

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUB-COMMITTEE
DATE OF DECISION	28 February 2023
REPORT TITLE:	Police Representation and Multi Agency Working
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Debbie Jones, Interim Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education. Roisin Madden, Director of Children’s Social Care. Vicki Wiltshire, Head of Service Access Support and Intervention
LEAD OFFICER:	Roisin Madden, Director of Children’s Social Care
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Maria Gatland, Lead Member for Children, Young People and Education
WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to give an insight into the existing strengths in the partnership between the Children Young People and Education (CYPE) Directorate, specifically Children’s Social Care and Police colleagues whilst promoting safeguarding and youth safety. Alongside the strengths, the areas of development are also a focus as we adapt and respond to the social changes and presenting needs.
- 1.2 Scrutiny is recommended to note the content of this report.

2 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

- 2.1 Police colleagues are active participants of the Croydon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Operational Group, where there is ongoing scrutiny around the roles of the partnership and application of threshold for Early Help and Children’s Social Care. Most recently we have explored the application of Operation Encompass, which enables Police to notify schools and health visitors of low-risk domestic abuse episodes ensuring partners are able to make checks on the children’s general emotional wellbeing and put appropriate support in place. This is a positive national initiative, that offers support to children at the lowest level of intervention and the MASH Operational Group will continue to monitor and scrutinise this.
- 2.2 Another area of focus has been Social Care’s weekly attendance at the Police South Headquarter Children’s Safeguarding meeting to review any situations where Police

have used their Police powers to protect children and remove from their parent's care. There has been a need to review this, to consider any disproportionality and Adultification; to enhance a child first approach and family led safety planning, reducing the authoritative, power led approach which is not always in the best interest of the child.

- 2.3 Police, Health, Children's Social Care and Family Justice Centre colleagues have additionally provided case studies and offered personal reflection of their work in recent co-delivered Learning Events, where a specific theme is reviewed, for example, the January 2023 event was specific to sharing information.
- 2.4 The next event (March 2023) is looking at some of the cross-cutting themes seen in Children's Safeguarding Reviews (SPRs) Adult Safeguarding Reviews (SARs) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). A particular focus will be on how transition's (between services or between children and adult services) impact on safeguarding. All three areas responsible for the reviews will co-deliver.
- 2.5 Key Themes for the CSCP for 2023-24 include:
 - Asylum Seekers
 - Child Victims of Domestic Abuse
 - Professional Curiosity/working with resistant Families
 - Child Sexual Abuse
 - Youth Safety/Extra Familial Harm
- 2.6 There is one current Serious Practice Review in progress which focusses on a group of young people involved in 3 unconnected, youth safety incidents where another child was killed. This is likely to be completed in March 2023 but is unable to be published until the criminal court process is concluded. This review has benefitted from significant input from professionals from all agencies.
- 2.7 The Gangs Team, work closely with the Metropolitan Police Service Gangs Unit to identify and manage risk and diversion of gang members up to the age of 25 in the Borough. Individuals and incidents are discussed at a weekly Tasking meeting and actions alongside partners such as the Youth Justice Service, Children's Social Care and National Probation Service agreed to divert, enforce and safeguard individuals.
- 2.8 Any young person who is either involved with a gang, has been targeted and may be harmed by a gang can expect the Gangs Team and The Gangs Partnership to be part of that professional network to share information and expertise, attend strategy meetings and monitor the situation providing the network with updates. The Gangs Team work closely with counterparts in other Local Authorities to promote information sharing.
- 2.9 If there is an imminent risk of harm linked to gangs, or an incident where someone has been harmed, the partnership will visit those involved and again assist with any safeguarding. This may also involve providing evidence and a supporting letter for a move out of the Borough.
- 2.10 The model above also applies to the Youth Integrated Offender Management partnership between the Youth Justice Service and the Metropolitan Police Service. This currently monitors 23 young people identified as either, high risk offenders, prolific offenders or likely to cause harm. This offers these young people the same as the Gangs

partnership and has a designated Lead within the Council's Youth Justice Service and a specialist Metropolitan Police Service 2.11 Integrated Offender Management Team. Daily intelligence checks are shared within the partnership and both Children's Social Care and the Community Safety team attend the monthly Youth Integrated Offender Management meeting to discuss and agree plans on all the young people.

- 2.12 The Youth Engagement Team's Detached and Outreach team respond to reports of Anti-Social Behaviour, crime and disorder by young people working with the police and the Violence Reduction Network to identify locations, days and times. The team will then go into those locations with and without the police to engage young people, deliver detached youth work via the Youth Bus and advise and signpost young people. Most recently we were engaged in a focused piece of work with the British transport Police at East Croydon Train station, to ensure we could offer an appropriate and responsive plan to any children and young people who were recognised as requiring a targeted youth intervention or a referral to Children's Social Care for a more intense level of support.
- 2.13 All the above are extremely strong examples of partnership work working well: One recent measure of this is that the Gangs Operational Manager, Zarina Vidale, was awarded a Metropolitan Police Service Commendation for her successful partnership work with the Metropolitan Police Service Gangs Team.
- 2.14 Partnership work is key to working with children and families in Croydon and making a difference: In November 2022, the London Borough of Croydon learned that we had been selected by the Home Office as a pilot site for the National Referral Mechanism scheme. At the present time, children are left with long delays for the Home Office to decide if a young person was exploited and the victim of modern slavery. This can result in children's court hearings being delayed and this can affect not only career and educational opportunities, but also how other people view vulnerable children. Partnership work with our Safeguarding Partnership helped secure this bid as we had full support from all of our Safeguarding Partners. We were also able to use the existing multi-agency structure of the MACE panel (known as the Complex Adolescent Panel) which will enhance our joined-up approach to child exploitation.
- 2.15 3 Practice Consultants are being recruited to Young Croydon adding specialist capacity for the whole social care practice system, supporting multi-agency responses to children and their families where extra familial harm is present.
- 2.16 With the National Referral Mechanism Pilot going live on 27/02/2023 and the first decision making panel meeting taking place on 09/03/2023, Children's Social Care are confident that this will further improve our work with the Police recognising exploitation, reducing the criminalisation of children in Croydon.

3 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

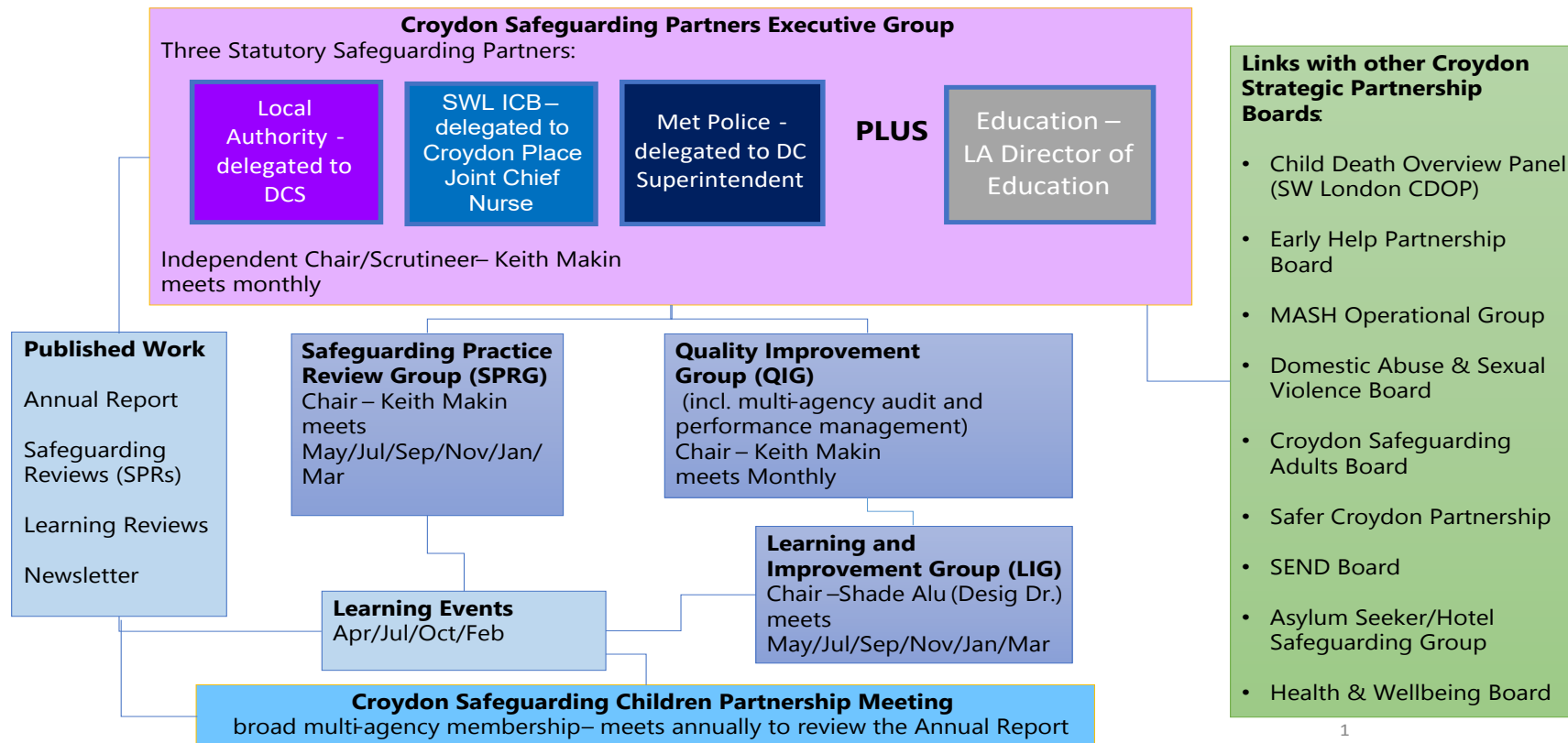
- 3.1 The Mayor has committed to delivering an "Improving Youth Safety Delivery Plan" focussing on keeping children and young people safe on the streets of Croydon.
- 3.2 Working in partnership with the community, the voluntary sector, children and young people, the Croydon Youth Safety Plan will focus on four key themes:

- Prevention – how do we stop the children and young people being made vulnerable
- Intervention - what we do to help the current vulnerable children and young people
- Disruption – how we tackle the gangs and criminal element exploiting children and young people
- Diversion – our positive offer for children and young people in the borough

3.3 To support the development of this, in the last few months, services across Children’s Social Care and the Violence Reduction Network have met to map out all the council delivered services. More importantly, practitioners have identified what they perceive to be the gaps and areas for consideration. The next steps will focus on engagement with partners, children young people and families.

3.4 As well as partnership working in its broadest sense, there is the work of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP). [The 2021/22 Annual Report](#) provides evidence of their work to protect children and promote welfare with a focus on youth safety.

The CSCP Meeting Structure is as follows:



4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implication for the Council arising from this report.

4.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications for the Council arising from this report.

4.3 Equalities Implications

There are no specific equalities implications for the Council arising from this report.