

# Strategic Plan

## 2026 - 2027



**Kent Safeguarding Children**  
multi-agency partnership

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# Introduction

The Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership is committed to ensuring the protection of the wellbeing of children and young people, recognition of risk and harm to children and young people and their recovery from harm.

Working Together 2023 establishes that local safeguarding children's partnerships should develop shared priorities. In the KSCMP the development of Partnership priorities and an accompanying strategic plan is overseen by the KSCMP Executive, with contributions sought from KSCMP sub-groups and partners as appropriate. The Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) are responsible for signing off the agreed priorities and strategic plan. The KSCMP arrangements and the Scrutiny and Assurance Framework outline the expectation that each KSCMP sub-group and relevant agency will contribute to the agreed priorities, with progress against the strategic plan monitored by the Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group (SAAS), as well as reporting to the KSCMP Executive at appropriate intervals.

The KSCMP Executive agreed that revised Partnership priorities would be developed for 2026-27. Being mindful of the current scope of significant national and local legislative and policy change, as well as reflecting on learning from the 2024-26 priorities and strategic plan, the new priorities focus on the fundamental purpose of the Partnership. We have clearly outlined what impact we hope to achieve to enable monitoring not just of the delivery of the actions in this plan, but also whether we are achieving our success measures.

We are mindful that these priorities set our direction for the next two years, but that during this time we will also likely see change arising from Local Government Reorganisation. These reforms may see intrinsic changes to the way safeguarding services are delivered and operate, as well as to the Partnership structure.

Whilst we have established these priorities for 2026-27, we recognise that there may be need for shifts in response to national and local direction and transformation. However, having clear ambition for the Partnership enables us to work as a system in a common direction within our current structure.

## **KSCMP priorities 2026-27:**

To deliver a safeguarding system which means that:

- Fewer children experience abuse
- Fewer children experience neglect
- Fewer children experience exploitation



# Structure of this plan

Each priority theme has a dedicated section in this plan, which consists of:

**Areas of focus:** Recognising that our priorities are broad in nature, we have also identified areas of focus within each priority. These areas have been identified in response to local and national learning and information.

**How we will know if we are successful:** To enable us to understand whether our activities are having the desired impact, we have set out our success measures that we can track progress against.

**What we will do:** We have clearly outlined activities that will be undertaken across the Partnership to effect the desired changes under each priority.

Section four sets out strategic partnership activity which is not aligned to the specific priorities but is important for the ongoing development and effectiveness of the KSCMP.

# Governance

This plan will come into effect from 2026 for a period of two years. Over that period progress in each of the areas will be considered by understanding activity of partners and KSCMP sub-groups and monitoring data which is aligned to our success measures.

A priorities data pack will be developed to provide oversight of progress towards the success measures. This data will be reported to and considered by the quarterly Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-groups meetings. Where data indicates that we are not achieving the desired progress, corrective or additional activity will be considered, as well as potential escalation to the KSCMP Executive if required.

A KSCMP audit plan will also be developed in alignment with this strategic plan, outlining expected Partnership auditing activity over the next two years. Possible consideration will also be given to the 2026 Section 11 audit criteria and how this reflects our priorities.



Priority: Fewer children  
experience abuse



# Areas of focus

- **Identification of risk and abuse:** To best protect children who are at risk of or who are experiencing abuse, it is essential that the Partnership is equipped to identify indications of risk or abuse.
- **Information sharing:** Related learning themes feature amongst those most often identified from Rapid Reviews in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard. The Partnership also continues to see learning related to information sharing identified within Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) and ongoing linked activity being undertaken by the Learning and Improvement Group (LIG) to build confidence and knowledge in when and how to share. It is recognised nationally as being a common issue identified in practice and there is a national focus on these challenges, including through measures outlined in the draft Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.
- **Child Sexual Abuse:** The national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (CSPRP) published a national review of child sexual abuse within intra-familial settings which highlighted significant learning and made several recommendations for local safeguarding children's partnerships to consider.
- **Early years:** It is recognised that the early years of a child's life are pivotal in their development and wellbeing, and that children in this age group are inherently physically vulnerable. Increases in funding and places means an increased number of children from this age group accessing early years childcare and education provision, which the Partnership should recognise and respond to.
- **Identity:** Identity and intersectionality feature amongst the most often identified from Rapid Reviews in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard. The national CSPRP published a learning briefing on race, racism and safeguarding children which highlighted a lack of focus on issues related to intersectionality.
- **Father inclusive practice:** Father inclusive practice features amongst the most often identified from Rapid Reviews in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard. Our 2024-25 annual report highlighted that an improvement had been seen following the launch of KSCMP guidance & training but was not sustained.
- **Think Family:** Think Family features amongst the most often identified from Rapid Reviews in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- **Domestic abuse:** Domestic abuse features amongst the most often identified from Rapid Reviews in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard. KSCMP undertook benchmarking against the Domestic Abuse Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in 2025 which highlighted learning and improvements to be taken forward.

# How we will know if we are successful

- A reduction in the prevalence of information sharing related themes in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- A greater number of relevant partners attend multi-agency strategy discussions and child protection conferences, as appropriate.
- An increase in the number of Section 11 criteria related to information sharing being met by Kent agencies in the 2026 audit compared to 2024.
- Continued access of the KSCMP consent & information sharing video explainer, information sharing to safeguard children factsheet and information sharing & consent e-learning.
- Completion of actions identified in the KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse action plan.
- Delivery of recommendations identified in the KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse benchmarking LCSPR.
- A reduction in the prevalence of identity as a theme in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- All KSCMP LCSPR terms of reference have intersectionality included.
- A reduction in the prevalence of father inclusive practice as a theme in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- Continued access of the KSCMP Father Inclusive Guidance training.
- A reduction in the prevalence of domestic abuse as a theme in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- A reduction in the prevalence of Think Family as a theme in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- Continued access of the KSCMP I'm Lucy video.
- Continued access of the KSCMP EatSafe resources.
- Increase in the proportion of Requests for Support where the outcome is Early Help compared to Child in Need (CiN) or Child Protection.
- Decrease in the proportion of children open to KCC Integrated Children's Services who have a Child Protection plan.
- Decrease in the number of children and families being re-referred to KCC Integrated Children's Services.
- Increased bookings and attendance at KSCMP multi-agency training courses.
- Evaluation data which indicates success of the LCSPR learning in practice sessions.



# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
1.1	Identification of risk and abuse	Single agencies to promote KSCMP multi-agency training on identifying and responding to potential child abuse.	All KSCMP partner agencies	April 2026
1.2		Pilot and evaluate three 'LCSPR learning in practice' sessions.	KSCMP Business Team	December 2026
1.3		Present single agency case audit findings to the KSCMP Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group.	All KSCMP partner agencies	April 2027
1.4		Establish referral pathways for the single unified system of family help as part of the Families First programme.	Families First Programme Team	December 2026
1.5	Information sharing	Provide assurance that Early Help and Child in Need (CiN) assessments and closure plans are shared to relevant multi-agency partners.	KCC Integrated Children's Services	March 2026
1.6		Provide assurance of movement in/out/transfer records, both being sent onwards and requesting inwards for children and families moving in or out of Kent.	KCHFT Health Visiting Service	March 2026
1.7		Provide assurance that risks known about adults are being shared with partner agencies and parents/carers where appropriate.	Kent Police Kent, Surrey & Sussex Probation	March 2026

# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
1.8	Information sharing	Multi-agency working group to be convened to review and respond to findings of audit of child protection conference reports.	KCC Integrated Children's Services	March 2026
1.9		Consider understanding of other area thresholds when transferring cases for families and children open at Early Help, Child in Need or Child Protection.	KCC Integrated Children's Services	June 2026
1.10		Implementation of the anticipated duty to share information in order to safeguard children, as outlined in the draft Children's and Wellbeing Bill.	KSCMP Executive	March 2027
1.11		Review the Kent Escalation and Professional Challenge procedure and develop associated communications for partners which outline expectations and responsibilities.	KSCMP Business Team	April 2026
1.12		Undertake a deep dive to assess effectiveness of KSCMP engagement with the VCSE sector.	KSCMP Independent Scrutineer	December 2026
1.13		Develop a communications strategy to reach Voluntary, Charity, Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, sports clubs, and private sector services for children, to highlight local pathways for guidance and referrals regarding safeguarding concerns.	KSCMP Business Team	June 2026

# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
1.14	Information sharing	Roll out of the Child Protection Information System to Primary Care Trusts, Mental Health and Kent and Medway Sexual Assault Referral Centre.	Kent and Medway NHS ICB	March 2027
1.15	Child Sexual Abuse	Oversee delivery of the KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse action plan.	KSCMP Learning & Improvement Group	September 2026
1.16		Develop a multi-agency KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse strategy.	KSCMP Executive	January 2027
1.17		Undertake benchmarking activity against the Child Sexual Abuse Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) framework and respond to findings.	KSCMP Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group	June 2026
1.18		Complete and respond to the recommendations of 2 ongoing LCSPRs which consider child sexual abuse.	KSCMP Learning & Improvement Group	December 2026
1.19	Early Years	Promote Family Hubs and Start for Life programme.	KCC Integrated Children's Services	June 2026
1.20		Monitor the impact of the Family Hubs/Start for Life programme via the quality assurance framework.	KCC Integrated Children's Services	December 2026
1.21		Undertake a deep dive to assess mechanisms to better involve Early Years providers in the KSCMP arrangements.	KSCMP Independent Scrutineer	March 2026

# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
1.22	Early Years	Develop phase two of the EatSafe programme to review and expand on existing resources and develop 'EatSafe with allergies'.	KSCMP Business Team	September 2026
1.23		Promote positive attachment relationships in early years.	KCC Public Health	September 2026
1.24	Identity	Update the KSCMP Practice Review Framework in response to the findings and recommendations of the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's briefing on race, racism and bias.	KSCMP Business Team	March 2026
1.25	Father Inclusive Practice	Review the Kent Father Inclusive Guidance.	KSCMP Policy & Procedures Group	March 2027
1.26		Partner agencies to provide information to the KSCMP about their processes and procedures for completing chronologies, genograms and case summaries to inform safeguarding work, as well as plans to review in response to the Marshall LCSPR.	KSCMP Learning & Improvement Group	September 2026
1.27	Think Family	Embed the 'I'm Lucy' video and resources within relevant KSCMP training courses.	KSCMP Business Team	March 2026

# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
1.28	Domestic Abuse	Oversee multi-agency partners responses to findings from the benchmarking undertaken against the domestic abuse JTAI framework.	KSCMP Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group	June 2026
1.29		Complete and respond to the recommendations of ongoing LCSPR which considers domestic abuse.	KSCMP Learning & Improvement Group	December 2026
1.30		Respond to the national evaluation of Operation Encompass and subsequently issued guidance, including on extending to early years providers.	Kent Police	March 2027
1.31		Ensure KSCMP has oversight of learning and recommendations identified through Safeguarding Adult Review and Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews that relate to children.	KSCMP Business Team	December 2026



Priority: Fewer children  
experience neglect



# Areas of focus

- **Recognising neglect:** Neglect is often understood to be under recognised owing to its cumulative nature whereby a single incident may not identify the need for concern or action, but rather a pattern or series of incidents over time.
- **Cumulative harm:** Cumulative harm features amongst the most often identified from Rapid Reviews in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard. Related learning has also been identified in KSCMP LCSPR's and activity progressed through LIG.
- **Parental mental health:** The impact of parent mental health on the safety and wellbeing of children is a current KSCMP priority which continues to be seen as a relevant factor to neglect.
- **Home conditions:** There is often a link between neglect and poor home conditions, but learning suggests this is not always well understood or recognised in practice.
- **Parental cannabis use:** Learning has been identified in multiple LCSPRs and thematic studies that the impact of parental cannabis use on the safety and wellbeing of children is not well understood or responded to in practice.
- **Was not brought:** Application of was not brought policies features amongst the most often identified from Rapid Reviews in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- **School attendance:** Regular attendance at school is closely linked to safeguarding; children who are absent from school are at great risk of exploitation, abuse, neglect, and missing out on vital support and education. National focus on school attendance has been highlighted in the draft Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.
- **Elective home education:** Local and national learning has highlighted the need to ensure children educated at home are safeguarded, receive appropriate education, and do not miss out on vital support or protection. This is highlighted in the draft Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

# How we will know if we are successful

- Decrease in the number of children and families being re-referred to KCC Integrated Children's Services.
- Continued access of the KSCMP Cumulative Harm seminar recorded webinar.
- Delivery of recommendations identified in the KSCMP Jasper Red LCSPR.
- A reduction in the prevalence of cumulative harm in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- 100% of Children & Family assessments where the child's bedroom was seen
- Majority of Requests for Support for neglect where concerns relate to home conditions indicate consideration of the clutter scale.
- Significant access of the Clear Minds Safer Homes resources and training
- A reduction in the prevalence of was not brought in the KSCMP learning themes dashboard.
- Increased school attendance rates.



# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
2.1	Recognising neglect	Develop and deliver a public awareness raising campaign aimed at improving recognition of the signs of neglect and action to take.	District Council Safeguarding Group	September 2027
2.2		Develop communications and resources to support multi-agency working at Level 2 of the Support Levels Guidance.	KSCMP Business Team	September 2026
2.3	Cumulative Harm	Review the KSCMP Neglect Identification Tool.	KSCMP Policy & Procedures Group	March 2027
2.4		Develop a range of knowledge and learning resources based on the expiring KSCMP Neglect Strategy.	KSCMP Business Team	June 2026
2.5	Parental mental health	Evaluate the usage and impact of the I'm Lucy resource.	KSCMP Business Team	December 2026
2.6	Home conditions	Undertake an audit of Requests for Supports for neglect to ascertain whether the clutter scale and home conditions are being considered and appropriately referenced.	KSCMP Business Team	December 2026
2.7		Include a prompt in the Request for Support form to consider and reference the clutter scale.	KCC Integrated Children's Services	March 2026

# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
2.8	Parental cannabis use	Promotion of the Clear Minds Safer Homes campaign resources.	KSCMP Business Team	April 2026
2.9		Development of a training offer aligned to the Clear Minds Safer Homes campaign.	KSCMP Business Team	April 2026
2.10		Undertake an evaluation of the Clear Minds Safer Homes campaign.	KSCMP Business Team	November 2026
2.11	Was Not Brought	Undertake an audit of the use of was not brought policies and share findings to the KSCMP Learning & Improvement Group.	Kent and Medway NHS ICB All Kent Health providers	March 2026
2.12	School attendance	Respond to the school attendance requirements of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.	KCC Integrated Children's Services Kent PRU and Attendance Service	December 2026
2.15		Undertake a dip sample of school attendance data.	KSCMP Business Team	June 2026

# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
2.16	Elective Home Education	Implement requirements of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill in respect of Elective Home Education.	KCC Integrated Children's Services KCC Elective Home Education Service	December 2026
2.17		Update KSCMP Elective Home Education resources to reflect local and national change.	KSCMP Business Team	December 2026



Priority: Fewer children  
experience exploitation



# Areas of focus

- **Identification and response to exploitation:** To best protect children who are at risk of or who are being exploited, it is essential that the Partnership is equipped to identify indications of potential or actual exploitation. Local and national learning, including through LCSPRs, has highlighted that potential exploitation is not always identified or considered at the earliest opportunity.
- **Multi-agency information sharing:** Tackling child exploitation requires multi-agency information sharing because no single agency holds all the information needed to identify, disrupt and prevent exploitation. It is only by sharing the information held by individual agencies that a full picture of risk and harm can be built.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** The Casey Audit highlights significant learning regarding the identification and response to child sexual exploitation, and national activity and change is expected as a result. The Partnership recognises this learning and the need to assure itself of the local response to child sexual exploitation.
- **Online exploitation:** The online space plays an increasing role in children's and families' lives, and exploitation increasingly takes places online.
- **Adultification and appropriate language:** National and local learning continues to highlight that the language professionals use can obscure seeing risks to and vulnerability of children who are at risk of or have been exploited.
- **Neurodivergence:** Learning highlights that neurodiverse children are amongst those most vulnerable to exploitation. There is a need to ensure there is a bespoke response to individual children's needs, recognising that neurodivergence is complex and different for different children.
- **Missing children:** Children who are missing from home or care are amongst those most vulnerable to exploitation.



# How we will know if we are successful

- Improved ability to report on the prevalence of child exploitation in Kent
- Increased proportion of children referred to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre where there are concerns of child sexual exploitation
- Continued access of the KSCMP online safety training.
- Reduction in the number of children with multiple missing episodes
- Reduction in the number of children with under 24hr missing episodes
- Increased number of child exploitation disruptions
- Increased number of child exploitation offence prosecutions
- Increased partner child exploitation intelligence submissions to Kent Police



# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
3.1	Identification and response to exploitation	Develop a KSCMP Child Exploitation strategy and action plan.	KSCMP Child Exploitation Oversight Group	December 2026
3.2		Adopt the risk of harm outside the home model.	KCC Integrated Children's Services	June 2026
3.3		Review the KCC exploitation assessment tool.	KCC Integrated Children's Services	June 2026
3.4		Map the work of the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit.	KSCMP Child Exploitation Oversight Group	April 2026
3.5	Multi-agency information sharing	Review the Kent and Medway Child Exploitation Procedures.	KSCMP Policy & Procedures Group	September 2026
3.6	Child Sexual Exploitation	Respond to the findings of the KSCMP Child Sexual Exploitation benchmarking.	KSCMP Child Exploitation Oversight Group	April 2026

# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
3.7	Online exploitation	Undertake a follow up survey regarding online safety training provision and completion within single agencies, within the 2026 Section 11 audit.	KSCMP Business Team	December 2026
3.8		Provide assurance that social media is considered within single agency assessments.	KSCMP Learning & Improvement Group	March 2026
3.9	Adultification and appropriate language	Implement recommendation(s) from a Kent LCSPR relating to adultification and use of language by professionals.	KSCMP Learning & Improvement Group	March 2027
3.10	Neurodivergence	Consider what support can be provided to the Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity (PINs) programme in regard to exploitation risk and vulnerability for neurodiverse children.	KSCMP Business Team	April 2026
3.11		Consider the capacity at the universal level to appropriately take account and apply understanding of neurodivergence and vulnerability to exploitation of both child victims and perpetrators.	KSCMP Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group	December 2026
3.12	Missing children	Review the KSCMP Children missing from Home and Care procedure.	KSCMP Policy & Procedure Group	December 2026

# Strategic Partnership Activity



**Kent Safeguarding Children**  
multi-agency partnership

# Areas of focus

- **Engagement of education:** Working Together 2023 and the draft Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill recognise the vital role that education play in the safeguarding of children. Safeguarding Partners have an increased responsibility to ensure strategic engagement of education within local children's safeguarding partnerships.
- **Suitable and aware workforce:** The workforce of the partners who make up the Partnership have an important role in the safeguarding of children. Ensuring suitable employment, through safer recruitment measures, and adequate response to concerns about staff are essential to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children. Professionals also equally need to have adequate and appropriate training and guidance to support them in their safeguarding responsibilities. They must be equipped to notice potential safeguarding concerns and know how to respond.
- **Local Government Reorganisation:** During the life of this plan there will be ongoing activity and strategic planning in relation to Local Government Reorganisation, including how safeguarding children services and the Partnership(s) are structured.

# How we will know if we are successful

- Increased attendance at KSCMP Education Engagement sessions.
- Increased access of KSCMP Education newsletters.
- Increased number of schools represented at the KSCMP Education Safeguarding Group.
- Continued attendance at LADO training sessions (hosted via KSCMP).
- Increased completions of the KSCMP Safer Recruitment training courses.
- An increase in the number of Section 11 criteria related to safer recruitment & LADO being met by Kent agencies in the 2026 audit compared to 2024.
- Surveys and auditing demonstrate a high level of awareness and/or an improvement in district and borough council staff awareness and signs of abuse and neglect, as well as referral pathways.



# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
4.1	Education engagement	Expand the membership of the KSCMP Education Safeguarding Group.	KSCMP Education Safeguarding Group	April 2026
4.2		Undertake an impact assessment of how Education is involved in the KSCMP and whether/how this involvement is making a difference.	KSCMP Independent Scrutineer	June 2026
4.3		Continue to host KSCMP Education Engagement sessions twice yearly.	KSCMP Business Team	April 2027
4.4		Continue to create and disseminate quarterly KSCMP Education newsletters.	KSCMP Business Team	April 2027
4.5		Examine data on key child safeguarding themes which impact schools and consider what they mean for schools.	KSCMP Education Safeguarding Group	December 2026
4.6	Suitable and aware workforce	Undertake a six-month review of completion and feedback of the KSCMP Safer Recruitment for non-education organisations training.	KSCMP Business Team	April 2026
4.7		Include safer recruitment within education specific training to be developed as part of the KSCMP learning and development programme.	KSCMP Business Team	March 2026

# What we will do

No.	Area of focus	Activity	Lead	Timescale
4.8	Suitable and aware workforce	District and Borough Councils to design and promote internal campaigns focusing on upskilling staff to recognise signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation, with a particular focus on the role played by Housing Officers.	District Councils Safeguarding Group	September 2027
4.9		District and Borough Councils to review staff training to ensure signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation are included, as well as what steps staff may need to take.	District Councils Safeguarding Group	September 2027
4.10	Local Government Reorganisation	Engage in strategic planning and advise on the discharge of safeguarding partnership responsibilities for any new local authority or authorities established as part of Local Government Reorganisation.	KSCMP Executive	September 2027

