire is a Fire Service project, working across all ages in Croydon. It includes community engagement, training and education leading to a reduction in arson and anti-social behaviour. Crossfire is unique to Croydon. The programme is tailored to the age group and setting. Ranging from 'safe/unsafe' games in pre-school, through developing home fire escape plans to the impact of arson and hoax calling. In secondary schools the fire service coordinates involvement of other agencies according to what the school requests including Ambulance, Battersea dogs home, Trident, Police, Voyage (stop & search) Sexual Health.

Twelve young people were trained to be young inspectors. The young inspectors identified services they wished to inspect; their first was the Drop In Zone run by CAYSH in the Turnaround Centre. For the inspection the young people carried out two mystery shops, one known observation, staff interviews and a young people questionnaire. They collated the results and produced a report with recommendations to CAYSH. A follow up inspection was carried out a few months later at which nine of their thirteen recommendations had been implemented.

The Care Leaver NEET and Housing Strategic Partnership worked to improve educational, employment and housing opportunities for young people aged 18-20 known to the Leaving Care service. The Partnership meets once a month bringing together representatives from different parts of the Council as well as external agencies, such as Bluetouch Consultancy, Catch-22 and BELS. The ongoing contact between these agencies ensures all parties involved can address issues pertinent to the lives of those for whom Croydon provides a service in a consistent and unified manner.

The cabinet unanimously approved the new Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) strategy with increased funding from 2016 to support the development of new and innovative services. The Family Justice Centre continues to work with partners to support victims and to drive forward a partnership approach to tackling DASV in Croydon.

Children, young people and parents have been successfully involved in policy development, service review and staff recruitment across a number of service areas throughout the year. For example, young parents and their babies were involved in the annual review and recruitment of two new family nurses in the family nurse partnership. Elsewhere, young people were consulted about the review of school nursing and therapies to inform their future commissioning strategy.

7. Budget

The Safeguarding Board is jointly financed by contributions from partner agencies, with the largest proportion coming from the local authority. 2014/15 saw the Board come within budget and the contributions for 2015/16 have been maintained at the same rate.

Income Funded by:	£
Local authority	264,112
Clinical Commissioning Group	33,850
Croydon Health services	33,850
South London & Maudsley	13,540
Metropolitan Police	5,000
CAFCASS	550
Probation	2,000
TOTAL	352,902

Expenditure	
Staffing	197,258
Serious Case Reviews	65,940
Training	26,387
Audits	15,920
Return Home Interviews start-up	23,000
Support charges	22,255
TOTAL	350,760

It has been recognised that Serious Case Reviews are a significant expenditure and that the learning elements are of paramount importance. In 2015/16 the SCR sub-group will closely monitor the costs of the SCRs themselves and any subsequent learning sessions.

8. Business Plan, achievements and challenges in 2014-15

The CSCB set ambitious targets for their work over 2014/15 with each sub-group taking responsibility to ensure their group business plan identified their work as well as supporting the aims of the overall Board. The plan has been successful and the Board has achieved much this last year.

In line with statutory responsibilities the CSCB has focussed on ensuring that agencies safeguard children and promote their welfare. The broad remit of the plan was: - to ensure that the Board was fully aware of the safeguarding picture for Croydon's children, families were helped earlier to prevent escalation of harm, to check the quality of the work undertaken, to ensure the workforce was trained and developed in safeguarding and to engage with and get feedback from service users.

Improve the quality of safeguarding data, increase useful analysis and disseminate the information effectively

In order to ensure the Board had a full picture of safeguarding in Croydon a formal dataset was agreed by the Executive with contributions from each agency.

Achievements

Engaging with the process of establishing and populating the dataset has enabled Board members to have full and frank discussion about the reality of safeguarding in Croydon and actually get behind some of the headline data. The Board has achieved greatly increased investment from partners with the data collection and the analysis has been able to highlight issues for further exploration. Being able to drill down into some of the detail has helped, for example the headline figure for Police attending child protection (CP) conferences appeared lower than that of other agencies. This was further examined and established that in line with Met Police guidelines, initial conferences were prioritised and had high attendance from Police representatives whereas review CP conferences were much less well attended. This rationalisation of resources was able to be explained and understood, but from the initial headline overall attendance figure gave a misleading picture.

The dataset has helped demonstrate the breadth of information about Croydon's children and the resources involved. It has brought greater clarity with the data telling the story of what happens as children pass through the various systems. Coupling the data collection with knowledge gained from audits and case reviews have enabled the Board to support challenge to current practice. For example, challenging the waiting times for children to receive a mental health service has been raised to commissioners and the Board to seek to improve service provision.

The Board's dataset remains work in progress and we will be collectively engaging with other South London Boards to share information and determine common issues.

The priority remains that the Board is enabled to gain a credible overview with robust information and analysis available to aid discussion at the board and sub groups which can promote challenge leading to improvements for children. For example the May Board spent time in groups looking at the issues behind the headline figures, which promoted discussion, raised questions and has added actions in response. One of these was looking at children presenting with self-harming and suicide attempts and the immediate response from CAMHS, the Board was keen to get the detail behind the headlines and the Health sub-group agreed to delve deeper. Another was recognition of the high caseloads within the assessment service within CSC which has been addressed by an action plan to deal with the throughput of cases to ensure that there is tight oversight by senior managers.

The Board commissioned a Safeguarding and Looked After Children needs assessment in 2014 which brought together datasets to build a profile of Children in Need and Looked After Children in Croydon. The aim was to inform the Croydon Safeguarding Children's Board members, key service leads and partners on the changing characteristics and needs of this client group. The findings have been used to produce some preliminary projections for this cohort which have supported the commissioning of relevant services and future service development.

Provide help directly to families at the earliest opportunity to prevent problems escalating

Early intervention preventing later harm is well evidenced and has to remain a Board priority in order to promote children's welfare.

Achievements

Croydon has shown great drive in developing the Early Help Pathways and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy (DASV) both of which were published in 2014. Agencies are alert to the warning signs and have improved engagement with early intervention; Croydon has a robust MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) with full engagement from agencies; Early Help assessments have sharply increased and the Board's Pre-Birth and Under One audit has helped identify the priority of Early Help.

Early Help are close partners with Croydon's MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) and are also a key element in providing a Step-down service to families previously using statutory services. Croydon schools have completed the highest proportion of Early Help assessments and have shown through their Section 11 audits their drive to safeguard and promote their children's welfare. They have been open and willing to engage with the Radicalisation, FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) and Trafficking agendas; they are also active partners in equipping themselves to learn more and share the risks of online child exploitation with their pupils.

The data has shown increased numbers of families being helped at an early stage, in addition to those being worked with as children in need. The new Children in Need project will help to continue that trend.

It is the view of the Board that there is not yet enough use of early help pathways and team around the family meetings taking place and therefore the Board will ensure that this is tightly monitored. In the first instance there has been momentum to utilise the Early help Assessment as a tool to refer to MASH, which is currently being brokered by a specific work group.

There is a strong stage 3 multi-agency offer through the Family Resilience Service that has ensured that Croydon is well-placed to secure strong local delivery of the national 'Troubled Families' programme. Having achieved a 100% success rate for families being 'turned around', the authority is a Wave 2 early starter on the programme. The range of outcomes the service has enabled families to achieve includes accessing employment, reduction in anti-social/criminal activity, improved attendance at school and reduced family conflict. In addition to the Troubled Families programme, Croydon has established a Functional Family Therapy (FFT) programme – which is an evidence based programme that works with families and young people engaging in anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and or youth offending. The programme has reduced re-offending within the cohort supported as well as cases where young people have been kept out of care for more than 6 months.

Ensure that quality assurance improves outcomes for children

The Board has been focussed on establishing that safeguarding delivery is robust and consistent and has commissioned external and multi-agency audit alongside feedback from single agency audit and Section 11 compliance to identify Croydon's position.

Achievements

In addition to the Needs assessment, the Board has commissioned three very different audits; Vulnerable Adolescents, MASH thresholds and multi-agency Pre-birth and Under One. Each has highlighted positive features on engagement and service delivery alongside identifying weaknesses and areas for improvement or further investigation. For example the MASH threshold audit found good decision making in 70% of cases and raised a question about the use of Police powers of Protection. This has prompted further exploration and a joint audit conducted by Police, Social Care and the CSCB into each of the 59 cases when Police Protection was used between January to June 2015. This has promoted a much greater dialogue and understanding of differing agency perspectives and a protocol as to future arrangements is being actively considered.

The Pre-Birth and Under One audit showed insufficient multi-agency working together by professionals during pre-birth and early infancy and the lack of engagement and assessment of fathers and key males in those children's lives. This was borne out by a current Serious Case Review as well as two previously in the recent past. This will be highlighted and a major task to be evidenced by all agencies for the 2015/16 business plan.

The biennial Section 11 self-assessment process has begun with agency completion to ensure their compliance with those statutory requirements. Presentation and analysis of the section 11s will be delivered to the Board in 2015/16. We will also be able to report more fully on commissioned contracts this year across all sectors.

Over this past year there has been follow up with Housing on their previous Section 11 and there has been a significant engagement from their staff with safeguarding as a result. We designed and delivered a bespoke safeguarding training package for all their staff which they were able to utilise when they were the biggest contingent of staff to undertake the audit day element of the Pre-Birth and Under One audit. They have actively engaged with a current Serious Case Review and made immediate changes to their practice as a result of learning from that review.

The CSCB has a programme of audits identified for the year with clear reporting back to the Board. All results are fed back quickly to operational managers and Action Plans drawn up which are overseen by the QAPP sub group. These in turn link the impetus onto relevant learning and development plans. We have also commissioned an independent evaluation of the key messages from the Board audit programme over the last 3 years, and its impact. The outcome of that work should be available in September 2015.

The first multi-agency audit for 2015/16 will test out safeguarding for children with disabilities. This was identified as being a priority in 2013/14 but was not carried forward. The hypothesis that CWD are under-represented on the list of children with child protection plans will be tested by this audit. The action plans from all of the recent CSCB audits (including the MASH and Pre-birth and Under One audit) will be brought together as a composite action plan and will be closely monitored and the Board Chair is keen that the next step will be peer review this year by the board. We have referred the recommendation from the Vulnerable Teenage Adult audit to develop a strategy for Teenagers to the Children's Partnership as the most appropriate forum to move this work forward. The Safeguarding Board hosted the Vulnerable Adolescent Conferences and the range of workshops and diverse participation will support the development of a strategy for young people.

Deliver an effective programme of training and work force development

Achievements:

In summer 2014 the Board agreed a new Learning and Development Plan (2014-2016); the principle aims of which are in line with the Quality Assurance Framework and CSCB Learning and Improvement Framework. The first part of the learning plan for 14/15 was focused on delivering a core safeguarding knowledge and skills programme in place to enable effective working together.

2014/2015 Learning and Development activity

Between September 2014 and March 2015 the following training was delivered:

- Safeguarding Level 1 and Level 2 delivered through online learning
- Safeguarding Level 3 delivered through Tavistock and Portman NHS
- Safeguarding Level 3 Refresher course
- Strengthening Families model in Child Protection Conferences
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- CSE and Gangs
- Serious Case Review workshops
- Early Help Assessments and the Role of the Lead Professional
- Impact of Substance Misuse on Children and Families
- Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment
- Private Fostering
- S11 Workshop for Board Members

To date 1600 people have completed the introductory online safeguarding training.

Between September 2014, when the new CSCB Learning and Development programme was launched, and March 2015 - approximately 660 people from a range of agencies have attended training, enabling multi-agency learning and networking to take place. There has been a particular increase in the attendance of practitioners from education settings, plus good engagement from Social Care, Health and Early Help practitioners. We have also developed safeguarding training for Housing partners, which has now commenced.

All training is evaluated and feedback used to inform future learning, the systems to evaluate training have been improved throughout the year and have identified ways to develop this further so as to make a better assessment of how learning is transferred to practice.

Engagement and feedback from service users.

The Board has had very little direct contact with children and young people but has been instrumental in ensuring that their views and wishes and feelings help inform and shape services. The chair has met with representatives of the youth parliament and we have now introduced regular links with the group through a variety of mechanisms.

The direct feedback we have been able to utilise is a Looked After child presenting the Board with personal views about the Independent Reviewing Service in contribution to the Annual IRO Report; we have had direct feedback on using our website and the Chair has met with young people from the Youth Council and Children in Care Council.

The Board has been able to share feedback from young people who took part in a video project run by the gangs team which had a dual purpose; enabling friends of a young person who was murdered by another young person (and for whom the Board undertook a Joint Independent Review on the perpetrator) to share and explore their feelings about his loss, and the second part saw them engaging in interviews with other young people in Croydon Town Centre to determine what the key issues for Croydon Youth. They were consulted and

agreed that their video could be shared with the Board and also presented at the CSCB Safeguarding Adolescent Conference.

The Children in Care Council completed a video detailing some of their personal views about being Looked After Children which they have agreed can be shared.

The largest engagement with young people which has been presented and shared with the Board, has been through the CSCB commissioned Vulnerable Adolescents audit, engaging with 73 young people and the 100 young people interviewed as part of the Safer London CSE mapping and profiling work.

In addition feedback comes a whole host of other avenues, including the Return Home Interviews, the MASE panel, Education sub-group, anecdotal case material to name but a few.

The Board's intention in 2015/16 will be to ensure more systematic feedback loops are formally in place and that views are acted upon

Children are safer because:

The CSCB has strong governance arrangements with clear communication and reporting arrangements with the Chief Executive Croydon Council, Scrutiny Committee, the Leader of the Council and the Police. Links are strong with the Local Area Team Safeguarding leads in health and with the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Health and Wellbeing Board have strong links with the Board as does the Community Safety Partnership.

Interventions supporting children who have been exposed to domestic abuse demonstrate changed behaviour in adults and children being more aware of how to keep themselves safe. This is in recognition of the very positive feedback from children and mothers. The Local Strategic Partnership launched its largest ever-domestic abuse campaign during the year to encourage earlier reporting of domestic abuse. Abuse is still underreported nationally but awareness raising events has resulted in an increase in reports to the police locally.

Croydon has been successful at raising the profile of private fostering arrangements across all agencies which has resulted in increased reporting.

Child sexual exploitation is recognized as requiring a well-coordinated multi- agency response. Croydon Board has undertaken significant pieces of work on Child Sexual Exploitation this year, which has led to a number of improvements. The voluntary sector has been a key to the success of this work as have the police and schools, Safer London, MsUnderstood, Missing People, NSPCC, and Railway Children

E-safety has featured highly on the LSCB partners' agenda, including the promotion of Child Exploitation On-line Protection (CEOP) resources; a one-day public event promoting advice to parents, carers and young people. Members of the Board and professionals across the partnership have been trained as CEOP Ambassadors and we plan to have a delivery

programme with the Schools team in 2015/16. Through the Board website we have promoted online courses:

- * E-Safety for parents & carers
- * E safety risks to children

The website also has several links to external providers with further advice and training for parents and their families.

Main Challenges:

Expectations of the LSCB continue to increase.

We are grateful for the increased support we have received from all partners and particularly from health and the council for the increased resource they are putting into FGM and CSE with the creation of 2 new posts. The voluntary sector has been able to provide invaluable support to young people with the development of some new projects over the last year. The new inspection regime sets high standards for LSCBs. We welcome these in the spirit of improvement and are currently engaged in a rigorous self-assessment. The Chair has requested the Chief Executive approach the Local Government Association to request a peer review of the board in the coming year.

We know we need to develop further our data analysis, increase the involvement of frontline staff in case audit and hear more from young people about how well our work matches with their priorities. We also need to develop the existing LSCB scrutiny of safeguarding checks within the system for Looked after Children, Accommodated Children and Care Leavers.

Completing 3 to 4 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) to a high standard is a major challenge. Even more challenging is ensuring the lessons from these reviews really do change practice and that improvement is maintained. We know from our audits and data that we are not yet intervening early enough in young people's lives and that the quality of initial assessments is still too variable. We also need to ensure that multiagency work is better reflected in initial and early help assessments of families and young people. Work with fathers is going to be a project for the board this year as it is clearly an area where the workforce needs further support.

9. Lay Member Report

Our two lay members, Asif Hassanali and Phil Insuli, joined the Board in 2012. Their role, which is voluntary, is to:

- contribute a community perspective to the work of the Board on safeguarding children and young people;
- think as members of the public, and
- play their part in the oversight and scrutiny of decisions and policies made by the Board.

As long standing local residents they represent the community interest in safeguarding children, bringing a fresh and independent perspective from that of the professional agencies that make up the Board.

“As lay members we are actively encouraged to fully contribute to many different aspects of the work of the Board. This not only involves participating in meetings of the Board and its sub groups, but also contributing to the development of improvement priorities, initiatives, the business plan, and evaluating research commissioned by the Board, such as the recently shared audit considering ‘Improving outcomes for vulnerable young people’. We have also attended a number of training events and conferences and Board development days alongside professionals to provide a resident/community Board member perspective.

When we joined the Board we were both struck by the complexity and scale of the safeguarding issues in Croydon due mainly to its location and demography. Croydon has the second highest population in London which has become more deprived in recent years and it is well known that children living in poverty are more likely to come into contact with safeguarding services. Croydon has the highest number of young people in London (97,800 under the age of 20); as well as the highest number of missing children (3,195 missing episodes in 2014, accounting for 7% of cases in London and more than the whole of Germany); and the highest incidence of domestic abuse, which of course children and young people may be exposed to or suffer the effects of. It really is a huge agenda.

We are always impressed by the level of commitment and resolve of the local agencies working together, often in very difficult circumstances with diminishing budgets.

There is always room for improvement, particularly learning the lessons from audits and serious case reviews – not just those in Croydon, but we believe the public would be pleasantly surprised by the huge range of projects and initiatives, as well as mainstream services, that are delivering targeted support to protect the borough’s children.

This was very much in evidence at the recent Safeguarding Young People Conference, held by the board, which included the launch of a new partnership project to support and safeguard children and young people who have been missing and/or at risk of child sexual exploitation, with close links to the work with gangs.

The skills and experience we have acquired from different jobs and our close connections with the community are put to good use by the Board. Asif commented “I work as an interpreter, often supporting social workers; as an independent visitor looking after two children over the last 4 years; and I participate in the weekly soup kitchen for the Muslim Association Croydon and the Community Revival Project. These have given me an excellent appreciation of the full scale of poverty and other challenges faced by children and young people and the local agencies supporting them.

Being part of the All Faiths Together group in Croydon has shown me that people with different backgrounds and beliefs living in Croydon have common concerns and can work together for the better of the community.

Drawing on this experience I have helped to implement projects like safeguarding training for Imams and committee members of all 9 Mosques in Croydon, which has been both challenging and rewarding.

Phil commented: “I have always lived in Croydon and have held a number of different roles in the community which have had a safeguarding element, including Primary School governor, safeguarding committee member for my local parish church and coach of a couple of youth football teams. I also have experience of quality standards, codes of conduct and public protection, as a former environmental health officer, public services inspector and lay panel member for a health and care professions regulator. These experiences led to me being asked to join the Quality Assurance, Practice and Performance sub group and the Serious Case Review sub group. I have also been involved in the recent multi-agency audit of case files relating to pre-birth and under 1s, completed earlier this year, providing a non-practitioner, public perspective.

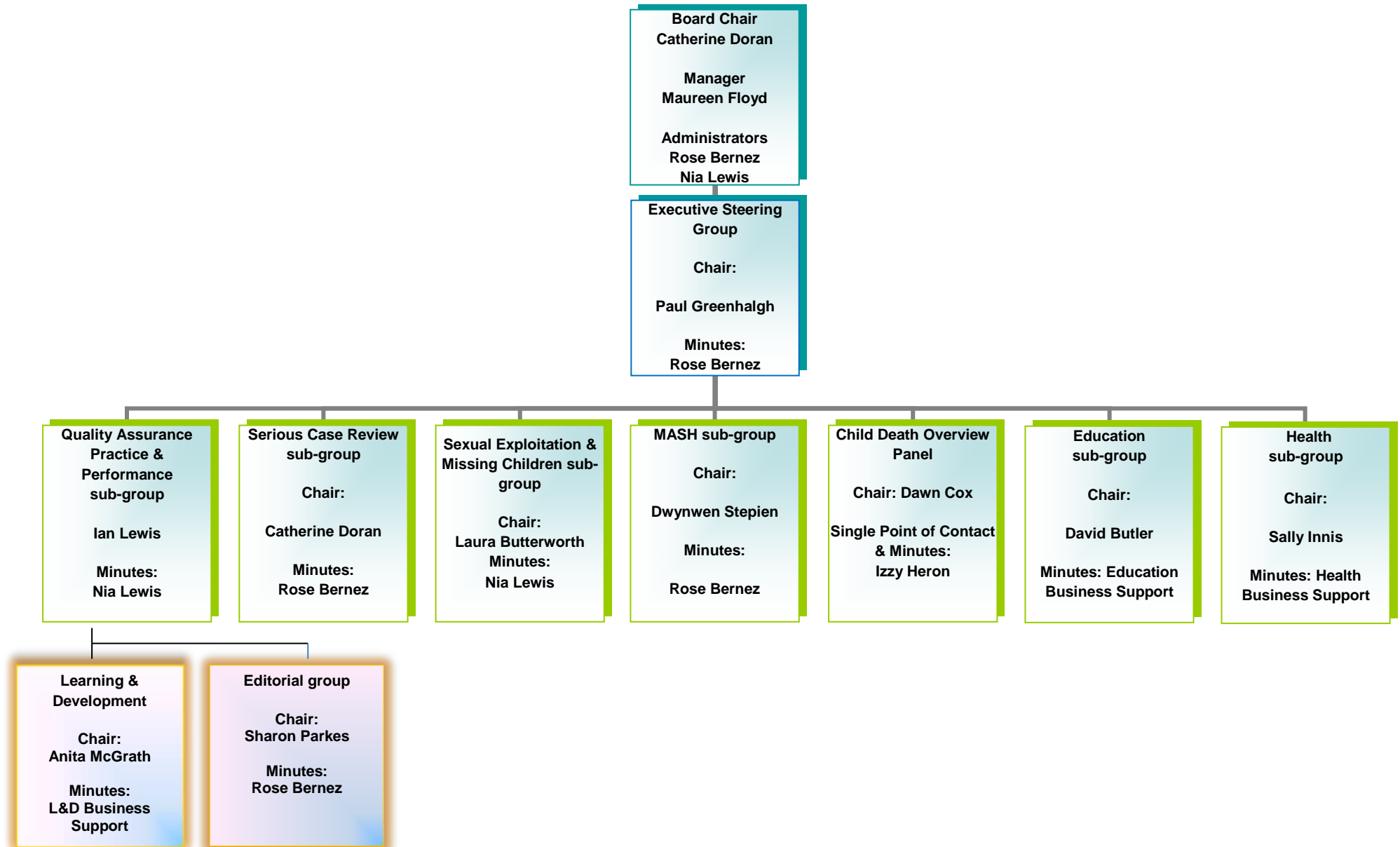
Many years ago I used to help with the annual Junior Citizen Event which involved primary school children being presented with a variety of different scenarios, including the ‘stranger danger’ test, which was the biggest concern of parents at that time. One of the key challenges for the Board in this digital age is the potential hidden risks posed by social media, for example, online bullying and child sexual exploitation.”

One of the most enjoyable aspects of being a Board member is hearing the inspirational accounts of young people who have come through adversity, often in early life, and flourished as a young adult.

It is our hope that in the year ahead the Board will have many more opportunities to hear the voice of children and young people and learn how local agencies can work together more effectively to safeguard their health and wellbeing.’

Asif Hassanali and Phil Insuli, Lay Members

10. Croydon Safeguarding Children Board Structure



10 a Serious Case Review Sub-group

Achievements & key issues

The overarching role of the SCR sub-group is to ensure that multi-agency learning from serious incidents is effective and that action plans from any Learning Reviews are monitored and completed.

During 2014/15 the sub-group ensured completion of two Serious Case Reviews with both reports being published in April 2015;

- Child M a missing teenager who was murdered by another young person¹²
- Child P, a 3 year old who was unlawfully killed by his mother when she committed suicide by lying with him in the path of a train.¹³

The SCR sub-group agreed three Serious Case Reviews be initiated during 2014/15 and has also overseen a Joint Independent Management Review with LB Merton into a 16 year old who stabbed another child to death and was convicted of Murder. Each SCR has been undertaken using different models, a SCIE review, a SILP review and a hybrid model, utilising Independent Management Reviews as well as Practitioner Workshop and Learning Events

Learning from the completed reviews was shared with the SCR workshops beginning in March 2015. The workshops focus was on young people, using learning from our own recent teenage cases in addition to important national cases regarding sexual exploitation. Some of the key issues found from our completed and current reviews included working with resistance, engaging fathers, sexual exploitation, missing children, and recognising that children perpetrating sexual assaults are also children in need.

The close liaison between the SCR Sub Group and the Learning & Development (L & D) Sub-group has been strengthened with the L & D Chair becoming a standing member of the SCR sub group. In addition an L & D representative attends the final Review panel for each SCR in order to assist with joint planning the specific learning and development relevant to that case. We have not waited for the final closure of an SCR before embarking upon learning events; for example we engaged a nationally renowned expert to present training on Fabricated & Induced Illness although the relevant SCR is not yet completed.

¹² [http://croydonlcsb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CSCB26_11_14 - Item 7 - Croydon Child M Overview Report final version 722.pdf](http://croydonlcsb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CSCB26_11_14_-_Item_7_-_Croydon_Child_M_Overview_Report_final_version_722.pdf)

¹³ <http://croydonlcsb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CSCSB-SCR-Josh-Overview-Report-Final-Feb-2015-1.pdf>

There has been considerable progress made in engaging with families for all our SCRs – an area which the sub group has prioritised and focused upon. Where possible, the reports have reflected the views of the families. Examples include a grandparent meeting the author as part of Josh SCR report and when complete a further meeting took place to share the report in detail and her comments were formally noted within the body of the report as well as an Appendix letter included to reflect her views.

Child M’s family were consulted during the review and then considerable efforts were made to ensure the family were aware of the report prior to publication.

Impact on children - have we made a difference?

The learning from our serious case reviews has prompted considerable multi-agency action which has been of benefit to children and their families.

For example a previous SCR Child X highlighted the need for pre-birth planning for vulnerable children and to engage with their fathers. This theme has been followed with the QAPP sub-group leading on a multi-agency audit into Pre-birth and Under Ones, which has tested out planning and engagement with fathers. Multi-agency formal training has been provided to engage men in assessments and interventions, and a multi-agency Vulnerable Women’s Group has been established at Croydon University Hospital.

We will re audit practice early next year to see the impact of improvements.

‘Having a multi-agency group means that we are able to have meaningful discussions regarding these families and plans for safeguarding them and their babies following the birth’.

The Child M SCR emphasised the vulnerability of missing children, although it was recognised that his death might not have been predicted or prevented, the Board accepted that the longer he was missing, so the risk to his welfare increased. We have strengthened the multi-agency missing panel and have comprehensive plans for missing children. The Board assisted with a project led by the NSPCC of Return Home Interviews for missing children.

The SCR also promoted formal escalation procedures; so the Board launched an updated Escalation Policy and has emphasized the need for agencies to discuss concerns and to escalate them quickly if not satisfied. There has been open acceptance and agreement with recognition that this can be a key element in safeguarding children.

The sub-group, Executive and Board have a regular tracking document giving the latest update on all SCRs, Learning Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews that are connected in any way with Croydon.

Impact on practice - have we made a difference?

For every SCR and Learning Review we develop specific Action Plans, these document all recommendations and subsequent actions, both by the Board and all relevant partner agencies which are overseen by the SCR sub-group. We also issue composite action plans for each agency so they are aware of the actions over various Reviews which will highlight if similar issues arise.

The important purpose of these action plans is to ensure that learning from Reviews can be acted upon and embedded in order to prevent such issues arising in the future. For example the SCR on Child E completed in early 2014 highlighted the need to improve responses to children in relation to child sexual exploitation. This was both in improving practitioners' awareness and joint responses. This has been a major focus of the Board's work in 2014/15 and practitioners have much greater awareness of CSE issues and a revised multi-agency protocol for Managing CSE was agreed and circulated. The CSE Panel has effective multi-agency representation and is being used well with practitioners regularly making appropriate referrals, which is explored further in the CSE Sub-group report. The SCR noted that parents should have greater CSE awareness; the Board took part in the National CSE Awareness Day in March 2015, distributing leaflets and providing advice to local families. This information is also available on the Board website and further guidance has been provided from engagement with Child Exploitation Online Protection and staff have undertaken CEOP Ambassador training. We engaged with the mother of Breck Bednar, a child who was murdered following being groomed online, she gave a moving presentation at our Safeguarding Conference, bringing into reality the impact of online abuse and we have also placed the foundation set up in his name on our website encouraging parents to access the link

The SCR of Child M, gave great emphasis upon Missing Children and the dangers they face. This has resulted in changes in practice, robust procedures have been introduced; the multi-agency Missing Children Panel is very effective, Children Missing from Education are now formally addressed, children's social care have introduced a 'flag' on their electronic recording system which alerts every missing child, that data is monitored via daily, weekly and monthly reports. The risks to missing children has been widely highlighted and actively responded to collectively by Police, social care, education and local voluntary agencies.

The legacy from our SCRs is cumulative and continues to be embedded into practice; for instance past recommendations about Child Protection Case Conferences have been accepted into everyday practice as has Reflective Supervision which is now available to every social work practitioner.

Emerging themes & recommendations for 2015/16

- The SCR sub-group will be well placed to undertake an analysis of the pros and cons of the different types of SCR methodology and the circumstances whereby recommendation of a particular model might be given.
- Provide wide dissemination of 'Key Messages from SCRs', a brief overview to be developed of the key themes arising from the reviews.
- Make an approach to join the DfE Innovation funded project as a pilot studying **Improving practice around the issue of inter-professional communication and decision making**. This involves looking at learning from our recent SCRs being jointly run by the NSPCC and SCIE.
- Examine any themes that have previously emerged from SCRs, DHRs or Learning Reviews and determine if there are barriers to the learning being achieved.
- Undertake an analysis of the impact of Criminal proceedings on SCRs and in particular on the Learning Events.
- Promote 'Professional Curiosity' as a major theme for the Board for 2015/16.

Maureen Floyd
Deputy Chair, SCR Sub-Group

10. b Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Actions from CDOP Annual Report 2013/2014

- Clarify arrangements for absence cover for the Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) and Child Death Review Co-ordinator
- Ensure CSCB are kept informed of the work of CDOP
- Ensure completion and presentation of annual report to CSCB
- Ensure timely statutory child death data returns for Department of Education by 30 May 2014
- Improve process of data quality and timeliness of receiving information for reviews by revising Form B (data collection form) and making them agency specific
- Review child death database to ensure improved quality to support rapid response meetings, the CDOP, annual returns to DfE and Croydon CDOP Annual Report
- Undertake a review of the local data to identify themes / trends in the deaths

Achievements for 2014/15

- Completion and presentation of 13/14 annual report and 5 year data analysis to CSCB to identify trends themes, trends and emerging issues in the deaths. Gaps in data and data quality identified. Association between deaths in Black African and Asian children and perinatal/neonatal events, chromosomal and congenital abnormalities, and infections with maternal, antenatal and perinatal factors should be explored
- Data quality and timeliness of receiving information for the reviews has improved by revising some of the Form B (data collection form) and making them agency specific. A number of these have been piloted.
- Completed transfer of 6 years written records to electronic database
- Completed and returned statutory child death data returns for Department of Education
- Terms of reference for both CDOP and Rapid Response meetings reviewed and agreed
- Rapid Response monitoring form designed to track actions
- Register of Unexpected Deaths designed and reported at each CDOP meeting
- Increased partnership working with SPOCs in South West London to improve meaningful data collection and share learning from SCRs
- Attendance at London CDOP Chairs meetings to encourage partnership working and learning
- Developed CSCB dashboard performance indicator to support timely completion of reviews by 6 months by CDOP
- Visited Coroner's office to increase partnership working, understand processes and support timely return of information

- Highlighted issues to professionals e.g. Baby Slings, Dangerous Dogs, co-sleeping.

Emerging themes & recommendations for 2015/16

- Completion and presentation of 14/15 annual report and data analysis to CSCB to identify trends themes, trends and emerging issues in the deaths
- Completed findings to inform an action plan which will be developed and implemented to address the emerging issues.
- To complete the revision and piloting of Form B for remaining agencies to ensure that agencies understand and are able to complete the forms to support achieving CSCB performance indicator.
- Undertake analysis of all records to identify themes, trends and emerging issues.
- Statutory child death data returns for Department of Education
- Review Terms of Reference for both CDOP and RR meetings
- Continue to build on partnership working to improve data collection and shared learning
- Attendance at London CDOP Chairs meetings to encourage partnership working and learning
- Monitor CSCB dashboard indicator; develop actions to mitigate risks
- Observe other CDOPs in sector to improve learning of how other panels function
- Look at how CDOP can increase awareness of issues identified at panel to support improving child outcomes
- Review and distribute Croydon Bereavement Leaflet to ensure that parents receive the correct information following the death of their child. Ensure alignment with CUH Maternity Bereavement leaflet.
- It has been recognised that a small number of babies in Croydon have died through co-sleeping. An analysis of the CDOP data focusing on Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infants (SUDI) which includes co-sleeping is being undertaken to identify risks associated with SUDI and co-sleeping. Following completion of the analysis, a report will be presented to the CSCB and a multi-agency action plan will be developed and implemented during 2015/2016
- Better working with Health – issues can sometimes be put on the backburner and can sometimes be difficult to obtain information.
- Better working with wider London allows us to pick up on trends, which we are unable to do as a Borough due to small numbers.

Dawn Cox
Chair, Child Death Overview Panel

10. c Quality Assurance Practice & Performance sub-group (QAPP)

Achievements & Key Issues and Progress on Business Plan

The safeguarding of children is highly complex. What matters most in the quality assurance of safeguarding children is knowing about the 'wellbeing' outcomes achieved by children and their families; i.e. the impact on real lives – whether and in what way their lives are better and safer as a result of the various services, interventions and arrangements. The experiences of children, parents and frontline staff are an essential source of information for determining what outcomes have been achieved. The QAPP have adopted this thinking in quality assuring safeguarding practice.

There are so many dimensions to safeguarding that trying to quality assure everything would overwhelm the process and system. Therefore the Board decided to focus on a discreet number of priorities which we (CSCB) concluded were the most important at the end of 2013. The CSCB employed a set of logically, evidence-based reasons (KPIS, SCRs and previous audits), for choosing the particular areas based on reflection on relevant research and jointly recognised local needs from consultation with all partner agencies and children and families themselves. These priority areas are set out in the CSCB Strategy and Business Plan for 2013/14/15 and in the Quality Assurance Framework 2014 - 16. The QAPP developed multiple methodologies to gather data to evidence the current standard of safeguarding practices with a particular focus on gathering information and experiences from children and their families and the views of practitioners about the quality of multi-agency working.

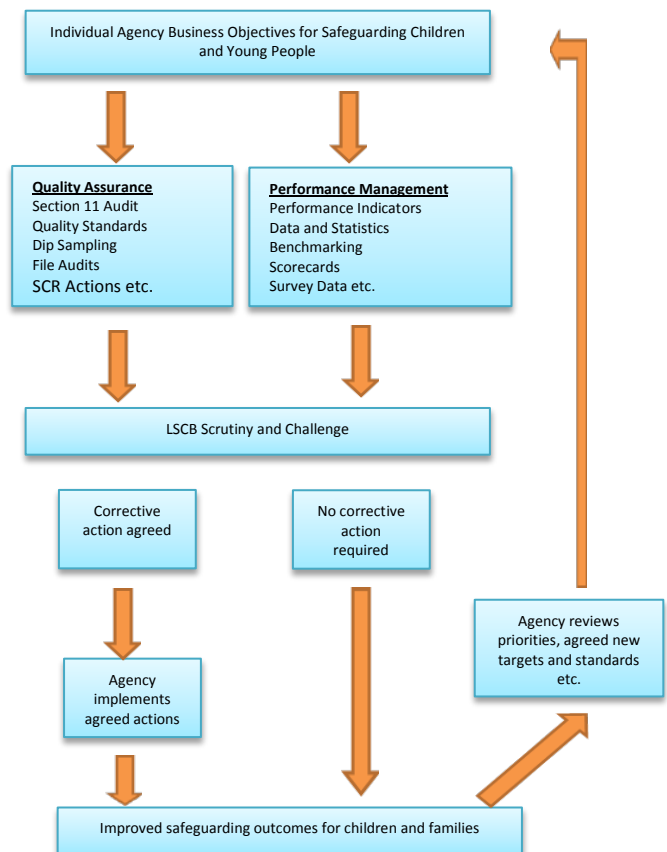
In January 2014 the Board introduced a new quality assurance framework (QAF) that asked a set of questions:

- Strategic Questions: which focused on asking those difficult questions of the CSCB itself, mainly about the Board's own awareness of risk and need, whether the services in place actually work to ameliorate that risk / need and whether the Board were aware of and planning for future risks and needs.
- Practice Questions which focused on issues such as: priority services, vulnerable groups of children (e.g. missing), specific risk issues (e.g. CSE) and partnership working.
- Organisational/Practitioner Questions which focused on issues such as: Relationships, capacity, supervision, support, organisational culture and resources
- Wider Picture Questions which focused on issues such as: poverty, housing and social deprivation and were answered most recently by the Strategic Needs Analysis of Children requiring Safeguarding Services for the next twenty years.

The QAPP have collected a range of evidence using the following sources:

1. Quantitative which is concerned with "*How much or how many*", examples are: data and trends, performance indicators and targets
2. Qualitative which is concerned with "*how well something is done*", examples are: views of practitioners, children and families; quality of assessments, case audits, mapping evidence to criteria
3. Outcome which is concerned with "*so what*", what difference has an intervention made to children and families and whether anyone is better off. Examples are: reduction / cessation in harm increase in attendance at appointments, improved well-being.

Figure 8: illustrates how the Quality Assurance Practice and Performance Sub-Group implements the Quality Assurance Framework.



In the past year the implementation of the QAF has assisted the Board coordinate safeguarding practices across the borough whilst ensuring effectiveness in particular to:

- Assessing the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families (especially Early Help)
- Assessing whether CSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations
- Quality assuring practice through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learnt
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of training including multi-agency training to safeguard children

Our aim has been to achieve a 'steady state' and then sustain a good standard of safeguarding practice across the Borough. This has been a challenge due to the turnover of staff. The Board has responded by developing electronic inductions and a fluid and responsive training programme. We have also had to prioritise our activities. Prioritisation has been based on the following methodology¹⁴:

Identification of gaps in practice from the November 2013 and May 2014 *Safeguarding Report to CSCB: 'An Analytical Commentary on Safeguarding Performance from April to September 2013 and again from October 2013 to March 2014.*

- Data from CRS
- Feedback from quantitative and qualitative data from child protection conferences
- Learning from local and national SCRs
- Previous quality assurance activities
- Feedback from partners
- Case file audits
- Training needs analysis of all children's social workers and managers in the people department¹⁵
- Independent multi-agency audit of 73 cases involving our most at risk adolescents with a specific focus on children missing and at risk of CSE.
- A mapping and profiling of CSE in Croydon

These activities have led the CSCB via the Executive and the Quality Assurance Performance, Practice sub-groups to identify the need to concentrate on ensuring basic safeguarding practice is in place across the Children's Workforce in LBC throughout 2014 / 15. The quality assurance framework is a methodology and an implementation model that has informed the

¹⁴ We note that this methodology is not comprehensive. However, going forward this QAF will ensure the CSCBV will be able to prioritise based on a reliable and highly sophisticated methodology.

CSCB Strategy and Business plan for 2014-16 and sets out the following areas as priority areas for review, development and for the Board to be measured against:

1. A need to focus on ensuring there is a consistent level of safeguarding practice across the Children's Workforce by focusing on a campaign entitled '*Getting the Basics Right*'
2. Reducing the numbers of children who go missing in Croydon and reducing the risks of those who do go missing by complying with statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home, care or education. (This included developing a better understanding of Other Looked After children in the Borough).
3. Developing Croydon's response and practice to children who are subject to sexual exploitation.
4. We also want to improve outcomes for children identified as vulnerable under one years of age by improving the pre-birth assessment process.
5. Responding to specific gaps in practice for example;
 - a. completing a MASH audit to assess threshold application,
 - b. trained all PRU staff in CSE,
 - c. all Housing staff completing a Training Needs Analysis in Safeguarding and then the implementation of a Housing wide training programme for all Housing staff employing levels 1 – 3 of the LSCB's sponsor safeguarding training and
 - d. Health and others receiving specific training in Fabricated Illness and
 - e. staff training in joint assessment and planning.

The QAPP have coordinated both multi-agency and Board commissioned independent audits such as

- the audit on Vulnerable Adolescents,
- coordinating and gathering analysis from single agency audits such as Children Social Care's 100 qualitative case file audits,
- two quarters of case file data from a quantitative audit tool),
- a training needs analysis of social workers and managers in Children Social Care,
- an audit of child protection conference planning
- Coordinating the MASH audit
- a strategic needs analysis of children safeguarding
- mapping and profiling of the extent of Child Sexual Exploitation in the borough.
- Led the Pre-birth and Under One multi-agency audit

The LADO process now has a set of KPIs and the learning from investigations is collated and transferred via a set of trainings and forthcoming conference. The QAPP has tracked the section 11 process ensuring the learning has been included in the learning and development plan. The QAPP has analysed the learning from all of these activities and contributed to the Board's learning and curriculum as well as informed the wider Board of good practice and gaps in safeguarding practice.

For example; after triangulated data from SCRs, and audits the QAPP identified as a partnership we were not identifying fathers; that we needed to prioritise children missing and children and young people at risk of CSE. Indeed the QAPP has also overseen the development of KPIs in relation to missing children and CSE.

The QAPP applies a systemic feedback loop to learning, to practice but also to further audit. For example the MASH audit identified that thresholds employed for police protections needed analysis. This has led to a Police, Board and CSC auditing incidents of Police using Powers of Protection

The QAPP has monitored the launch of a new escalation policy, as well as updated protocols in relation to; Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence, CSE, Early Help and MASH. The QAPP will sign off policies and protocols in relation to FGM, Joint Working, Radicalisation and Neglect in 2015.

The QAPP has also received feedback as the work of the Third sector namely interventions from the NSPCC, Safer-London and MsUnderstood.

The QAPP has a wide portfolio and has identified a range of issues for the Board's priorities for the forthcoming year including; engagement of fathers, multi-agency assessments and interventions, early help whilst a continuing emphasis upon missing and CSE and other vulnerabilities associated with adolescents.

The QAPP has overseen the implementation of the Participation Strategy. Developing a systemic method to regularly and meaningfully gather the voices of children, families and professionals has proven challenging. Children Social Care has introduced surveys which are completed with families over the phone and findings are due to be presented to the Board in November 2015.

The Quality Assurance Manager for Looked After Children has collated children reviews from Looked After Reviews whilst all the child protection coordinators have asked parents and professionals to complete a brief survey at the end of the each child protection conference. We also have a specific project where a social work student is meeting with children and parents who have experienced the child protection process to explore key themes around the level and type of support wanted and received, the timeliness of support to them, quality of contact with CSC.

We have also spoken to 20 young people who have been the victims of trafficking as well as a number of young people who have been privately fostered. We are also recording the views of professionals who have been part of the LADO process and we are exploring technically how the CSCB website can be more participative. The CSCB's current participation strategy is evolving as we learn what works in relation to participation. Our next phase is to encourage other members of the Board to share their participation activities in relation to keeping children safe.

The QAPP sub-group has overseen an audit of 73 vulnerable adolescents, identified by practitioners as being those they were 'worried about'. The audit used a series of multi-agency workshops with practitioners as well as engagement with the young people themselves.

The young people voiced their concerns and sought earlier intervention to prevent family breakdown, they felt this would have been helpful to prevent the family breakdown.

It is important to understand why children behave as they do, including why they go missing and then to address the reasons. Children's difficulties arise from what's happened in their lives and they need to be able to deal with this

'Really need time to build relationships with these children who have been let down so often'

To achieve greater insight the QAPP is now supporting an increase in the numbers of multi-agency audits undertaken throughout the year.

Emerging themes & recommendations for 2015/16

Key Messages identified through the implementing of the quality assurance framework are:

- All agencies need to improve how they worked together and communicated with one another and how we record our joint work
- All agencies need to improve how they jointly assess and jointly intervene
- All agencies need to need to identify and engage fathers
- All agencies need to intervene earlier with specific focus on pre-birth and under ones.
- All practitioners need to improve their awareness of indicators of child sexual exploitation and identify when children are at risk of going missing
- All practitioners need to commit to the early help model of working becoming lead professionals and contributing to the concept of the team around the child

The QAPP will continue to measure safeguarding performance and act, on behalf of the Board to identify gaps as well as good practice. For 2015 the QAPP are prioritising Children with Disabilities, an evaluation of missing and new CSE services and practice as well as focusing on substance misuse and infants.

Gavin Swann
Deputy Chair, QAPP Sub-Group

10. c (i) Learning & Development sub-group

Achievements & key issues and Progress on Business Plan

The Learning and Development (L&D) Sub-Group is part of the QAPP; some members of the L&D Sub-Group are also members of other Board sub-groups.

The L&D Sub group has strengthened its relationships with the SCR Sub-Group in particular through utilising SCR Action plans to inform training. For example throughout 2014/15 the L&D Sub Group used both national and local SCRs to inform learning and development. The current SCR workshops have used the Tia Sharpe case alongside local cases, such as Child M. We also incorporated the national case of Breck Bednar into our annual conference to highlight key learning areas relating to young people and the risks they face online.

The group also considers development of learning in response to findings from Audits. For example an audit of Vulnerable Young People informed learning content of the Serious Case Review workshops and the commissioning of training on Engaging Vulnerable Young People.

The group is developing a better picture of single-agency training to inform how the Board's training complements this, for example we are aware of the training Croydon Health provide for its staff and are able to promote how multi-agency complements this training through shared learning, and covering specific knowledge areas in more details (e.g. CSE).

The group also considers the findings from the evaluation of training and monitoring of take-up from different agencies. The group has agreed the use of an Evaluation framework and a minimum question set to be used for evaluation of training at two stages. This is based on the work from the Pan-London LSCB Training Sub-Group. The first stage is after the training to assess the quality and immediate response to the content, including an understanding of how the learning will be applied to practice. The second stage follows some months after the training to assess how the learning has been applied; this has been developing and is an area for continued development going forward. Evaluation of each of the courses during this period has been completed. During this period also our system of evaluation has improved to capture evidence of how learning has been applied to practice

Impact on children - have we made a difference?

Overall feedback of the training delivered during this period has been very positive.

Focussing in particular on Level 3 Safeguarding, as this is a core part of the Board's training, feedback has been overwhelming positive with many participants clear about how it will improve their practice. The majority of staff felt that their awareness of safeguarding issues has now increased with a better knowledge and understanding of the issues involved

“I will feel reassured when making assessments and referrals regarding safeguarding issues”,

“Wider understanding of the issues involved and better knowledge of the wider system”;

- Some said they would apply the learning and skills into their everyday practice
- Several stated that they would be able to share more information with staff

Workers are more aware of the voice of the child:

“it has made me to be always child focused in my work no matter what the situation”

Some felt more able to challenge decisions:

“I will ask even more questions than before; I will also challenge colleagues and other professional’s decisions”.

In March 2015 we commenced a series of Serious Case Review Workshops – including sessions for Managers and Strategic Leads and sessions for Practitioners. Feedback from these sessions has been very positive, in particular the quality of the multi-agency discussions that have taken place. Feedback from these sessions indicates how practitioners will apply their learning:

Managers and Strategic Leads individual comments on how the training will influence their practice, included:

- More aware of the implications for schools and of all agencies improving communications
- Will continue to work in partnership with all professional and go with my gut feeling
- using it when working within Child Protection Conferences and consultation with social workers, and in reflection in supervision when discussing and or planning for further work on cases
- Will share key points with our work force and facilitate more learning opportunities
- I am more likely to follow up queries and to make enquiries where before I may have expected someone else to
- I intend to deliver training to Attendance Officers in the context of safeguarding, using relevant SCR as examples

Practitioner’s feedback on how the training will influence their practice included:

- Being more inquisitive of the case/need
- Being more challenging of decisions
- Information sharing and sharing analysis to help decision making
- Better understanding of CSE and Child Sexual Abuse
- Looking in-depth at cases and working with ALL partners
- Challenges to own value base and professional value base
- Use of escalation policy

NAME OF EVENT	ATTENDEES TO DATE
CSE/OP RAPTOR	60
CSE/GANGS	24
SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS	244
LEVEL 3 SAFEGUARDING	262
DA & SEXUAL VIOLENCE	56
DA, HBV (DASH)	29
CHILD TRAFFICKING	20
PREVENT	81
CSCB CONFERENCE	186
PRIVATE FOSTERING CONFERENCE	47
CAPI CONFERENCE (PARENTS IN PRISON)	83
SYSTEMIC PRACTICE	29
FABRICATED INDUCED ILLNESS	77
ENGAGING MEN	21
INTRODUCTORY ONLINE SAFEGUARDING	1600

Emerging themes & recommendations for 2015/16

Through evaluations and discussions at the L&D Sub-Group we recognise the need to improve how all agencies access the training to ensure good multi-agency representation at each training session. This will be improved through better marketing via the website, newsletter and targeted promotions to particular sectors. We will also continue to assess, via the L&D Sub-Group how the Board’s training offers best complement single agency training through the sharing of training taking place across different agencies, and identified needs in completed Section 11 Audits.

We will continue to improve gathering evidence of the learning loop through evaluations and evidence from Audits of practice needs and improvement. A new booking system will improve how feedback on training is obtained; it is anticipated that this will bring an increase in the number of respondents and therefore more information will be available for interpretation.

A new learning and development programme has been developed, based on evidence of need from recent thematic audits and feedback from existing multi-agency training surveys; such as Engaging Vulnerable Young People training – as developed from the Audit of Vulnerable Young People and local SCRs; Engaging with Men – as developed from Pre-Birth/Under 1's Audit, revised CSE training as developed from local reviews and Audits. Developments include introduction of an Induction Day for new staff, and plans to increase community learning – such as supporting Parents to be more aware of CSE.

Going forward, we are integrating Early Help training to provide a full programme of Early Help and Safeguarding training for multi-agency partners.

Anita McGrath
Chair, L & D Sub-Group

10. c (ii) Editorial Sub Group

The Safeguarding Board saw the launch of its standalone website in August 2014. There has been a concerted effort to bring this up to an acceptable standard and encompass the information and guidance that should be available to professionals, children and families. Teething problems were encountered which were a real challenge to rectify. The site has been updated and links properly established from Croydon local authority site and via search engines. There has been positive feedback from Board members that they have found the site useful and informative and the intention is to build the site further.

The Board approved the establishment of an Editorial Board as a sub-group of the QAPP to oversee the website content and ensure the publication of a regular Newsletter. This has been achieved.

The Editorial Group was established to ensure that the website is continually updated and engages with the right target audience (e.g. children, young people and families and professionals).

Membership of this group has been cross partnership to ensure the best information is communicated to the public and to professionals for safeguarding Croydon's children and young people.

The purpose of the Editorial sub group to the website has been to;

Respond to news, additions and amendments, ensuring that information is regularly updated on the website

Produce a regular CSCB Newsletter soon after every CSCB Meeting.

CSCB Newsletter

The CSCB Newsletter is produced shortly after the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board meeting. It is designed to be used as a channel to give the latest news and developments of the Board; to promote training and conferences, provide information about specific areas of interest and it provides direct links to the CSCB website where full details can be accessed.

It also provides links to national information updates, key policy developments, updates to the Annual Learning and Development Programme which again links to the website giving full oversight of the programme and giving full details of the multi-agency training offer during the year as well as bespoke training developed.

The newsletter is also a promotional tool for upcoming events including conferences, seminars and general information sharing.

Have we made a difference?

We have received feedback from Board members who have commented that they and their staff have found the website to be worthwhile with access to good information relating to the practice, referral pathways and protocol. It also provides access to national and local resources and multi-agency training offers and a channel to promote key learning messages and resources to develop good practice.

We incorporated the views of young person(s) who had an overview of the website but in particular the children and young people's tab. The feedback was very useful which supported us in making the changes we have made to that section. The amount of text was reduced to keep focus on the information being given. We also took into consideration the language we used which was reviewed and looked at altering to include pictures etc. although this could not be progressed as we had to work with the original template which site had been located on. This is an ongoing part of our work.

Emerging themes & recommendations for 2015/16

- Each Newsletter to contain summary information from Board and/or sub-groups
- Ongoing review of information located on site
- Provide links to relevant National data & research
- Wider distribution of website and newsletter
- Communications strategy
- Respond to engagement with young people and the community.
- Provide information which will offer advice, help and support to young people, parents and practitioners.

Sharon Parkes
Chair, Editorial Sub-Group

10. d Health Sub-group

Achievements & key issues and Progress on Business Plan

The health sub group membership reflects the broad range of health professionals working across Croydon.

The focus of the sub group's work plan is to improve outcomes for the children and families that we all work with. This cannot be achieved in isolation and the need for integrated working between health professionals, commissioners of services, CSCB and Local authority partners has become increasingly recognised.

With this in mind, this report reflects the achievements of health professionals and development of services but also recognises the role that others have contributed to this end.

The sub group has developed a work plan which reflects the CSCB objectives and includes relevant work streams (including some which are multiagency) across the health economy. This report includes a briefing and an update on some of the work completed over the last year. The work plan is now in the process of being updated in order to reflect the CSCB objectives for the forthcoming year and new emerging health safeguarding issues.

The GP Case Reflection model was initially developed by the Deputy Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children. This model takes an innovative approach to supporting GPs in their safeguarding practice, allowing the time to reflect on complex cases and consider the safeguarding issues.

It also provides an opportunity to discuss and strengthen safeguarding administration processes including requests for child protection/child in need information and invitations to case conferences.

The majority of GP practices have now implemented this model and although in the first instance the focus was on children, it has now been developed to include adults with safeguarding needs. Two audits of the model have demonstrated improvement in safeguarding understanding and activity including referrals into MASH and Early Help. The development of this model has been supported by Croydon CCG and recognised as good practice nationally with an overview report being placed on the NHSE pin board.¹⁶

¹⁶ NHS resource where Best Practice can be shared

The Croydon CCG safeguarding team holds GP safeguarding leads workshops four times a year. The aim of this forum is to maintain awareness of safeguarding issues, improve understanding and knowledge of services available across Croydon and to provide support in what can be a challenging area of practice. A number of presenters from partner agencies have attended the workshop in order to improve understanding of emerging safeguarding issues and awareness of the numerous service developments within the safeguarding arena.

The topics covered have included domestic abuse and sexual violence, female genital mutilation, family nurse partnership, health visiting services, looked after children, early help services and MASH.

Working with families and children is the core business of health professionals. It has long been recognised that early recognition of need and provision of support enables the improvement of health and social outcomes. Members of the health sub group identified the need to develop pathways which would promote sensitive parenting. Alongside this, the local authority has been developing and strengthening the early help model. Through partnership working and using an evidence based approach, integrated pathways are being developed, utilising the skills of health and non-clinical professionals in order to move into the 'Best Start' model. Although still in development, this work recognises the significance and strengths of partnership working and the positive relationships between health and local authority professionals and commissioners in order to identify need and provide support to children and families at an early stage in order to successfully improve outcomes for all. The progress of this model is included on the health sub group work plan in order to ensure that there is optimum awareness and preparation for a different way of working.

There has been recognition across the partnership that referral numbers into MASH need to be reduced and those into Early Help Services increased. In order to promote this, the manager of the Early Help service has attended and presented at the sub group. This will continue to be a work stream in order to maintain awareness of what the service can offer and improve referral rates on an on-going basis.

The Health Sub Group has contributed to the development and progress of the Croydon partnership Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy with champions from across the health economy including the CCG. This has been a work stream of the sub group and allows the opportunity for health professionals to share developments from each agencies perspective in order to promote understanding and referrals across the whole health economy. Although there is no hard data available from health, anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been an increase in referrals to the Family Justice Centre.

The health of Looked After Children (LAC) has been the focus of attention for a number of years in Croydon. LAC health professionals play a significant role in the improvement of health outcomes but this cannot be achieved in isolation.

Designated LAC professionals have presented to the GP safeguarding leads workshops in order to raise their profile and promote the key role that GPs play in supporting the LAC population. The Designated LAC professionals have worked closely with partners in the local authority (including commissioners) in order to improve understanding of the LAC population (which currently exceeds 800 children) and health processes through data collection and analysis.

Numerous health professionals contribute to improving the health of looked after children and in view of this, LAC has been included on the sub group work plan in order to generate discussion and consider how we can work together in order to develop services and meet the needs of the children and young people.

The views of health partners can then contribute to discussions with local authority partners in order to develop a holistic approach to improving health outcomes.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has been the focus of significant partnership discussion and work over the last year and progress has been made to support the estimated 3,400 females in Croydon who are affected by FGM. The health sub group has successfully responded to the numerous developments in legislation and national drivers through intensive awareness raising activity. This has included the group's contribution to the Croydon multi-agency response to the Home Office consultation in December 2014. While there has been acknowledgement of the absolute need to safeguard women and girls at risk, protect them from harm and respond to statutory requirements, there has also been recognition of the need to improve health outcomes of those affected physically and/or emotionally by FGM.

Multi-agency activity over the last year has seen the development of an antenatal pathway completed in partnership with police and local authority colleagues. There has also been recognition of the need to develop a whole systems approach which includes contributions from all key stakeholders including the communities affected, in order to raise awareness, develop appropriate pathways for referral, improve health and psychological outcomes and protect those at risk of harm. In light of this, Croydon CCG has recruited an FGM Project Consultant to take the lead on this vital and significant area of work. The main emphasis of this project will be improving outcomes for all women and girls who are or may be affected by FGM. They will support a whole system approach which will be aligned to safeguarding and legal requirements, and include considerable stakeholder involvement. The development of this project will be included in the health sub group work plan for the forthcoming year.

Current figures suggest referrals of approximately 8 pregnant women a month where FGM has been identified as a risk.

CHS have continued to focus on the needs of pregnant women affected by FGM and respond to the increasing requirements. The recruitment of a midwife into the Croydon Health Services (CHS) homeless team will support the needs of marginalised women and is likely to facilitate an increase in identification of FGM and therefore, referrals. It is anticipated that due to the nature of the work of this service, identification is likely to also include non-pregnant women, young women and possibly children who have been subject to FGM.

In recognition of the vulnerability of this group, a Health Visitor will shortly be recruited in order to complement the midwifery post. These are very new and innovative positions with few like them nationally. This will further develop the services ability to respond to the unique issues that are faced here in Croydon. The manager of this service is a member of the health sub group, providing a forum to share the work that is on-going to support the health needs of this highly vulnerable client group.

The Health Sub Group has considered a series of local and national Serious Case Reviews and has provided feedback on the implications of health practice and how improvements can be made in order to encourage better opportunities and outcomes for clients. It has been recognised that commissioners of children's health services must be made aware of the findings of SCRs and safeguarding audits in order to consider any impact on commissioning intentions – commissioners are now invited to attend the group in order to be included in these discussions.

The health sub group provides an opportunity for all health providers to consider their organisational safeguarding quality assurance processes. This includes s11 reporting, CCG safeguarding quality assurance processes, multi-agency and single agency audit activity and CSCB dataset requirements. While it is not possible to examine each process in detail, it does allow for discussion around areas of concern that may be as a result of internal and/or external factors and to consider how to respond in order to seek resolution.

The sub group provides a forum for health professionals from the various organisations across the borough to share the work being completed within their own agencies. This also includes discussion around new guidance, policies and procedures and for members to act as 'critical friends'.

The Health Sub Group has successfully worked towards strengthening partnerships to adopt a 'Whole System Approach' towards safeguarding.

Through working across the CSCB partnership to strengthen joint working and developing integrated pathways, including new initiatives such as Best Start and developing an increased understanding and use of the early help offer.

In addition, there is recognition that work streams cut across all the CSCB sub groups and work has been on going in order to integrate common areas of development.

The Health Sub Group has contributed to the working of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing children work programmes which have been achieved through a number of health professionals being members of the CSE and Missing Sub group. This has encouraged discussion and awareness raising of the progress that has been made in these areas. For example, health partners have embedded CSE and missing in learning and development strategies – these have been shared with service providers.

The Health Sub Group has worked towards improving services for children under the age of 1 through providing additional support to pregnant women and babies who are vulnerable or at risk in order to support them to have happier and safer lives. The Named Midwife for Safeguarding has strengthened the vulnerable women’s group in order to ensure that the needs of pregnant women who have additional risk factors in their lives are identified at an early stage with the appropriate level of support provided.

This group is multiagency and includes a member of MASH. The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) continues to work intensely with a significant number of young women having their first child. FNP is able provides the health sub group with on-going updates regarding their service including reports on the successful outcomes for young families in Croydon.

My team and I have worked hard to make it truly multi-agency and therefore more meaningful and safer for the families we work with.

Another safety net is the 16 week women only antenatal appointment, this gives both the women and the midwife an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues and also if accompanied at the booking another opportunity to ask the domestic abuse question and FGM. This can then be fed into the vulnerable women’s group if anything is identified. It also gives the women a chance to discuss previous pregnancies, terminations of pregnancy or any other sensitive information that they may not want their partners to know.

Emerging themes & recommendations for 2015/16

Much will be a continuation of existing work, some areas of more specific focus include:-

- FGM
- Focus on the work with the under ones including the on-going development of the vulnerable women's group, understanding and assessing the roles of men and the development of pathways to reduce incidence of SIDs.
- Development of oversight of single agency audit activity and improvement of outcomes.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Adult Mental Health and CAMHS services in line with the SCR recommendations and the Vulnerable Adolescents audit, in partnership with QAPP and SCR sub-groups.

Sally Innis
Chair, Health Sub-Group

10. e Education Sub-group

Achievements, key issues and progress on Business Plan

This has been a busy and productive year for the education sub-group, and one which has seen its focus and reach extend in its second year of operation. Representation on the sub-group has been extended to include the independent sector in Croydon. The Chairmanship of the sub-group changed in January 2015 following an internal reorganisation of roles and responsibilities.

Work is targeted on key issues facing schools and other education providers, recognising the key role they have to make in ensuring all children and young people are safeguarded and that they are better equipped to keep themselves safe.

Sub-group members have continued to ensure close links with all education settings through engagement with a termly forum for all designated safeguarding leads from both primary and secondary settings. This forum involves multi-agency information sharing and training and ensures the latest statutory and non-statutory guidance, alongside other resources, are shared with schools. Agencies involved have included partners from Social Care, Health, the Police and other Council services such as Early Intervention and Support Services.

The sub-group has supported the establishment of a supervision pilot for the designated lead in schools and other education settings, recognising the support required to meet demands of the role and to enable reflection, thus helping to improve practice.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has increased their profile through increased engagement with schools, who recognise this role provides an invaluable service. The LADO is a member of the sub-group and contributes to each meeting on number and types of referrals, noting trends and pressures. This has proved invaluable to the group in planning future work and has enabled appropriate information sharing with schools. There has been a continued increase in the number of referrals and funding has been obtained for a second LADO to improve accessibility.

Following the annual Section 11 audit of schools and colleges, and based on the findings of the 2014 audit, recommendations have been made for changes to the audit and audit process for 2015 and beyond to ensure appropriate encapsulation of pertinent issues, including CSE, DASV and radicalisation.

Information dissemination has been undertaken for schools to ensure that they are aware of the issues, signs and symptoms and how to respond to radicalisation in schools and further comprehensive guidance will be issued in the autumn term 2015 as part of a “safeguarding toolkit” for all schools and colleges within the Borough.

The sub-group has agreed that, from September 2015, all schools will have a nominated member of staff responsible for the co-ordination of information on, and awareness of, Domestic and Sexual Violence (DASV), recognising the key role schools have to play as a front line service who, particularly during the primary phase of education, have frequent contact with parents and carers of children and young people and the impact DASV has on their lives and well-being.

Impact on children - have we made a difference?

- There has been a 97% increase in contacts and a 53% increase in referrals to MASH consultation line, the LADO and MASH.
- Where a referral has been made to the LADO 40% of cases that reach a strategy meeting result in those concerns being substantiated.
- An increase in referrals regarding physical abuse and concerns about standards of care, including neglect, indicates greater awareness of these issues and a greater willingness to act on the part of schools and other education settings.
- Schools engage well with forums for designated teachers and are very engaged with ensuring their practice is up to date.
- Where specific issues have been raised, for example with regard to Child Sexual Exploitation in a number of settings, there has been a high degree of willingness to engage with training and awareness raising in order that pupils are identified, supported and referred appropriately.
- The response of schools and colleges to engagement with a number of projects, for example those led by MsUnderstood and Safer London, indicates a real willingness to ensure pupils are safeguarded.
- Following information sharing meetings with both primary and secondary head teachers there has been good take-up of training for staff on PREVENT and Raising Awareness to Prevent Radicalisation.
- 12 Education Providers reported one or more incidents of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) as part of the audit, including all Key Stage 3 to 4 PRU's and 53% of Secondary Schools.

Emerging themes & recommendations for 2015/16

- The education sub-group will ensure there is a co-ordinated and comprehensive offer to schools to support them in their safeguarding work through contributing to and approving a “safeguarding toolkit” for all education settings. This will include support with policies, recording systems and education programmes.

At the same time it will monitor training activity, referrals to MASH and the LADO and the outcomes of the 2015 Section 11 Safeguarding Audit to provide appropriate challenge and support in order to improve practice.

- The education sub-group will work to ensure schools are equipped to deliver comprehensive and co-ordinated educational programmes on, amongst others, the themes of:

- o CSE
- o DASV
- o Teenage Relationship Abuse
- o Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- o Radicalisation
- o Gangs
- o Knife crime

- The Education Sub-Group will take responsibility for the audit, including the amending of the audit tool to include a focus on current key themes and updates to legislation, statutory duties and the latest revised Ofsted framework.

- Consideration will be given as to the possibility that CSE is being under-reported by Education Providers in Croydon. The Education Sub-Group will consider what further work needs to be undertaken with education providers to raise awareness of this issue, perhaps with peer support from leaders within Pupil Referral Units and high reporting Secondary Schools (One secondary school reported 10 children known as CSE).

- Representatives from education providers who experience an on-site visit as part of the audit process will be invited to an Education Sub-Group meeting to provide updates on progress achieved in relation to recommendations made as a result of the visit.

- 41% of referrals were not accepted by MASH, which is significantly less than the 73% of referrals made nationally in 2014 which led to assessment. This suggests that education providers would benefit from engaging with Early Help and MASH colleagues to get a better understanding of why referrals are not accepted, and put in place further packages of early help support as a pre-cursor to possible statutory involvement from Children’s Social Care. The sub-committee will monitor and analyse schools making safeguarding referrals and provide challenge to ensure improvements in practice. This will include termly monitoring of

schools' engagement with Early Intervention and Support Services to ensure children are receiving the right support at the right time.

- The sub-group will review the supervision trial for schools and education settings to ensure designated safeguarding leads are being supported and enabled to be reflective in order for them to fulfil their role.
- The sub-group will reflect on lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews to improve practice in schools and educational settings.
- The sub-group will work to raise awareness within schools around children missing in education and vulnerabilities as a result
- The sub-group will consider ways to help facilitate children and parents to feedback on safeguarding issues. In addition it will consider ways to raise awareness amongst parents and carers so they are supported in keeping their children safe from harm. This will include consideration of training, e.g. through the use of CEOP Ambassadors, and information sharing, e.g. related to radicalisation.

David Butler
Chair, Education Sub-Group

10. f Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Achievements & key issues

The launch of the MASH in January 2014 was preceded by the co-location of Public Protection Desk and social care. The key activity for 2014/15 has been embedding the working of MASH and developing improved relationships and information sharing with Health, Police, Social Care, Early Help, Probation and Education. The sub-group set the following objectives for 2014/15.

MASH Strategic Objectives

- MASH Implementation – working together to change culture, embed policies, procedures, practices and structures.
- Measuring Impact and Evaluation – what difference is being made. Here we need to include information on data, include Key Performance Indicators (KPI) e.g. time for assessments. We need to look at historical data to see trends.
- To develop a MASH Communication Strategy – for professionals and the public.
- MASH in the Children's Recording System (CRS) – electronic database able to provide the intelligence that provides all the necessary data of MASH and making it a success.

Key achievements during the year include:

- The response times to contacts coming into the MASH have improved and the intervention for families is proportionate to the referrals received. The information shared helps to create a holistic picture of the family
- Work on the FGM pathways in the MASH has increased the number of contacts on FGM
- The schools have an understanding of the purpose of the MASH
- The professional consultation line is a success and heavily utilised by professionals. Social Workers receiving the calls are able to provide advice and assist the network on matters of safeguarding and child protection including input on how to make a referral
- Regular meetings of the MASH partners take place to track the outcomes of referrals on cases that have experienced the detailed MASH intelligence process.
- MASH open days have been undertaken and attendance was good across partners

- The MASH audit undertaken October 2014 to January 2105 indicated that MASH decision making was generally sound with the majority of cases audited (96/135) rated as good or outstanding.
- MASH/Early help are closely aligned – both physically and in terms of systems with Early Help using the same recording system. This will enable greater integration as the system is further developed.

The sub-group has a stable core membership with strong contributions by partners. In 2015/16 the membership will be reviewed to ensure that all partners are regularly represented at sub-group meetings.

Impact on children - have we made a difference?

The role of MASH is “to identify and make safe at the earliest opportunity all vulnerable people in our communities through the sharing of information and intelligence across the safeguarding partnership”. The MASH audit outlined that decision making was sound and the proposition is that the impact on children is that vulnerable children will be identified.

Emerging themes & recommendations for 2015/16

- Wider communication of the functions and benefits of the MASH to the public and professional network to enable a deeper understanding and provide clarity. Publicity material to be designed and distributed.
- Further development and alignment of the Early Help Pathways and Early help Hub with the MASH process. Including work with the partnership to increase the levels of Early Help Assessments and the quality of referrals to MASH through the use of increased evidence of earlier support.
- Implementation of the Early Help Module to incorporate MASH- CRS to enable a seamless tracking of the journey of the child through the system. Additional benefits of a system being able to produce good quality data to measure performance so that the sub-group can analyse performance.
- Training and ensuring staff and partners have the knowledge and information required across both MASH and Early help.
- Improvements on the online referral form and the capacity of the professional consultation line to manage the volume of calls/queries.
- Ensuring regular feedback from referrers and partners so that improvements can be sustained.
- Follow-up on operational issues raised through the audit such as the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Contact Centre.

Dwynwen Stepien
Chair, MASH Sub-Group

10. g Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing Sub-Group

Introduction

There has been an extensive investment in Croydon in responding to the issues of Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation over the past twelve months, one example being the audit of 73 case files of at risk adolescents. We summarise the development of the partnership and describe our progress in relation to meeting the objectives of the action plans and conclude by describing the LSCB arrangements for monitoring and assessing the quality of intervention. It is important to recognise that the issues of Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation are inextricably linked as is this report.

The Quality and Effectiveness of Partnership Working

There are multiple partnerships in place in this area of work.

One of the most important partnerships is between the Police, Children Social Care and the Voluntary Sector. In Croydon Police colleagues in the Public Protection Team and the Missing Person's Unit as well as the 'Single Point of Contact' for CSE have consistently demonstrated a willingness to share information. There is a daily report of missing children sent to Children Social Care each morning as well as a weekly summary report which identifies children of most concern. Police also encourage co-location inviting social workers and partners Safer-London and NSPCC to share desk space at Croydon police station as well as undertake joint visits where appropriate. Police always attend the Missing Children's Panel and co-chair the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE) as well as relevant strategy groups. The specific Operation Raptor also demonstrates quality working relationships not only with local police partners but by more specialised police teams of Trident, British Transport Police, the Sexual Exploitation and Child Abuse Command, (SO17), Sapphire and the Child Investigation Abuse Team as well as the National Crime Agency and the Child Exploitation On-Line Protection Team (CEOP). This partnership has specifically supported the identification and protection in November 2014 of the twenty most vulnerable young women in Croydon through Operation Raptor. In line with our action plan and as we did in this operation we will continue to work proactively to use all powers available to disrupt such behaviour including prosecution.

The ongoing Operation Make-Safe is a further example of this joint working. The Justice Minister Michael Gove recently visited Croydon to see how well the partnership was working, as Safer London felt it demonstrated strong engagement across the sector.

The second area of partnership is with schools, health providers and other council service providers. Schools are a crucial partner in the prevention of CSE.

As such the Head of School Standards, Commissioning and Learning Access and chair of the Education Sub-Group has committed to supporting the coordination of the CSE awareness raising campaign across all schools in Croydon.

All Pupil Referral Unit staff and Alternative Education providers have all been trained in CSE awareness and there is an openness to develop skills in identification and direct work. The Education Safeguarding and School Attendance team and the Education Learning Access team play a crucial role on both the Missing Children Panel and MASE although we recognise that we need to improve how we compare data of those children missing education and those children missing from home and or care and this is a priority area for the coming weeks. Safer-London has been given the additional capacity to extend its prevention activities in schools in Croydon and the MsUnderstood project will assist to coordinate CSE interventions across all secondary schools in the Borough.

The partnership with Health is particularly important especially Croydon Sexual Health Centre and the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children. Often it is these health workers who identify sexual exploitation where children and young people attend because they may be worried about pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. Evidence of good partnership is that a specialist CSE worker from Safer-London will be based in the Sexual Health Centre to provide specific advice and consultation to young people as well as to Health staff.

The other key aspect of partnership is with the voluntary sector. National and local research informs us that young people are less likely to talk to a police officer or social worker about being exploited. They prefer to speak either to peers or an unconnected professional from a non-statutory organisation. In Croydon we recognise that we have a very large youth population and many of them are affected by poverty, family instability and poor relationships, domestic violence, peer on peer abuse and poor education with consequent poor life outcomes. This means there are a large number of young people who are vulnerable to going missing from home and being sexually exploited. In order for us to meet demand we need the support of our local partners especially:

The NSPCC who provide a number of projects and highly equipped staff to work with children affected by CSE. Croydon Council have also contracted the NSPCC to provide the Return Home Interview service.

In April 2015 Croydon Council secured funding from the international donor the Railway Children to assist us create a Missing and CSE team based in Children Social Care extending our capacity to intervene.

The charity Missing People is also supporting Croydon with a number of initiatives.

It is clear to the sub-group that the multi-agency partnership working has to be open, trusting and transparent and committed to learning.

Position and Development of the Sub-group and the Missing and CSE Action Plans

An Analysis of the Work of the Missing and CSE Sub-Group

The Board decided in January 2014 that there would be a specific thematic sub-group focusing on these priority areas in Croydon. The implementation of the sub-group got off to a shaky start and unfortunately had three different Chairs within the first nine months. The Board were keen that Chairing this group came from the voluntary sector and that has been achieved with representatives from the NSPCC and the Safer London. The sub-group has reviewed membership and has agreed a Mission Statement:-

**Committed in partnership to ending Missing and CSE through
Prevention, Protection and Disruption**

We also agreed a set of principles, a series of objectives and continually evolving action plans. The multiagency partnership is achieving against this strategy. For example:

In January 2014 we established the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel; MASE.

In March 2014 Croydon was involved in Operation Volonia. This was intelligence and analysis activity led by a number of police teams in Scotland Yard. Croydon were invited to contribute to the analysis due to the high numbers of missing children in the borough.

In June 2014 an audit of 73 of the most vulnerable adolescents was published and presented to the CSCB and was instrumental in shaping the CSCB's strategy in relation to Missing and CSE. The subsequent action plan has helped us inform the Learning and Development curriculum, raised awareness across the partnership, assisted with the decommissioning of CAMHS to name but a few examples.

In August 2014, we started in partnership with the Home Office and Barnardo's, a project piloting the Child Advocacy Model for children trafficked. This included children internally and externally trafficked.

In September 2014 we wrote a paper entitled '*An analysis of the learning from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham and what can Croydon Council and Croydon CSCB learn?*' where we developed an initial hypothesis as to Croydon's current practice. In this paper we also suggested the first stages of the CSCB and CSC's strategies to combat Missing and CSE.

In September 2014 representatives of CEOP, NCA, Croydon Police, Trident, British Transport Police, SO17 and Croydon Council met and devised Operation Raptor, which was further inspired by the findings and recommendations from the Jay Report (September 2014).

Operation Raptor Phase One commenced in November 2014 and concluded in early January 2015.

The aim of this joint operation was to gather data and map patterns by analysing the: networks, relationships and behaviours of the top twenty children identified by police, Youth Offending, Safer London and Children Social Care as 'of most concern' in relation to episodes of missing, sexual assault and other vulnerabilities commensurate to indicating child sexual exploitation. Although the police investigation continues the intelligence has been used to inform the CSE Action Plan which is now on its fifth iteration (May 2015).

By November 2014 senior leaders in the Council, as well as elected members, had recognised the significance of Missing and CSE and agreed funding a permanent Missing and CSE coordinator. Also in November the Missing Children's Strategy and Action Plan was agreed by the CSCB.

In December 2014 Croydon responded to ALDCS and MOPAC requests to outline Croydon's response to CSE. These documents set out Croydon's strategic and operational response.

In January 2015 Croydon CSC underwent a peer review in its response to Missing and CSE with senior colleagues in Lewisham CSC.

In February 2015 the sub-group signed off the CSE Action Plan which was agreed by the CSCB in March 2015. Also in March 2015 the Leadership of the Council committed to combating CSE as one of its three priorities for the Council in 2015.

In April 2015 Croydon Council secured funding from the international donor the Railway Children to combat CSE in Croydon. The funding was awarded to Safer London to extend their Empower project in CSC. Also in April all commissioning arrangements for transporting vulnerable children were reviewed from a safeguarding perspective with a specific focus on CSE.

In May 2015 the profiling and mapping of CSE in Croydon was completed. Also in May the team from MsUnderstood provided feedback from their audit and assessment of practice recommending specific developments in relation to peer on peer abuse and CSE and Croydon attended a 'Master class' with other London Boroughs which further supported the development of our response.

In June 2015 a revised Multi-Agency Protocol for Managing CSE was agreed and circulated to all social workers and partners. Also in June Croydon attended a MOPAC challenge event which gave Croydon and others the opportunity to reflect on learning to date and advocate to MOPAC for changes in practice. The CSCB Annual Conference was focused on working with at risk adolescents with specific plenary sessions allocated to CSE awareness raising and discussions.

Also in June we ran a workshop that fed back the learning of the Mapping, Profiling and Operation Raptor. The event was oversubscribed and a second workshop is being organised.

Analysis on Progress against Objectives Identified in the CSCB 2015 Missing Children Action Plan

The Missing Action Plan was agreed by the CSCB in November 2014 and we can report we have achieved much.

We have ensured that the profile of missing children has been raised across the council and amongst partners. There have been a series of training for social workers as well as partner agencies, the Council's Children's Recording System has been re-designed so it is easier to record and report missing children, other systems have been streamlined and the Council has invested in a Missing and CSE Coordinator and more recently a specific administrator so we can produce daily reports of all missing children and generally improve our monitoring and oversight of these children, measure procedural compliance, support and track the RHI process whilst also tracking and liaising with other Local Authorities over their missing children who are resident in Croydon.

There has been a significant investment in training and awareness rising. For example; Foster carers, residential providers and hospital staff have had some training in reporting and working with children at risk of missing, as have all social workers and managers in CSC. Police have also undertaken individual visits to a large number of children's homes to reinforce practice.

The Missing Panel remains an important tool in managing and monitoring practice whilst coordinating interventions. We have also implemented all the identified projects related to reducing the numbers of missing children including the Trafficking Pilot, the CEOP Ambassador Programme and the Peer on Peer Abuse project coordinated by MsUnderstood. We have entered into a partnership with the charity Missing People who have offered free text services to all missing children although this needs to be better communicated to professionals and children. Missing children remains a priority area for Children Social Care and Croydon police. We have also launched the Return Home Interview service which is proving invaluable adding further capacity to safeguard children and prevent repeat missing episodes. Children are telling us that they are going missing from home and or care mainly because of poor relationships with their parents and disagreements over boundaries with foster carers. The RHI project will also collect important information and the voice of children. We have increased our capacity to work with missing children through the new Missing and CSE team.

We have also engaged strategic leads from neighbouring boroughs to reflect together on planning, commissioning and practice in relation to OLAs.

Analysis on progress against objectives identified in the CSCB 2015 CSE Action Plan

The multi-agency strategic plan is structured using the three headings Prevent, Protect and Disrupt

Under the Prevent agenda we have coordinated a range of awareness raising activities. We have undertaken a range of introductory trainings and workshops for social workers, all PRU staff and partner agencies as well as those in the private sector such as hotel staff and through the quality assurance framework we continue to develop more sophisticated trainings and supports to staff. For example; we will be running a series of workshops linked to how professionals psychologically manage child sexual exploitation. We also have an outreach programme to parents via the CSCB where we have recruited a number of CEOP ambassadors who attend parents' evenings and offer advice and support to parents who want to know more about how to monitor their child's use of social media.

The subgroup has been able to incorporate the learning and recommendations from a raft of national reports and publications.

The CSCB has also supported the community develop their awareness in relation to CSE for example; on National CSE Awareness Day we maintained a stall in Croydon High St providing information to over 200 parents specifically on CSE and how to protect children from on-line abuse. There are also a range of media activities to raise community awareness as well as the Council making CSE a priority for the entire borough in 2015 via the Congress.

We have completed a mapping exercise, we have discussed CSE with over 100 young people in Croydon schools and this has informed service design and planning. An updated CSE protocol has been launched and circulated.

There is evidence of good inter-agency working. The NSPCC and Safer-London, who are co-located with CSC, YOS, and the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), are intervening with our most vulnerable children. Operationally we operate our MASE Panel that reviews all cases where children are considered to be at risk of or subject to CSE. The lead police officer for CSE attends and it is his / her role to liaise with their opposite number in the identified Local Authority to ensure police are aware of cross borough issues.

The lead officer for combating CSE attends bi-monthly liaison meetings with her opposite numbers from Bromley, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton and Southwark where we identify patterns, share intelligence and develop practice. Croydon was involved recently in a complex police operation to identify CSE where we developed an investigative methodology that has now been accepted as best practice and adopted nationally. We have also coordinated three Operation Makesafe activities. Our partnership with Safer-London and the NSPCC ensure the Board is provided with best practice guidance in working with CSE.

The agenda around CSE is fluid but over the next three months we will continue to implement the CSE Action Plan which will need to be reviewed in the autumn. We will establish the new Missing and CSE team across Children Social Care and continue the training plan for social workers and partner organisations.

Areas that remain underdeveloped and inform our future planning include:

- The priority is to continue to translate this investment, energy and strategic success to social work and multi-agency practice as we need to be able to evidence changes in practice and better outcomes for children who go missing or are subject to CSE. This is challenging for example due to the turnover of social work staff it is difficult to maintain consistency in recording or practice.
- Although we have had success with Operation MakeSafe, we need to continue to develop intelligence as to the latest patterns and trends associated to CSE in the borough. To achieve this we need to improve how we gather, coordinate and analyse intelligence as well as resource similar operations to that of Operation Raptor.
- We need to extend the awareness raising campaign throughout the borough
- We need to improve how we link data about Children Missing Education with Missing Children and CSE.
- We need to provide further training to staff in CSE whilst improving the supervision of cases and professionals.
- We need to improve the identification, recording and intervention with children who go missing, increase the numbers identified who go missing in the community, improve our systems to ensure other Local Authorities are notified when OLA LAC go missing in Croydon and link missing with commissioning of placements.
- We need to improve the recording of our interventions, including the uploading of RHIs and CSE intervention activities into CRS
- We need to evidence the use of enforcement and disruption tools as well as see more young men presented at MASE. We also need to develop a sexually harmful behaviours strategy and better coordinate the rehabilitation of offenders.
- We need to continue to gather the views and experiences of young people.

CSCB arrangements for Monitoring and Assessing Practice

The effectiveness of MASE has been under regular review. The MASE has been observed by senior managers in Children Social Care, the Police, Education as well as elected members. There has been a steady increase in referrals to MASE which now provides a crucial mechanism in the management and monitoring and intelligence gathering around CSE.

The recent mapping of CSE in Croydon offered the CSCB significant insight into need and practice as did the vulnerable adolescent audit completed in June 2014.

In January 2016 the MASE would have been established for twelve months and the Missing and CSE sub-group will request of the CSCB that we commission an independent audit to assess the quality of our multi-agency intervention.

Children Social Care has developed a set of key performance indicators reported from CRS and we expect to be able to measure our performance in the coming weeks. We also recommend that these KPIS be added to the Children Social Care & Early Help Dash-Board as well as the Board KPIS.

We need to complete a thematic audit of our practice response to missing children.

Croydon Council Congress

Croydon Council has organised two Congresses in 2015 which focus on issues pertinent to the safeguarding of children in Croydon. The Congress is a powerful forum where the Council, as a whole, employs its resources, influences and networks to drive forward specific awareness raising and practice improvements in specific areas affecting residents.

In February 2015 a Congress was arranged that focused on Domestic Abuse which affects many families in Croydon. The Domestic Abuse Congress brought together community leaders, national advocates in the field of prevention and intervention, children and families and professionals. The congress consisted of a series of workshops and plenaries supported by a powerful film that depicted the circumstances and experiences of a survivor of domestic abuse. The feedback from those who attended recorded that this Congress was informative, emotional and changed many peoples' minds as to the effects of domestic violence on families especially children.

Child Sexual Exploitation has been identified as effecting young people across the country. In Croydon our response has been to invest heavily in partnerships to develop a multi-layered response in schools, in communities and amongst professionals. As part of our response Croydon Council has organised a Congress to take place on the 26th of November. The Congress will focus on the experiences, voices and needs of children and young people in Croydon with a specific focus on peer to peer abuse. Our communities and professionals charged to protect children and young people will be invited to hear about what techniques,

practices and resources that are available in Croydon to prevent children from being sexually exploited, protect children who are being exploited as well as disrupt that exploitation through the use of all legal means. I would like to take this opportunity of inviting you to this event.

Conclusion

We have learnt a lot and achieved much but we need to demonstrate that there is an improvement in practice and outcomes for children who run away and those affected by CSE.

Gavin Swann
Deputy Chair, CSE & Missing Sub-Group

11. Private Fostering

National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering require the local authority to report annually to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board on how it ensures that the welfare of privately fostered children in its area is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, including how it co-operates with other agencies in this connection. The Private Fostering report presented to the Board in May 2015 demonstrated that the service had actively address all of the recommendations from the 2013/14 report and had achieved success in increasing the numbers of Privately Fostered children being reported.

There has been an increased awareness campaign with a significant number of sessions delivered to internal and external partners in addition to a Private Fostering Conference with 47 attendees. Private Fostering has been added to the induction for all new social work staff, with particular focus on social work students and those completing their first Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

A multi-agency Private Fostering Panel has been established since February 2015 and meets quarterly in order to review and quality assure the assessments being undertaken by the Specialist Private Fostering Social Worker and the decision making in respect to the suitability of arrangements.

Given the size of the child population in the borough, its location close to the Home Office, the number of English Language schools in the borough and also the mobility of families, the London Borough of Croydon does not have high levels of children privately fostered. Whilst it is recognised that private fostering arrangements are under-reported in Croydon with this figure falling below expected levels, this figure has improved markedly since the last report in February 2014 when there were only 6 private fostering arrangements known to the Local Authority; the lowest levels since local arrangements for private fostering were established in 2009.

Following the appointment of a Specialist Private Fostering social worker in early March 2014 (at which time there were 9 arrangements open), who has a strong focus on awareness raising, there has been a steady rise in the number of arrangements known to the Local Authority. Information obtained from the monthly dashboard report gives numbers of private fostering arrangements for 2014/15 as set out in Figure 9 below:

Figure 9

Month	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No. of PFA	20	25	27	27	23	23	28	29	23	27	25	24

Social work monitoring visits are conducted within 5 weekly intervals during the first year and at 10 weekly intervals in subsequent years. The Panel has introduced a target of completion of an Annual Review of all PF cases.

Two PF children required safeguarding intervention by the local authority and one PF Carer has been subject to Prohibition and Disqualification by the PF panel.

Moira Keen
Private Fostering Lead

12. Local Authority Designated Officer

The LADO has continued to develop effective relationships and partnerships with partner organisations, and this has been reflected in the continuing increase in partner's referrals and use of the LADO service.

Schools have continued to represent the higher proportion of referrals, and in 2014/15 there has been a rise in the LADO's interaction with Private schools. This reflects a concerted effort to engage this sector, which, in turn, has responded well. Following improved recording systems, this year it has been possible to review the source of referrals as well as the sector in which the adult is employed and this has shown increases in awareness within the Health and social care sectors, although there remains considerable work to do with the latter to ensure all cases of concern are supported by the LADO.

In addition, the number Strategy meetings, which act as a focus for the management investigations, have increased and this, in relation to the increase in referrals, suggests thresholds are being maintained. Indeed, there has been an increase in the number of cases leading to criminal prosecution and currently there are 12 cases in the process of either a decision being reached by the Crown Prosecution service, or already scheduled for court appearances. There have also been 10 members of staff who have been dismissed or resigned as a result of cases overseen by the LADO.

It is clear that awareness within the Professional network within Croydon is increasing and is as a result of continued awareness raising by the LADO. Awareness workshops and presentations have continued to be organised with child-minders, Early Years Group settings, specific schools, and mainstream police services. In addition, Training has begun with social care Looked After Children's Teams, Fostering teams and the Fostering Panel. The latter coming following issues raised by a recent serious case review in the Borough.

Given the significant numbers of allegations made against adults working in educational organisations, the LADO is a standing member of the Board's Education sub group and works closely with officers and representatives on that group. This has supported the increasingly positive relationship with schools in Croydon.

Externally, the LADO has taken an active part within the London LADO group and was, with colleagues, actively involved in organising and managing the second National LADO conference, held in London in February. The conference, supported by the Croydon Safeguarding Children's Board, was a great success and has led to an intention to organise a Croydon version for practitioners and organisations in Croydon in autumn 2015.

Steve Hall
LADO

13. Conclusion

Croydon Safeguarding Children Board is well-established and has shown its commitment to achieving best outcomes for Croydon children. The Board has had a very busy year with completely new administration and leadership, in spite of this period of transition the Board has made great strides which are reflected in this very full report documenting much of what we have achieved as well as noting many of the challenges that lie ahead.

We are pleased with what we have achieved as well as welcome the collective challenge that the Board brings to all of us to accomplish the best we can for children of Croydon.

Glossary

ACRONYM	MEANING
AILC	Association of Independent LSCB Chairs
ALDCS	Association of London Directors of Children's services
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service
CAMHS	Child Adolescent Mental Health Service
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection
CHS	Croydon Health Service
CRS	Children's Recording System
CSAB	Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSCB	Croydon Safeguarding Children Board
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DASV	Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy
DfE	Department for Education
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
DV	Domestic Violence
FEP	Family Engagement Partnership
FFT	Functional Family Therapy
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FNP	Family Nurse Partnership
GLA	Greater London Authority
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
L&D	Learning & Development
LAC	Looked After Child
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LBC	London Borough of Croydon
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
LSOAs	Local Super Output Areas
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASE	Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel
MASH	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub

MOPAC	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
NCA	National Crime Agency
NHSE	National Health Service England
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
OLA	Other Local Authority
PF	Private Fostering
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
QAPP	Quality Assurance, Practice and Performance sub-group
RHI	Return Home Interviews
RR	Rapid Response meeting
SCIE	Social Care Institute for Excellence
SCR	Serious Case Review
SID	Sudden Infant Deaths
SILP	Significant Incident Learning Process
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SO17	Police Sexual Exploitation and Child Abuse Command
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
TB	Tuberculosis
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YOTs	Youth Offending Teams

