

REPORT TO:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE 14 OCTOBER 2014
AGENDA ITEM:	7
SUBJECT:	PARTNERSHIP WORK ON SAFEGUARDING
LEAD OFFICER:	Catherine Doran, Chair, Croydon Safeguarding Children Board
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Catherine Doran, Chair, Croydon Safeguarding Children Board

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item is contained in the sub-committee's agreed work programme.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To scrutinise the effectiveness of partnership work to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people in the borough.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Members are invited to examine the activity carried out in 2013/14 to safeguard children and young people in the London Borough of Croydon as set out in Appendix 1, the Annual Report of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board, and to scrutinise its outcomes and effectiveness through questions to the Chair of the Croydon Safeguarding Board and partner organisations.

Appendix 1: Croydon Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013-2014

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None



CROYDON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Annual Report 2013/14

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Introduction

This annual report provides a summary analysis as to the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board activities over the past twelve months. This report describes a story of restructure of, the development of an informed strategic direction as we strengthen culture of quality assuring safeguarding activity across Croydon.

This report also informs the reader as to the strategic direction of the Board in the coming twelve months. To do this, this report is written by continually linking the past year's activities and learning with the forthcoming year's strategic direction. The Board has adopted this framework to better evidence its journey and more importantly to connect its previous activity the business plan for 2014-15.

Croydon continued to face significant challenges from the challenges from the changing nature of its population in 2013-13: the overall numbers of children and young people continued to grow significantly, and at the same time the population became more deprived. As well as local birth rates being very high, migration into Croydon was also significant. From April 2013 Croydon was a pilot authority for the implementation of national welfare reform.

This Annual Review should be read in conjunction with the detailed needs assessment published in July 2014.

Foreword by Independent Chair

This will be the last time that I will be writing this introduction to the Annual Report and Business Plan for Croydon's Safeguarding Children Board. My three years as independent chair have spanned a period of unprecedented change and upheaval for all partner agencies as well as for their wider operating environment. It is to the great credit of all the highly committed men and women providing services to the most vulnerable children and families in the borough that so much has been achieved even though I know they would all report that at times the pace of change has been slower than any of us would have wished.

Sadly the status of the board's small support team remains fragile. Such progress as has been achieved has been due in no small measure to the heroic efforts of our board support officer Vicky Hersey (now on maternity leave) and to our excellent interim board manager (Steve Love). Despite the best endeavours of all concerned we have still been unable to recruit to the post of Quality Assurance Officer a factor which has undoubtedly hindered progress in this critical area.

Despite all of this the level of engagement of partner agencies with the work of the board, both at and between our meetings, remains high. As a result some good progress has been achieved in relation to the priorities set out in the Business Plan for 2013/14. In particular the Board's structure has been completely realigned and refocused to maximise efficiency and achieve a concentration on the key issues, the Strengthening Families approach to case conferences has been fully embedded to positive effect and good progress has been achieved in relation to the quantity and quality of performance information available to the board. Relationships between the Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards and the Health and Wellbeing Board have also been strengthened and placed on a more formal basis. In addition the year 2013/14 has seen an excellent and very extensive training programme designed to ensure that the relevant practice lessons from Serious case Reviews are learned. Finally our new website has 'gone live' which should significantly improve our ability to communicate the board's key messages across the partnership and with the wider communities served.

The Business Plan for 2014/15 at the end of this report sets out a number of short term priorities which, when addressed, will build further on the firm foundations established over the past three years. This will not however be an easy task. I would not expect the challenges faced by my successor (Catherine Doran) to be any less than those we have had to deal with since 2011.

Clearly the statutory functions of the Safeguarding Children Board will continue to be to add value to local provision to safeguard vulnerable children by;

- Co-ordinating the activity of all those providing services to children and their families, and
- Assuring the quality of these services via the Board's learning and improvement framework.

In the longer term three main factors will tend to impede these functions and thus present a real threat to the safety and well-being of children in the borough. These are;

- The further fragmentation of key services as a result of 'outsourcing'. Self-evidently the more stakeholders there are the more of a challenge it is to co-ordinate their activities effectively.
- Growing demand. All of the indications are that both the number of children resident in Croydon and the factors which tend to mitigate against safe, effective parenting (i.e. poverty, substance abuse, mental ill health, domestic violence) are set to rise for the foreseeable future. The continuing impact of the 'austerity agenda' will thus present a huge challenge when it comes to matching resource levels to demand and we know only too well from serious case reviews that overstretched staff with rising caseloads make it extremely difficult to ensure timely, coordinated, child focused support for troubled families.
- Staff turnover. The safeguarding workforce in some significant areas across the partnership continues to evidence a high rate of 'churn' resulting, in some key areas, in an over dependence on short term, agency staff. If the recruitment and, crucially, the retention of key safeguarding workers is not addressed this will inevitably undermine the building of strong, professional relationships between partner agencies and with families, the co-ordination of activity and the longer term benefit accrued from training and staff development initiatives. At the end of the day it is the quality and depth of relationships between people who are committed to the well-being of the borough's most vulnerable children that makes the difference.

I commend this annual report to you and wish colleagues all the very best as they strive to take this critical work programme forward.

Paul Fallon

(Independent Chair - Croydon Safeguarding Children Board)

2. Objectives of CSCB

The requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) was created under the Children Act 2004.

The core objectives of the CSCB as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013:

to co-ordinate 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 of the authority; and to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013 replaces the 2010 version and sets out the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and a clear framework for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services.

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.

3. Board Structure and Membership

3.1 Board Structure & Membership

The structure of the Board was reviewed in March 2012, resulting in the creation of an Executive Steering Group, chaired by the Executive Director of Children, Families, and Learning, accountable to the main Board - to monitor progress against the Business Plan, drive the work of the sub - committees and agree the agendas for Board meetings. During late 2012 and early 2013 it was recognised that further work would be required to strengthen its capacity to deliver local and national priorities. This work was undertaken throughout 2013, which led to the Board's enhanced structure with an amendment to its sub-groups, being agreed by the Board in autumn 2013.

The logic behind realignment was to systemise the aims and objectives of the Board with each sub-group which are now expected to drive forward practice developments in safeguarding in Croydon. The Board and the sub group structure is set out in Appendix A. The Board representatives are drawn from the following agencies

- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Children Families and Learning – Children's Social Care
- Children Families and Learning – Early Intervention
- Children Families and Learning – Education
- Children Families and Learning – Youth Service and YOT
- Croydon Council – Community Services
- Croydon Council – Legal
- Croydon Council – Public Health
- Croydon Council – Safeguarding Adults
- Croydon Health Services NHS Trust
- Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group
- Croydon Schools and Colleges
- Housing
- London Ambulance Service
- Metropolitan Police Service Borough
- Metropolitan Police Service CAIT
- Private Schools and Colleges
- Probation
- South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
- UK Visa Immigration Service

During the 2013-14 financial year the lead cabinet member for Children's Services, Councillor Tim Pollard, acted, as a 'participant observer' on the LSCB. Councillor Pollard was also the Chair of the Children and Families Partnership Board from the local election in May 2014 the new Lead member, Councillor Alisa Flemming, has fulfilled these functions.

The Board's membership also includes two lay members representing the local Community and three voluntary sector representatives.

3.2 Sub-Groups

In order to assist the Board to undertake its objectives and functions, there are multi-agency sub-groups in place.

- Child Death Overview Panel
- Health sub-group
- Quality Assurance, Performance and Practice sub group
- Serious Case Review sub-group
- Education sub group
- Child sexual exploitation and missing children sub group
- Executive Steering group
- Multi – Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Each sub group have reviewed the membership and terms of reference.

Details of each sub-group are available on the website

3.3 Supporting Structure

Croydon Safeguarding Children's Board was originally supported by the Board manager, a Quality Assurance post and a training post as well as a dedicated administrator. In the 2013-14 financial years, the Board has experienced instability regarding this support structure. The Board manager post was covered by an interim appointment from July 2013. The Board administrator supported a great deal of the work of the Board during this time.

The Board continues to employ an interim Board manager and has restructured the supporting structure by transferring the Training Manager post into the newly created Learning and Development Unit (an amalgamation of the Social Work Academy, the Training activity of the CSCB and the Children and Families Partnership). Amalgamating function, roles and administration means that resources can be better targeted and coordinated so we can ensure there is a safeguarding training curriculum on offer to the partnership which is informed by the Board's quality assurance framework.

It had not been possible to recruit to the Board training and quality assurance post during early 2013. We decided not to attempt to recruit to the Quality Assurance Manager role in early autumn 2013; this time instead we will employ an alternative strategy to use the allocated salary for this role and commission specific quality assurance activities throughout 2013/14/15. This activity will be managed by the Quality Assurance, Practice and Performance sub-group and this strategy will be reviewed by the Executive summary annually. Similarly the lack of permanent appointment to the training post in 2013 meant that a significant amount of the work was contracted out.

During the summer of 2013 the council's Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurances which line manages the CSCBs support structure, was filled by an interim arrangement. The above arrangements strengthened significantly from October 2013 when the substantive Head of Safeguarding Quality arrived. The

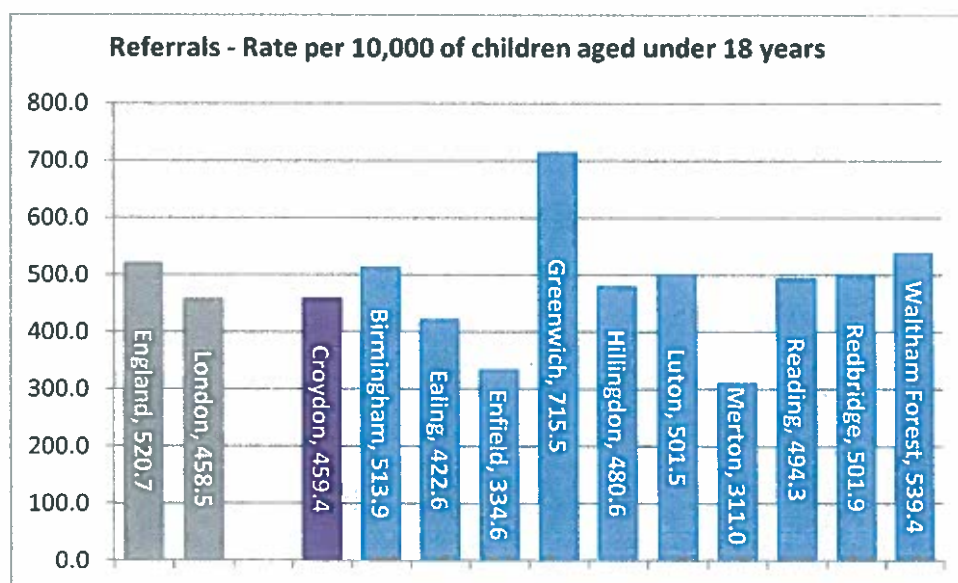
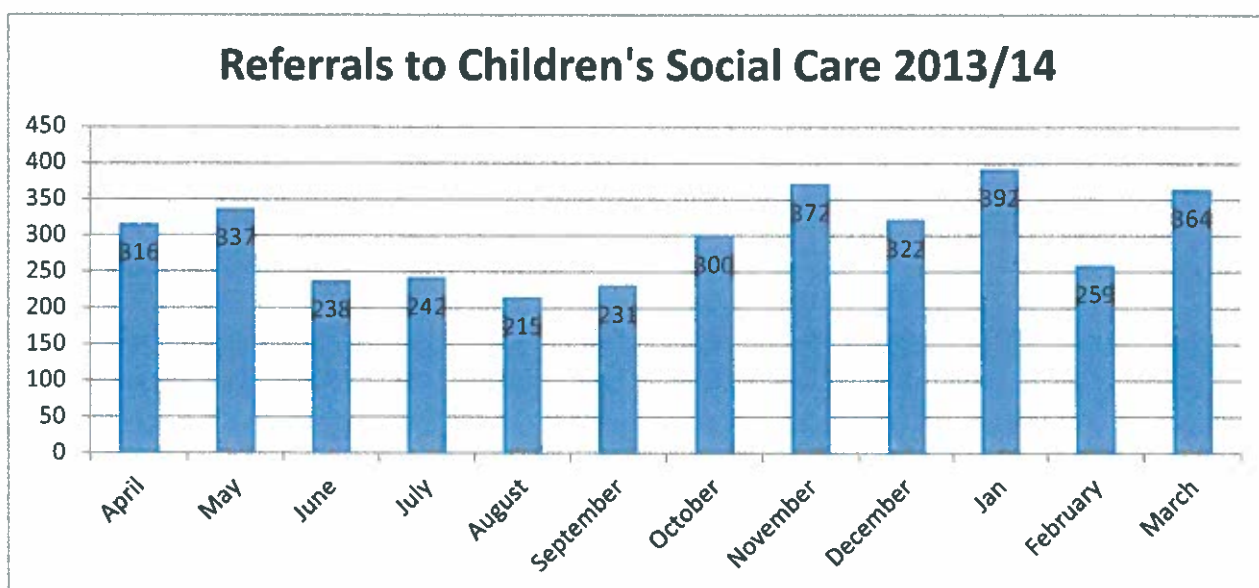
development of a new model to support safeguarding training and quality assurance and a new substantive manager was in post by April 2104.

4. Safeguarding Activity

This section sets out the main specific child protection data which is gathered by LSCB partners. The series of data presented in this report is for the 12 month period ending 31st March 2014. The quality of data has significantly improved following the implementing of a new Children's Recording System (CRS) in October 2014 in Croydon Children Social Care & Family Support (CSC&FS). In time CRS will provide a 'conceptual framework' introducing a common language and a framework to analyse and plan interventions, sharing information and promoting earlier intervention as identified in the launch of the Early Help Pathways (June 2014). CRS offers an accessible and accountable platform for social workers and managers to undertake and support assessments of risk, intervention, planning and review completed within a 'workflow' system. The work is processed systematically, sequentially, is readable, transparent and underpinned by the Assessment Framework, the Looked After Children systems, the data and process models (DOH 2003b and 2003c) and the Information Outputs (Gatehouse et al 2004) which are all part of the core requirement of Children's Services to evidence based practice and outcomes. Managerially, CRS enables the development of performance management systems to effectively and competitively monitor progress and planning of cases through quality assurance processes, as well as, measure interventions through performance targets. CRS attempts to reduce variability in practice and thereby human error. Strategically, CRS has the ability to collect aggregated statistical profiles which will allow managers to plan and commission service delivery, marshal resources towards frontline application and report local and national indicator sets, as well as evidence for inspections. (DCSF 2008, Shaw et al; 2009, White et al; 2009). National and regional benchmarking data for 2013/14 is currently unavailable.

4.1 Referrals to Children's Social Care

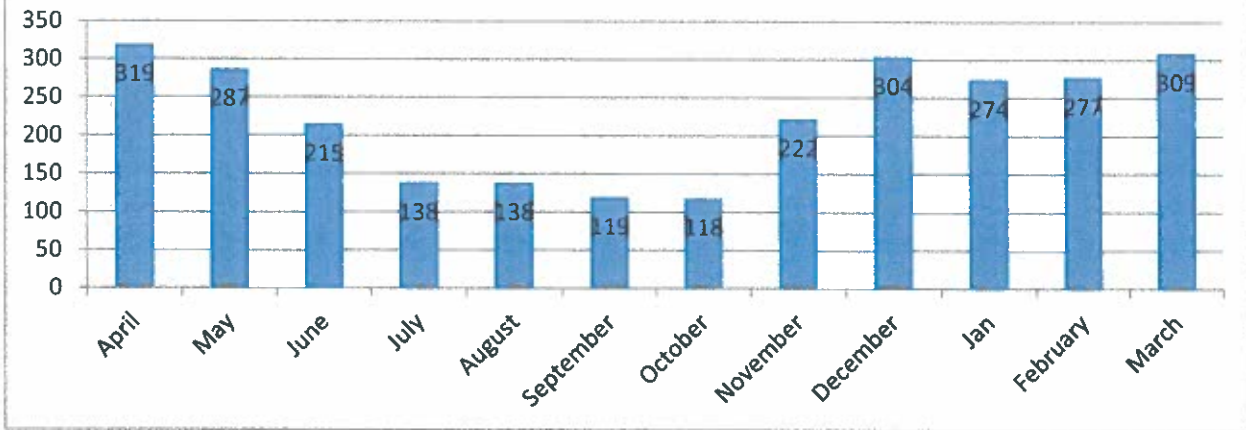
There are significant demands and concerns for children in Croydon. In 2013-14 there were 22806 'contacts' into Children's Social Care. This led to 3588 referrals compared to last year's referral figure of 4818. (The number of contacts last year was 22,906). To manage this demand the MASH, a multi-agency safeguarding hub, was established, in part, in January 2014 to support early information sharing and allocation of work¹. The police remain Children's Social Care's largest referrer. In the first six months of the year the police referred 48% of all contacts. A new system of pre-referral gate-keeping was put into place in the second part of the year and subsequently the police's referral rate has declined. Croydon is at the London average for referrals per 10,000 although slightly lower than our statistical neighbours.



4.2 Assessments by Children's Social Care

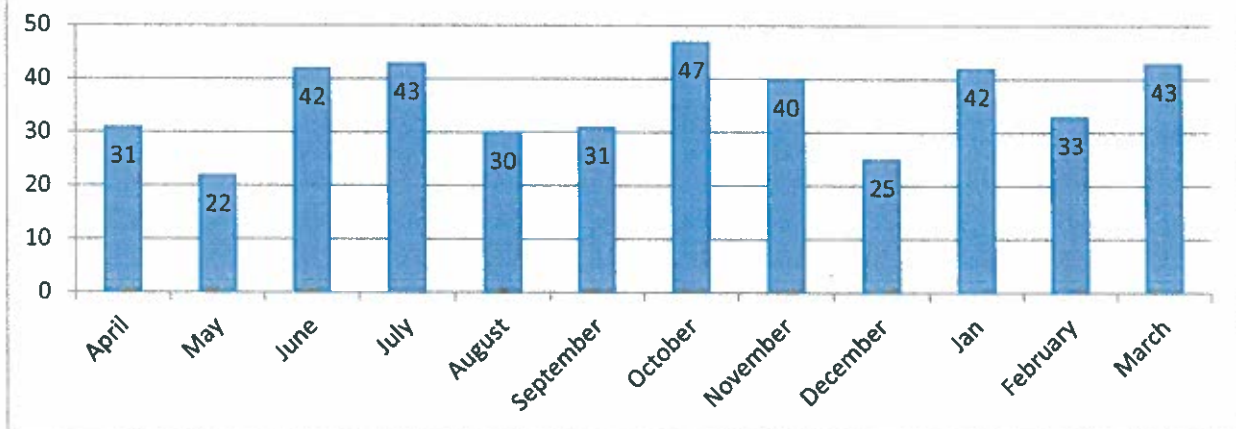
Following the Munro Review (June 2011), social work process and practice changed in relation to the assessment of need timescale. Social workers are now expected to complete one assessment (rather than an initial and then a core, if required). Croydon introduced this system in June 2012, meaning there is no comparator year on year information. What we do know is that 2720 assessments were completed in 2013-14 of which 73% were completed within 45 days. Children Social Care intends to undertake a quality assurance activity of assessments in the coming year.

Number of single Assessments Completed 2013/14



4.3 Number of Children becoming Subject to a Child Protection Plan in 2013

Number of children becoming subject to CP Plan 2013/14



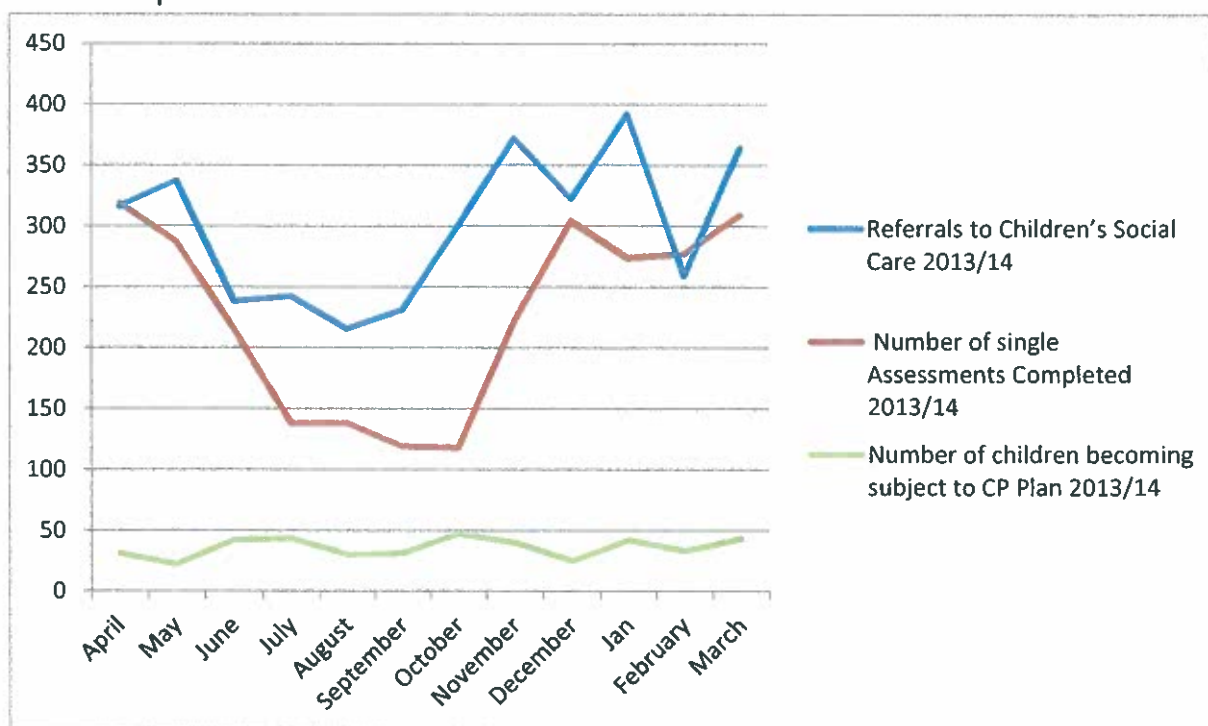
The data indicates a very busy and productive activity in terms of the child protection process. The data informs us that 429 cases have passed through the Child Protection process in the past year with 9 cases remaining subject to child protection after two years. All 9 cases are subject to review. The data evidences an increase in the number of Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences held in the last year. The data further indicates an increase in the numbers of children being 'conferenced' under 2 (which is positive as concerns for children are being identified earlier). There remains a number of children aged 13 and older who are being made subject to child protection plans. The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service will undertake an audit of a random sample of this group to identify themes and issues.

The above data identifies emotional abuse as the highest category of abuse registration in Croydon followed by Neglect due to children living / witnessing domestic violence. The data further informs us about the causal link between the parental factors of domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health with the significant harm threshold.

The numbers of children who have been made subject to a CP plan more than once continues to decline although remains significant at 32.

The data confirms that there is an incremental increase in the numbers of children subject to child protection plans in Croydon. The data further highlights a slow decline in both children being the subject of a child protection plan for a subsequent time and children being on a child protection plan for over two years. The number of child protection cases transferred from other boroughs has increased by 120% in the last year in part, a reflection of increasing growth in the child population, increasing levels of deprivation and increasing levels of immigration into Croydon (in part as a result of national welfare reform. Croydon has had a strategic focus and action plan on the work of Children in Need (CIN) to ensure a more structured and outcome focused service delivery to children who are the subject of CIN work. This work is continuing with the new CIN Independent Reviewing Officer posts however significant risk is managed within the children in need service. In addition the Strengthening Families (SF) Model of conferences has now been in place for 14 months and is designed to have a greater focus around, risk, strengths and protective factors and parent participation. The model has been received well by both professionals and parents. It was subject to independent review in autumn 2013 and was found to have brought increased effectiveness to process.

The table below overlays referral, assessment and child protection data for a comparison.



5. Progress against Business Plan 2013/14

5.1 To Strengthen Our Architecture to Deliver Early Help

We said we would strengthen processes around supporting our lead professionals and increased awareness amongst agencies of resources available and the impact of this work.

We have:

- Launched the revised Early Help Pathways guidance, providing operational guidance as to the arrangements for staged intervention in Croydon. The new guidance has been designed with considerable communication across the partnership. It was launched through an event with strong multi-agency participation and leadership.
- Included Early Help in the CSCB and the Children Social Care and Family Support Quality Assurance Frameworks.
- The Early Help Service has purchased the Early Help Module, provided by Liquid Logic and used by Children Social Care. This will provide Early Help services with a systemic process to support roll out of the Early Help Assessment and significantly improve the service monitoring activity. Data about early help activity has been reported to the Board over the past year.

5.2 Ensure that thresholds, referrals and assessments are understood and that frontline practitioners are involved

We said we would ensure that member agencies have a shared understanding of local thresholds and process for early help and children's social care in relation to risk and safeguarding. This included the continued development of the tracking of children subject to sexual exploitation.

We have:

- Launched the Early Help Pathways providing operational guidance as to staged intervention (June 2014) which outlines the criteria for Early Help as well as thresholds into Children Social Care.
- We established a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub in autumn 2013, and the MASH is providing greater clarity as to thresholds in operation in Croydon, by coordinating information to reduce duplication whilst identifying safeguarding needs.
- A CSCB sub-group was established (December 2013) to focus on Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing children, to direct and implement a strategic plan in respect of children at risk of sexual exploitation. This has resulted in Croydon joining a new partnership with Msunderstood, designed to support

local areas across England to build a strategic and operational response to peer-on-peer abuse. A new protocol for CSE is currently being written along with a new protocol for Missing children.

- From August 2013 we strengthened the capacity for the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to support responses to allegations against staff. The role is much more outward facing and the use of the LADO significantly increased.
- CSCB has joined a formal partnership with the charity Missing. This partnership will lead to greater exposure, additional resources and increase knowledge and awareness and improved practice. The Board will also fund (Sept 14) a Missing From Home, Care & Education return home worker who will undertake independent interviews of children who have gone missing in partnership with the NSPCC. We have also launched the MASE; the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Monthly Meeting which reviews, in Croydon's case, all children who are thought to be at risk of sexual exploitation. We have also reviewed our MAP process and re-developed the CSE protocol.
- Strengthened capacity to deal with private fostering and strengthened our awareness rising with partners and the community about these issues.

5.3 Ensuring that we have a strong Learning and Improvement Plan

We said that by March 2014 we would have an integrated learning and development unit which would develop an integrated approach to learning

We have:

- The Board signed off a Learning Development Framework in early autumn 2013.
- The new Learning and Development Unit is now fully staffed (June 2014) and is currently drafting a Learning and Development Plan. The Learning and Development Plan is informed by the quality assurance framework and a system of 'feedback loops' from all forms of organisation learning and activity as identified in the CSCB QAF (March 2014) and in this report under Quality Assurance. We expect to implement the multi-agency learning and development plan in line with the Competence Still Matters 1 – 8 frameworks and in conjunction with the NHS Learning Framework.
- In the autumn of 2013 a series of workshops was organised for front line staff across the partnership to ensure key messages from national and local Serious Case Reviews for front line practitioners. Over four hundred professionals attended and an evaluation was completed of those who participated. This report is available at www.croydonlscb.org.uk
- To inform the learning and development plan a training need analysis has been completed by Children Social Care staff and a training needs survey is currently being piloted across Croydon Housing. Once completed, reviewed and lessons learnt then this training needs survey will be rolled out across other parts of the council as one method to identify safeguarding training needs across the partnership.

- The Early Help operational guidance is being rolled out along with a training and development strategy to build capacity in the partnership for learning to support the effectiveness of early help.

The Section 11 self-evaluation was completed by all agencies and an analysis was reported to the Board. The following five themes were identified in the Section 11 as work streams for the next year.

1. The s.11 analysis identified that there is strong evidence throughout the partnership of senior management engagement in Safeguarding. All agencies have identified safeguarding roles or functions at senior level.
2. Most agencies and clearly all who are directly involved with children have specific descriptions of their responsibilities towards children. Other partners, for whom direct involvement with children is not a main part of their work, should nevertheless review their statements to ensure that they take account of 'Working Together' 2013.
3. The development and planning of children's services shows some evidence of engagement with children and their families. A number of specific initiatives are in place. Attempts have been made to undertake surveys relating to the experiences of families who have been involved in the system. We recognise that we still need to strengthen systematic nature of our approach to seeking the views of service users and meaningfully engaging them in service developments.
4. All agencies have invested in safe recruitment arrangements which reflect their organisational arrangements and there is evidence in some cases of additional support for particular roles being recognised.
5. Interagency working is strength for the safeguarding partnership in Croydon.

All the above activities have been fed into the new CSCB QAF and have informed the Learning and Development Plan for 2014/15. As a priority the L&D team will commission a regular Level 3 safeguarding training whilst we review the current level 1 and 2 e-learning package and identify the level of need for those specialist professionals, supervisors and managers who will need safeguarding training levels 4 – 8.

We realigned training resources available to the Board. We have moved the training manager's post into a newly developed Learning and Development Unit. This has given the Board access to more systems of support for training, improved coordination, greater scope for commissioning, improved integration and an improved capacity to quality assure. We used the salary for the CSCB quality assurance post (after not being able to recruit) specific quality assurance activities such as an audit of supervision and an evaluation of current practice around CSE and Missing children, with additional work planned for an evaluation of current multi-agency practice for children under one.

5.4. Ensure that the Quality Assurance Process is Robust

We said that we will access support and expertise for the CSCB's quality assurance functions which will be procured externally for a three year period.

We have:

- Described above we have now started to commission independent and expert support from academics to identify how practice can be improved in Croydon.
- In March 2014 a Strategic Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) was presented to the Board. This document was based on the LSCB's publication; *Improving Local Safeguarding Outcomes; developing a strategic quality assurance framework to safeguard children (2011)*. The work will be reviewed and updated quarterly by the Quality Assurance, Performance and Practice sub-group. (The QAPP, the Learning and Development Unit and the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service (SQA) will be driving forward the QAF activities). The current QAF has been informed by:
 - Training needs analysis of social workers and managers in CSC&FS
 - The Section 11 overall summary and analysis (January 2014), which was based on a full round of Section 11 audits from all agencies
 - November 2013 and May 2014 Safeguarding Report to CSCB '*An analytical Commentary on Safeguarding Performance*'.
 - Learning from local and national SCRs
 - Learning from IMRs
 - Previous quality assurance activities
 - Feedback from partners
 - Case file audits

The QAF identified the need to concentrate on four specific outcomes for 2014/15 namely;

1. A need to focus on ensuring there is a consistent level of safeguarding practice across the Children's Workforce.
2. Reducing the numbers of children who go missing in Croydon (particularly LAC placed in Croydon by other local authorities and too often reported temporarily missing to the Police) 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.
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 less than one year of age by improving the pre-birth assessment process.

We undertook four specific evaluations:

1. An evaluation of the Child Protection Case Conference 'Strengthening Families' model completed and presented to the Board in November 2013.
2. Analysis of s.11 safeguarding profiles (completed January 2014).

3. An audit and evaluation of safeguarding supervision across the partnership (to be presented at the July 2014 QAPP sub-group).
 4. An audit and evaluation of the needs of vulnerable adolescents paying particular attention to the needs of children who go missing in Croydon as well as children who may be at risk of sexual exploitation (to be presented to the September 2014 QAPP sub-group).
- (Points 3 and 4 were both commissioned in late 2013).

5.5 Embed the Whole Family into Practice

We said that the role of the Board was to link with other strategic partnership Boards to refine and establish and coordinate a multi-agency response to Think Family

We have:

- Launched the Early help Pathway document which provides operational guidance on how to 'Think Family'. The new Early Help model has been designed as a family based assessment. This will encourage a joint assessment and joint intervention approach.
- Strengthened very significantly our partnership response to domestic abuse so that we take a whole family and whole system approach.
- The Family Resilience Service provides a joined up assessment and intervention for the whole family.
- We have strengthened some operational arrangements between children's social care and parents who have mental health, domestic violence or substance misuse issues.
- One of the 'Croydon Challenge' work-streams is to review how Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care can better integrate systems and services to provide a joined up and 'think family' approach to assessment and intervention. This is in preparation for greater structural alignment between children's and adult's services.
- The Strengthening Families model in operation for child protection conferences is modelled to empower families take responsibility and protect their children. It is specifically designed to support parents identify their strengths.

5.6 Ensure Strong Communication Strategy

We said that we would ensure that key partner agencies are represented on the Multi-Agency Child Protection Panel and inter-agency case review panels. We all said that agency representatives on the Board ensure all appropriate agency members take an active role in the Board's sub-groups.

We have:

- The CSCB website has been launched and will support the availability of CSCB documents and the regular dissemination of a CSCB newsletter, summarising the key activities and outcomes of each Board meeting as well as learning updates.

- Since November 2013 a formal reflective forum has been developed in Children's Social Care in the drive towards group supervision. A three weekly Think-Space has been established for all consultant practitioners. The concept is to role model a reflective forum to enable consultant practitioners to roll-out the Think-Space model in the new social work units. Think-Space will also be developed as a model to manage complex and 'stuck' cases especially when working with adolescents. This has led to a Think-Space model will be piloted with designated teachers in 2014/15.

5.7 Children's Engagement

We said that agencies, wherever possible, use opportunities to discuss with children and young people their views of services offered to them by individual and multi-agencies.

We have:

- The Strengthening Families evaluation involved a small number of children and families as did the more recent audit and evaluation of vulnerable adolescents.
- In spring 2014 the Children & Families Partnership commissioned a local survey of children and young people's views on well-being. The responses by over 6000 children and young people are being used to reform future priorities.
- Croydon has developed and supported a 'young inspectors' which, is designed to empower young people who are supported to inspect further education colleges and children's homes.
- Young people have been involved in recruitment panels for staff at a number of levels, including at director level. The Children and Families Partnership has reflected on this experience and have published guidance for the partnership on young people's involvement in recruitment.
- The Youth Council continues to highlight and give a profile to issues relating to the safety of children and young people. In the 2012-13 education year the Youth Council ran a campaign on abuse and neglect. In the 2013-14 education year, the Youth Council is again contributing to the strengthening of work on anti-bullying – a priority which also informed the work of the relevant sub-group of the Children and Family Partnership.
- The Learning and Development Framework, which was signed off in March 2014, has set out a dedicated engagement and participation strategy that is currently being implemented.

6. Progress against Single Agency Objectives

This section reports progress in safeguarding activity from the perspective of individual agencies and specific focus of work.

6.1 Children's Social Care

We estimate that the Croydon Children Social Care and Family Support Service is on a journey of transformational journey of modernisation, system and practice improvement and significant progress has been made in establishing the conditions to promote good practice. The Children in Need and Children Looked After Services have been re-organised and re-structured in 2012/13, supported by updated policies and procedures. Senior management team of CSC&FS is made up of strong permanent staff. There has been a successful recruitment campaign which has led to almost all middle and frontline managers now being permanent and a number of new permanent social workers in the Children in Need and Children Looked After Services. A new electronic recording system CRS, (as described above), was implemented in autumn 2013, which supports a new performance management approach.

However, there remain too many agency social workers and managers within the children in need service. There is a high turnover of social workers. These issues have consequences in relation to the rate of improvement of the quality of social work practice. Social workers have high caseloads. There has been an increase in referrals, in the numbers of children subject to child protection plans and in the numbers of looked after children. This comes at a time when expectations of practice and timescales for care proceedings have led to increased demand upon frontline practitioners. (See Strategic Needs Analysis July 2014). The strategy to meet these challenges for Croydon Children Social Care and Family Support is multi-faceted. To summarise the strategy for 2014/15 for CSC&FS is to better integrate the Early Help Pathway institutionalising TAC, the lead professional and the step up and step down processes in order to identify 'the right children' at the earliest of ages whilst diverting others to less intensive but supportive services. We need to continue to support the remodelling of services, for example through the transformation of the fostering and adoption service as well as the recent strengthening of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. This modernisation will be driven through the implementation of CRS in every part of the service, and by supporting a cultural shift towards performance culture balanced with reflection, a drive to support compliance with basic practice and procedure but with an ambition of advanced social work practice. CSC&FS has developed a quality assurance an enhanced performance and framework.

Our strategy for the forthcoming year will continue to support an assertive and proactive recruit campaign to attract high calibre social workers and managers to Croydon for example via the Frontline programme. We will support our social workers and managers with a relevant and high quality training programme for 2014/15. We continue to support our approach to systemic practice by the development of a training plan geared specifically for this purpose. Staff have commented that the systemic training that they have so far received has been among the best training they have ever received. We will support a learning culture and drive forward service improvements for example in how we can develop our front door services and how we support reflective practice.

We will endeavour to identify the children in need of protection as early as possible as we identify the right children that need to be protected and 'looked after' by Croydon Council.

6.2 Early Intervention Support Service

The Early Help Board has been re-established to ensure oversight of the early help offer and processes including the Early Help Dashboard. The Dashboard brings together key indicators that start to evidence the strengthening of processes around the role of lead professionals and take up of the early help offer across 0-19.

The Early Intervention Support Service leads on support for early help across partners and is in contact with all schools, children's centres and links closely with health, early years and voluntary sector partners to support the implementation of the Early Help Pathways Guidance. The service has in place supervision and safeguarding policies which are being updated in the light of becoming an integrated 0-19 service. The Family Resilience Service has a clear outcome framework and increasingly work with family with under 5's are using the Family Outcomes Star to measure outcomes. A quality assurance framework will be drafted in the autumn as part of the social care and family support framework to ensure continuity across all stages of intervention.

6.3 Education

All educational settings are aware of their responsibility regarding safeguarding practice.

The framework for safeguarding practice reflection is implemented and supports staff in managing the pastoral area of their work. Clear processes are in place for all colleges, schools and Educational settings to receive information, guidance and training about safeguarding, including governors. Thresholds and 'step down' processes are better understood by school settings, within the context of the staged intervention protocol.

Effective Quality Assurance processes and providers for schools, and educational settings, are in place, as evidenced in Section 11 returns. The above processes are supported by an effective forum for designated teacher, which is well attended at a senior level.

6.4 Health

A strong communication strategy is in place and discussed at health sub group in preparation for the reporting cycles in June and December.

A Safeguarding/LAC review meeting includes all health partners, in order to explore the expectations of what may be required. We have established a forum where challenges can be discussed and means of addressing issues explored

Health agencies to take responsibility for ensuring that practice is fit for purpose and considers the journey of the child.

6.5 Children Adolescent & Health Services

We have increased our learning through training and dissemination of lessons learned. SCR recommendations and how the Trust has implemented these are included in the Level 1 & 2 mandatory safeguarding children training for all staff at induction. The Trust has successfully implemented a new training strategy in 2013/14 which focuses on sharing learning within local teams. The strategy will continue through 2014. This model has been well received by local services and facilitates more meaningful discussion about the impact of specific areas of learning on the team and how lessons can best be embedded into practice.

The Trust remains compliant to the revised Intercollegiate Document 2014. The current Trust Induction training ensures that all new staff have a high quality of training to ensure they have the basic skills to identify abuse and neglect as well as knowing how to act on concerns, specifically in relation to actual cases that have involved the Trust.

The roll out of the team based training has been positively received by teams and services. This model allows front line staff to have better access to the relevant safeguarding leads and so facilitates more ongoing discussions about safeguarding, in practice. Through this model, teams are also able to better understand the rationale for SCR recommendations made and also to have better ownership of implementing the recommendations.

6.6 Police

The Metropolitan Police is currently in a period of re-organisation. Croydon Borough has recently been through the Local Policing model which has transformed the structure of Croydon Police. Child safeguarding and public protection has remained a priority throughout this change programme. All departments with the Public Protection areas have remained fully staffed during this process of change. The Police contribution has been particularly significant in four areas:

- **MASH:** The Police have been a pro-active partner in ensuring the go live date was met. Officers have been co-located. There has been continuous training

to all team members to improve tri-age and decision making. Police referrals on the Borough are the highest for the Metropolitan Police and this has been acknowledged with the placement of an extra officer into the unit to cope with the demand. Police referrals have improved with more appropriate tri-ages being passed through the MASH. Training has been given to all police officers on the Borough in relation to the completion of Merlins.

- Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE): This year Croydon has implemented the London Protocol for Sexual Exploitation with it going live in January. The team has worked with key stakeholders to ensure that the MASE meetings are productive and that a multi-agency approach is taken. Training is on a continual roll-out to all officers on the Borough to raise awareness to all staff of the signs of child sexual exploitation. Officers in the MASH have received be-spoke training in this area. Officers have been appointed as “champions” of teams to ensure continued learning and best practice.
- Missing Children: Missing children has been a key priority for the Board. This has involved a multi-agency action plan to improve working practices and the sharing of information. Information on missing children is shared daily with the CSS. Joint working has taken place with officers and social workers to problem solve repeat missing children. There has been a strategic approach to tackling and challenging the placement of repeat missing children into the Borough. The team has formed working partnerships with CEOPs, NSPCC, Safer London and other third sector agencies. Training has been delivered to police officers, social workers and foster carers, as well as visits having been made to children’s homes across the Borough. Joint working practices between the police and CSC has led to a reduction in the number of repeat missing children on the borough. Training has been delivered to all police officers around missing children, best practice and learning from previous cases.
- Domestic Abuse: The Borough has the highest number of reported domestic incidents in London. This in many cases impacts on the lives and wellbeing of children. The team work very closely with the Family Justice Centre. Training has been delivered to all officers and there is “champion” on each team. The Borough is working to the Met’s action plan to improve our response to domestic abuse. The police are involved with Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence forum and are an integral part of the action plan. All recommendations from the Domestic Homicide Reviews have been accepted and form the basis of training. Training has been delivered to all officers and this continued over the next year. All recommendations from Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews have been accepted and incorporated into training for all officers. Officers have also participated in multi-agency training across the Borough.

7. Quality Assurance and Learning and Development

7.1 Quality Assurance

The quality assurance activity of the Board has undergone significant change in late 2013 and early 2014.

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. These principals have influenced the design of a robust quality assurance framework which has been developed from December 2013 through to presentation at the CSCB in March 2014, and finalised in summer 2014.

There are so many dimensions to safeguarding that trying to quality assure everything would overwhelm the process and system. Therefore there has been a need to focus on a discreet number of priorities which the Croydon Safeguarding Children's Board (CSCB) has concluded are the most important. What matters is that there is a logical, evidence-based reason 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 this CSCB Strategy and Business Plan. Our quality assurance principles are as follows:

- The CSCB QAF is a framework for 2014 – 16 subject to continuous review.
- The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is a 'living and fluid document'.
- There is a continuous feedback loop of quality assurance and learning
- The QAF assists the Board and its sub-groups to monitor and evaluate safeguarding practice and support the board identify areas for improvement.
- This work is cyclical, meaning we are continually identifying gaps in practice, developing a strategy to sustainably meet those gaps and then testing to ensure the new practice is maintained.

The Quality Assurance Performance and Practice sub-group has a particular role: to drive forward improvements in practice and performance and to assist the Board identify gaps, themes, risks and strengths in practice. The group will act as the engine of the Board driving forward practice improvements.

The quality assurance process will be driven from a multi-agency perspective with all agencies encouraged to share their quality assurance of safeguarding activities.

7.2 Learning and Development

Developing a culture of continuous learning and improvement amongst all partners is a core function and aim of the Safeguarding Children Board. How we achieve this across a range of agencies and roles to truly achieve improved outcomes for safeguarding children requires strong commitment from each partner agency; a willingness amongst teams and individual staff to learn and share; development and delivery of quality training that meets local needs and the means to effectively evaluate practice and progress. Following this, developments took place during the winter 2013/14 to establish a new learning and development unit.

- The learning and development unit, in consultation with the Board and other key partners, will develop, provide co-ordination and enable delivery of the Board's learning and development plan
- The unit will also be identifying and responding to learning and development needs across Croydon's children social care services and Early Help services also which will increase our learning opportunities across the range of children's safeguarding and child protection services

The principal aims of this programme are to:

1. **Be outcome focussed**; to achieve better outcomes for children, families and practitioners.
2. **Make a positive contribution to the practice of children's safeguarding**; setting high expectations, be motivating and promote application of learning to practice, and meet the standards stated in 'Working Together' (2013) and the Ofsted Framework (2013).
3. **Promote continuous organisational learning**; ensuring we have a continuous learning loop through effective evaluation and use of outcomes data to inform priority areas and future learning pathways.
4. **Be evidence led**; informed by local need and best practice.
5. **Be accessible for a range of teams and roles**; using good planning, a variety of learning approaches and aiming for good availability and access to resources.
6. **Use quality and effective commissioning approaches**; in the purchasing and selection of course development, design and facilitation - to ensure design meets demand and that our programme uses a mix local expertise and purchased activity.

Croydon Safeguarding Children Board is determined to support the development of 'expert practitioners' across the multi-agency landscape so we can ensure there we have a confident and competent workforce who can identify, help and support children and young people at the earliest point of possible intervention.

There is an expectation that members of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board ensure that their staff are competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting children's and young people's

welfare. As employers there is also an expectation that members identify adequate resources and support for multi-agency training.

8. Serious Case Reviews

Serious case reviews are undertaken when children die or are seriously injured, and abuse and/or neglect are suspected or known to be a factor, and/or there are concerns about how local agencies worked together. The purpose of such reviews is to learn lessons and improve practice.

The Board did commission in the training to disseminate and discuss lessons and learning that had emerged from five Serious Case Reviews that had been undertaken in the period 2010-2013. The training took place in autumn 2013. It was interactive and provided numerous 'feedback loops' from over 400 practitioners working within the multi-agency landscape of Croydon. Their feedback has been incorporated into the CSCB Business Plan, Learning and Development Plan and QAF.

During the period from 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014, the CSCB SCR sub-group worked on four SCRs and two IMRs. (In January 2014 the Safeguarding Board agreed a process to manage learning reviews that did not reach the threshold for SCRs). The CSCB was also involved in an IMR process in a neighbouring borough in the last year.

8.1 The key themes and learning identified through the completed serious case reviews by the CSCB were:

Training

- Ensuring that the safeguarding training provided to **ALL partner agencies** includes the specific requirement to follow up any referrals to Children's Social Care in the event that an acknowledgement of the proposed action/outcome is not received.
- Emphasising need for all professionals to challenge assumptions regarding the protective effect of family members in the absence of an in depth assessment or legal order relating to the situation.
- Awareness of and adherence to agreed procedures in relation to sexually active children and children subject to sexual exploitation, as set down in the London Child Protection Procedures.
- Awareness of the risks posed to older children of the possibility of deliberate self-harm by suicide.

Initial contacts

- Early intervention and monitoring arranging relating to a referral, making use of the CAF and Team Around the Child meetings.
- Clarity as to referral thresholds and the improvements made in the referral system within CSC.
- South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust has improved the recording system of incoming and outgoing referrals to and from SLaM to ensure that in future details of such referrals are quickly located.
- Improving the identification and recording of children who go missing.

Information

- The development of information leaflets aimed at helping parents whose children are victims of child sexual exploitation.

Procedures

- The clarity of and understanding of procedures in relation to pre-birth assessments, that are timely and inclusive of fathers, and that practice is consistent with these. In addition that there is a suitable tool/format for undertaking and recording these assessments.
- All partner agencies ensure that robust supervision is taking place that includes challenge, and reflection on practice and the effectiveness of interventions.

Legal

- Procedures when applications for Care Orders are refused the court.
- Cafcass and CSC opportunities for pre-proceedings communication.

8.2 SCR Methodology

Following the implementation of the new 'Working Together' 2013, Croydon has decided to pilot a more holistic approach to learning and respecting families when tragedy occurs. As a result, Croydon conducted its most recent Serious Case Review using the Significant Incident Learning Process (SILP). The SILP is a collaborative and analytical process. The key principle of the approach is the engagement of frontline staff and first line managers in conjunction with members of the Serious Case Review Sub-Group and Designated and Specialist Safeguarding Staff. The involvement of front line staff and line managers gives a much greater degree of ownership and therefore much greater commitment to learning and dissemination. The main focus is to extract learning from the detailed study of a set of circumstances. From a worker's point of view it takes account of:

- The worker view of the systemic factors in the case
- How the worker understood his/her role or the part you were playing
- The worker's perspective on what aspects of the whole system influenced you as a worker
- The tools the worker was using.

This SLiP process further informed the partnership's learning framework. From this initial experience the SCR sub-group has agreed to undertake a further SLIP method for the next SCR.

9. Child Death Overview Panel

The sixth annual report of the Croydon Child Death overview panel sets out the activities of CDOP for April 2013- March 2014.

LSCBs have a responsibility through the Child Death Overview Panel, for reviewing the deaths of all children in their area. The aim is to determine whether the deaths were preventable and whether there are any lessons to be learnt or issues of concern.

The CDOP has a fixed core membership of experts drawn from key organisations and includes the Designated Doctor for Child Protection and Child Death Reviews, Head of Safeguarding and Designated Nurse Children (Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group), the Named Nurse Safeguarding and Child Protection (Croydon Health Services), Croydon Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and Child Death Review Co-ordinator, a representative from the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team and the Local Authority Designated Officer, Social Care and Family Support; the CDOP is chaired by Public Health. The Panel met on 5 occasions during this year.

There is often a time lag between a death and the panel review whilst all the relevant information needed for the review is gathered. One of the reasons for this delay is the slow return of the Form Bs, the data collection forms from various agencies. This is an on-going problem and will be addressed in 2014/2015 with a review of the existing form and development of agency specific forms.

The arrangements for rapid response to the death of a child and review are well established in Croydon. There were 8 deaths in 2013/2014 for which a rapid response meeting was held.

Between April 2013 and March 2014, the CDOP was notified of 37 child deaths and the panel completed 36 reviews.

Of these:

- 6 died in 2011/12
- 16 died in 2012/13
- 14 died in 2013/14
- 14 (38.9%) were neonates (babies less than 28 days of age)
- 12 (33.3%) were babies aged 28 days to <1 year
- 26 deaths (72.2%) were expected and 10 (27.8%) were unexpected
- Most of the deaths in children under one year were due to perinatal / neonatal events and chromosomal, genetic and congenital anomalies
- Two deaths were due to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS/ SUDI).
- One case was identified as having modifiable factors
- The most deprived geographical areas in Croydon have the highest number of child deaths
- 44.5% of child deaths reviewed were from black and minority ethnic groups

- The most common risk factors noted were smoking, emotional, co-sleeping and domestic violence

There were no specific recommendations for the CSCB from the reviews during this period. Due to the small number of deaths, learning, based on the overview of all deaths of Croydon children rather than from individual cases, is limited. However, any learning from individual deaths is fed back to the appropriate agencies as agreed by the panel. Good practice is acknowledged at each review and is summarised in the annual report to ensure positive sharing and learning within Croydon agencies.

10. Overall Analysis and priorities

There is a significant and increasing demand on services for children, especially vulnerable children, in Croydon.

Croydon's Children's Social Care service continues to undergo modernisation and continues to embed significant practice improvement as part of the transformational journey. This has led to significant changes in staffing. There remains a significant number of agency social workers employed across the service and this has consequences upon the quality and consistency of social work practice. Croydon Children Social Care has is currently implementing a new theoretical systemic approach for social workers and managers to adopt in practice. The electronic recording and performance management system and priorities for 2014-15 CRS system is providing managers with greater insight into the quality of practice and this will influence CSC&FS's service and improvement planning.

Following the NHS reforms in April 2013 Health services have also undergone restructuring. This has resulted for example in the development of an integrated commissioning unit. Joint work is currently being undertaken to ensure safeguarding is at the forefront of commissioning activity.

The Probation service has undergone a radical restructure which will have an impact on children's safeguarding.

Likewise The Metropolitan Police service has also undergone service wide recent restructuring, under the local policing model, which seeks to standardise policing to ensure consistency across all London Boroughs.

The foundations for the Board have been established through the restructuring of the sub-groups whose role it is now to drive forward practice improvement. The Board now has a dedicated and detailed quality assurance framework. This 'tool' will support each of the sub-groups and the Board identify strengths and gaps in practice whilst also recognising specific local safeguarding themes such as missing children especially 'other local authority' looked after children that go missing as well as child sexual exploitation, under Ones and FGM.

The Board now has a series of 'feedback loops' in place which are designed to continually inform the Board about gaps and strengths in safeguarding in the Borough.

11. Outline Business Plan 2014-15

There are a number of themes running through this annual report that inform the Business Plan for 2014/15, the Quality Assurance Framework and the Learning and Development Plan. Along with the contributions from a range of partners at a development day in spring 2014, this results in the priorities for the 2014-15 Business Plan set out below. A more detailed plan of outcome measures will be developed by late summer as part of a focus on our continuous improvement.

Strategic Objective 2014-15	Action
In the light of the summer 2014 needs assessment, to keep under review agencies' responses to a growing, and more deprived, population and greater demand, in the context of public finance restraint, and to ensure any required mitigating actions are in place	Keep under review stability, workload and competence of front line staff across agencies, and put in place any required mitigating actions.
Embed growing strengths in quality assurance and ensure it drives further improvement in safeguarding practice.	The QA sub group will explore the issues relating to the number of contacts that result in referrals
Embed growing strengths in learning, training and development and the lessons from SCRs	The Board will have a multi-agency training and development plan linked to the needs of all partners in place
Further strengthen partnerships and a whole system approach in early help	Early help services will ensure that the evidence to support the increased engagement with young people is resulting in appropriate interventions and positive outcomes Consider the impact of the early intervention objectives on LAC & CIN
Further embed improvements in missing children and children who have being sexual exploited	Reduce the number of children who repeatedly go missing Address the risk between missing children and sexual exploitation Ensure that missing children is seen as a multi-agency issue
Review the partnerships approach to safeguarding under the age of one	The pre-birth assessment process will be improved
Develop a strategy for female genital mutilation.	Capitalise on work commissioned by the CSCB resulting in further engagement from other relevant bodies, such as the Health & Wellbeing Board
Further strengthen 'think family approach, particularly in relation to	Audit the operational arrangements to embed the whole family into practice

children who have mental health problems , domestic violence and substance misuse issues	review the ' Croydon Challenge' to integrate systems to determine the most effective alignment
Strengthen engagement with local communities and develop the use of feedback from children and parents.	The L&D framework's dedicated engagement and participation strategy will be implemented

2013/14 OUTTURN

GROUP	TYPE	CURRENT BUDGET 2013-14 £	OUTTURN £	VARIANCE £	CURRENT BUDGET 2014-15 £
EMPLOYEE COST					
	Board Chair	20,300	20,700	400	18,000
	Business Manager	56,142	95,402	39,260	52,500
	Quality Assurance Officer	49,434	0	(49,434)	53,552
	Training Manager	51,635	0	(51,635)	55,934
	Interim Consultant	0	74,630	74,630	42,400
Employee Total		177,511	190,732	13,221	222,386
PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES					
	Serious Case Reviews	72,500	74,270	1,770	60,000
	CSCB Website	0	12,011	12,011	2,500
Professional Business Activities Total		72,500	86,281	13,781	62,500
TRAINING					
	Internal Training	1,000	1,490	490	1,000
	External Training	16,800	17,454	654	27,000
Training Total		17,800	18,944	1,144	28,000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES					
	Subscriptions / Memberships	1,800		(1,800)	2,000
	Support Charges	57,600	58,993	1,393	6,614
	Printing, office supplies and c	28,078	13,674	(14,404)	17,000
Operating Activities Total		87,478	72,667	(14,811)	25,614
GROSS EXPENDITURE		355,289	368,624	13,335	338,500

FUNDED BY:

CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP	(15,415)	(21,100)	(5,685)	(33,850)
CROYDON HEALTH SERVICES	(15,415)	(21,100)	(5,685)	(33,850)
SLAM	(9,371)	(12,827)	(3,456)	(13,540)
METROPOLITAN POLICE	(6,000)	(5,000)	1,000	(5,000)
CAFCAS	0	(550)	(550)	(550)
GENERAL	0	(550)	(550)	0
PROBATION SERVICE	(1,100)	(2,000)	(900)	(2,000)
RECHARGE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS ACTIVITIES	(94,400)	(94,400)	0	0
LOCAL AUTHORITY (CORE FUNDING)	(213,589)	(213,589)	0	(249,710)
LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING (ER - BROUGHT F	0	(90,000)	(90,000)	
TRANSFER TO AND FROM EAR MARKED RESERVES		89,000	89,000	
TOTAL INCOME	(355,289)	(372,116)	(16,827)	(338,500)
(SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	0	(3,492)	(3,492)	0

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Appendix A

CSCB Board Structure

