

Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership

Annual Report **April 2025 – March 2026**

Contents

Section	Page
Section One: Introduction	3
Foreword by the KSCMP Executive	3
Area profile	4
Inspections	5
Section Two: Progress against statutory guidance	7
Implementation of changes set out in statutory guidance	7
Contribution of each Safeguarding Partner	10
Section Three: Scrutiny	12
Multi-agency audits	12
Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Subgroup	15
Analysis of areas with limited progress	16
Independent Scrutineer evaluation	18
Section Four: Learning from Serious Incidents	20
Serious Incident Notifications	20
Rapid Reviews	21
Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	23
National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	24
Learning and Improvement Group	26
Acting on learning	27
Section Five: Key decisions and actions taken by Safeguarding Partners	34
Lead Safeguarding Partner decisions	34
KSCMP Executive decisions	34
Section Six: Financial breakdown and value for money	37
Funding arrangements	37
Assessment of impact and value for money	38
Section Seven: Representation of education sector	39
Education representation in the Partnership	39
Section Eight: Use of data and information sharing	42
Data	42
Section Nine: Implementation of national reforms	44
Families First Partnership Programme	44
Section Ten: Strategic priorities	45
2024-26 Priorities	45
2026-27 Priorities	46
Section Eleven: Workforce development and capacity	50
Workforce	50
KSCMP Learning and Development Programme	50
Section Twelve: Future planning	57
Planned activities for 2026-27	57
Section Thirteen: Conclusion	59
Conclusion by the Lead Safeguarding Partners	59
Appendices	60
Appendix One: KSCMP Structure	60
Appendix Two: Data references	61

Section One: Introduction

Foreword by the KSCMP Executive

This annual report sets out the work of the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP) between April 2025 and March 2026 and highlights both the progress made and the challenges faced in keeping children safe. Kent continues to operate in a demanding safeguarding context, shaped by rising levels of need, increasing complexity, workforce pressures and wider system reform. This report reflects a Partnership that has maintained a strong focus on learning from harm, improving multi-agency practice and strengthening accountability, while acknowledging that further improvement is required in some areas.

Throughout the year, the Partnership has prioritised learning from serious incidents and safeguarding practice reviews, using this learning to inform audit, training, guidance and system change. Evidence set out in this report demonstrates improvements in areas such as escalation, information sharing, and father inclusive practice, alongside sustained challenges relating to children's mental health.

Statutory guidance, in particular Working Together to Safeguard Children, sets clear expectations for local safeguarding children partnerships to provide strategic leadership, robust governance, effective scrutiny, and meaningful assurance that safeguarding arrangements are improving outcomes for children. It also requires annual reporting to demonstrate how learning from serious incidents, audits and performance data is used to strengthen practice. This report evidences how KSCMP discharged these responsibilities through updated partnership arrangements, and how we continue to develop approaches to assurance and performance monitoring.

Looking ahead, the Executive has agreed a broader set of Partnership priorities for 2026-27, centred overwhelmingly on fewer children experiencing harm. The challenge for the coming year will be to embed recent improvements, respond effectively to national reform, and continue to develop the Partnership's ability to evidence the difference it makes to children's lived experiences across Kent.



Christine McInnes,
Corporate Director,
Children, Young People
and Education,
Kent County Council



Paul Lumsdon,
Chief Nursing Officer,
Kent and Medway NHS
Integrated Care Board



Simon Thompson,
Assistant Chief Constable,
Kent Police



Susie Burden,
Executive Headteacher,
Fulston Manor School



Debra Hines,
Executive Headteacher,
Joy Lane Primary School

Area profile

Inline	2025/26	Comparison to 2024/25
Number of children aged 0-17 years ¹	355,400	+2.0% from 348,300
Looked after children (Kent Citizen) ³	1,470	+1.8% from 1,443
Looked after children (unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) ³	451	-1.6% from 458
Missing episodes ⁴	6,002	-0.3% from 6,018
Children educated at home ⁸	5,234	+0.2% from 5,222

Decreasing	2025/26	Comparison to 2024/25
Referrals to NELFT ⁵	20,174	-11.5% from 22,488
Young people who had involved with Early Help - CSE ¹²	182	-92.9% from 351
C and F Assessments where a young carer was identified ¹⁴	472	-15.7% from 546
Domestic Abuse – Child Domestic Violence ¹⁵	2,428	-8.2% from 2,626
Domestic Abuse – Parent Domestic Violence ¹⁵	5,704	-4.9% from 5,986
Other Domestic Violence ¹⁵	1,699	-19.7% from 2,034

Increasing	2025/26	Comparison to 2024/25
Under 16s living in poverty ²	54,002	+12.5% from 47,273
Ethnic minority pupils ⁶	73,428	+2.6% from 71,555
Pupils with Special Education Needs ⁷	48,100	+6.7% from 44,874
Children with a Child Protection plan who has a disability ⁹	117	+12.8% from 102
Young People in Youth Justice ¹⁰	222	+25.7% from 165
Children with a child protection plan ¹¹	1,243	+7.4% from 1,151
Young people who had involvement with CSWS identified at high risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) ¹²	560	+11.3% from 497
Privately Fostered Children ¹⁴	27	+18.5% from 22
Referrals to Family Group Conferencing - families ¹⁶	1,737	+16.6% from 1,449
Referrals to Family Group Conferencing - individuals ¹⁶	2,816	+18.7% from 2,289

Please see appendix two for a list of data references.

Inspections

Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services

In November 2025 Ofsted undertook an [inspection of Kent County Councils \(KCC\) children's services](#). The inspection report sets out that children remain at the core of a strong, and often exceptional, service in Kent and that those children who need help and protection receive services which usually result in positive outcomes for them and their families. Strong partnership working, both operational and strategic, are noted as being productive and child centred. The report also highlighted challenges that are significant to the way services are structured and provided in Kent, including high numbers of both other local authority placements of children in care and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).

The overall inspection grading was 'good', with experiences and progress of children in care specifically noted as 'outstanding'. The experiences and progress of care leavers however was graded as 'requiring improvement'. In response, KCC has begun work within the Partnership to address the needs and services for care leavers. The KSCMP is working with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB) to bring together a care leavers working group. This group has been set up to lead and coordinate the multi-agency response to the inspection findings in relation to the experiences, outcomes and safeguarding of care leavers. The group aims to clarify and embed corporate parenting responsibilities across partner agencies; ensure there are systems in place to recognise and respond to the potential vulnerabilities of this cohort and to promote consistent awareness amongst care leavers and Personal Advisors of the services available to adults at risk as well as relevant escalation pathways.

PEEL

In 2025 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carried out a [PEEL \(police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy\) inspection of Kent Police](#). The inspection assessed how good Kent Police is in eight areas of policing, with all being rated as either adequate, good or outstanding. The use of a new inspection framework means it is not a like for like comparison to previous inspection outcomes. The inspection report notes positively how Kent Police keeps people safe, reduces crime and gives victims an effective service. It is also noted that the way the force uses preventative orders in domestic abuse cases and collaborates with partners, such as social services, health providers and education, to protect people at risk of harm has increased. In the majority of cases reviewed, officers recorded the voice of the child in referrals, making sure that the child's experiences and needs were considered in safeguarding decisions.

Innovative practice is highlighted in respect of children, including an early intervention project to reduce knife crime among young people and the use of a learning intervention for children who commit low-level criminal offences.

Whilst the force is graded as 'adequate' for safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm, some areas of improvement were identified relevant to children, including increasing consistency of use of Operation Encompass to notify schools of pupils living with domestic abuse and a more coordinated response to safeguarding, and reviewing of sharing of information with appropriate agencies.

Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation

In October 2025 HMICFRS published a progress report against the recommendations set out in a previous 2023 inspection of how the police, law enforcement agencies and other public bodies were tackling group-based child sexual exploitation. Based on the most recent findings, HMICFRS considers that police forces have made the necessary improvements and therefore closed the area of improvement.

Kent Police was one of the six forces which were visited by HMICFRS as part of the progress report. The report highlights that Kent Police was a notable example of the use of a specialist exploitation team to review open and closed child sexual exploitation investigations reported to it in the previous 12 months, to check the investigation was thorough and that the child sexual exploitation flag had been applied accurately. It also notes that Kent Police applied the Independent Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) group-based definition well when it reviewed approximately 3,000 closed child sexual exploitation reports, sometimes resulting in identification of other linked crimes or further lines of enquiry.

Section Two: Progress against statutory guidance

Implementation of changes set out in statutory guidance

Updated Arrangements

In line with our commitment to review and update our Partnership arrangements annually, revised [KSCMP arrangements](#) were published in December 2025. As per the requirement of Working Together to Safeguard Children, the revised arrangements were signed off by both the KSCMP Executive and Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs).

Amendments to the arrangements included updating names of relevant senior Partnership leaders, removing the Health Safeguarding Group from the Partnership's architecture, and removal of registered providers of residential holiday schemes for disabled children from the named Relevant Agencies (as no such schemes continue in Kent). In addition, following reflections from the Independent Scrutineer about a lack of connectivity between the Partnership subgroups and the Executive, a provision was included for subgroup chairs to provide an update directly to the Executive via their twice annual 'away days'.

The [Scrutiny and Assurance Framework](#) was revised to include a formal escalation pathway from Partnership subgroups to the Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group (SAAS), Executive and Lead Safeguarding Partners. The pathway had already been in place in practice, and is now formalised within the framework.

The [Practice Improvement Framework](#) had a number of amendments made, many of which reflected learning identified in the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's (CSPRP) learning briefing on race and racism in safeguarding children, as well as updates which reflect the revised CSPRP guidance on reviews for Safeguarding Partners (see below).

Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Guidance for Safeguarding Partners and Learning Support and Capability Project

Following engagement in focus groups for the national Learning Support and Capability Project and the review of the statutory guidance for Safeguarding Partners, the KSCMP Business Team began implementing anticipated changes ahead of publication, allowing time for embedding and adaptation.

Since October 2024, all KSCMP Rapid Review reports have explicitly referenced Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI); however, limited detail within agency summary reports constrained meaningful analysis. In response, the KSCMP Rapid Review summary template was revised in April 2025 to require agencies to report specifically on EEDI. This has supported learning linked to the Partnership's *It's*

*Silent*¹ action plan and highlighted where adultification was likely relevant to the circumstances of a child's death. To further strengthen Kent's reviewing approach, the Business Team sought CSRP support, which might be improved with the offer of a timely discussion.

In line with updated guidance, the Executive decision-making template for notifying serious incidents was revised in May 2025 to record the rationale for informing families of a notification (or not) and the Rapid Review agenda updated to prompt consideration of whether and how families should be informed of learning and actions². This has enabled meaningful engagement with one family following a Rapid Review, whose contributions informed system learning and were incorporated into a learning briefing.

Considering examples in section 7 of the guidance has also strengthened Executive decision-making when notifying incidents involving suspected suicide, children in care, and intrafamilial sexual abuse (including retrospectively), increasing confidence in identifying harm that meets the threshold for notification and review.

Key elements confirmed and updated in the 2025 guidance already embedded in Kent include all Safeguarding Partners agreeing which cases to notify (since 2022); a pathway for decision making regarding serious incidents involving over 18's (since 2022); Rapid Review reports being signed by the Executive (since 2020); and commissioning LCSPRs where there is *new learning* for the local area (supported by the Learning Themes Dashboard developed in 2022).

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 was published in March 2026, without prior consultation and came into effect immediately, indicating less substantial changes than in the previous version. The guidance is now aligned with the Children's Social Care Reform Programme and the Children's Social Care National Framework, where previously it only referenced them. Whilst previous versions of the guidance set an expectation that Local Children Safeguarding Partnerships should focus on strategic governance, this iteration of the requires that Partnerships should provide leadership to, and have active oversight of, the operational delivery of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

These substantive changes in the guidance have been identified and assessed in implications they hold for the KSCMP, with the Executive giving consideration as to how to best reflect the revised and new requirements in the KSCMP arrangements. Work to implement the guidance includes reviewing the remit of SAAS (including use and oversight of operational performance data) and engaging further with the education sector to ensure appropriate representation in the Partnership.

¹ See page 25

² The expectation has always been to advise a family when an LCSPR has been commissioned and invite their engagement when possible.

Partnership Forums 2025

On Wednesday 2nd April 2025 the KSCMP held its first Partnership conference. It was attended by almost 100 professionals from across a range of agencies working in Kent. The agenda included items outlining key activities and priorities of the Partnership, as well as inputs from guest speakers on the role of education within partnerships and online radicalisation risks to children. The conference also provided an opportunity to gather feedback from attendees both on the event and on a range of safeguarding topics.

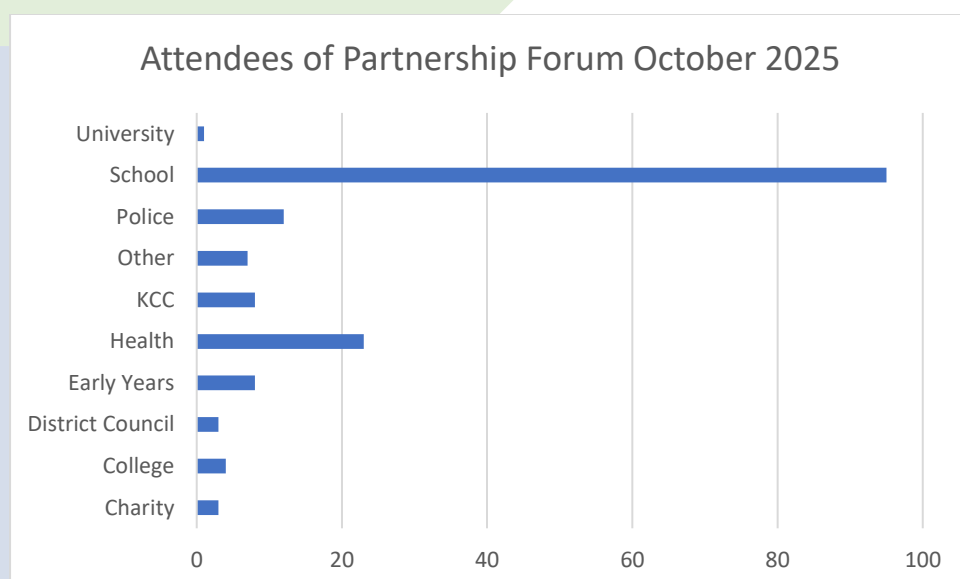
Feedback from attendees of the conference indicated that the event had been useful and provided learning that could be acted upon in attendees' work. Particular positives noted included the varied agenda, representation of a range of agencies, the opportunity to hear from leaders of the Partnership, and how it brought the work of the Partnership to life.

*"This is **extremely helpful**. We already access a number of these resources but putting them within this context is really useful."*

Attendee of KSCMP 2025 Conference

The conference also brought benefits for the Partnership, as well as for those who attended. Following the conference additional members were identified for the Education Safeguarding Group and the working group developing the KSCMP's parental cannabis use campaign. Insights from interactive activities during the event were also used to inform development of the Partnership's 2026-27 priorities.

On Monday 6th October 2025 the KSCMP held a Partnership forum, a shorter virtual event to share key information from the Partnership and engage a wide range of partner agencies. It was attended by 164 professionals, the chart below giving a breakdown of attendees by agencies highlights the significant number of school and education attendance. This highlights the success of KSCMP's efforts to better engage with the education sector in Kent.



Attendee feedback on the forum was largely positive, with an average satisfaction score of 4.0 out of 5, and all attendees who provided feedback indicated they had learned something new which was relevant to their role.

"It gave me up to date and new information on all the topics discussed. They were all relevant to my role."

Attendee of KSCMP 2025 Virtual Forum

"It is good to receive regular updates about what is going on in the wider safeguarding world."

Attendee of KSCMP 2025 Virtual Forum

Contribution of each Safeguarding Partner

Approaches to Partnership governance structures

The KSCMP's governance arrangements promote strong multi-agency leadership, shared accountability and effective scrutiny to ensure safeguarding remains a collectively owned and centrally held responsibility across all partners. Our governance structures support both strategic oversight and operational effectiveness. This includes clear reporting lines between our Lead Safeguarding Partner Board, Executive and subgroups with a thread through to frontline practice. Partner agencies and multi-agency groups ensure that learning and risks are escalated appropriately and that strategic decisions are informed by practice realities. The KSCMP recognises that in order for our Partnership to be effective we have to create an environment in which we can constructively hold one another to account but also support one another to improve and attain – as it is only when we are functioning well as a collective that we can safeguard children as well as individual agencies.

The KSCMP's subgroups work to support this system of constructive challenge and we use our escalation processes to good effect to provide both that questioning and wider support. Partnership groups also consider multi-agency performance reporting, shared assurance processes e.g. via the Partnership multi-agency audit programme and the regular review and tracking of progress achieved against our priorities and Strategic Plan. The KSCMP works to ensure that learning is embedded across our safeguarding system and that safeguarding practice reviews, audits, analysis and feedback from managers, practitioners and children and families inform our joint work and drive our continuous improvement activity. Kent's Safeguarding Partner agencies recognise that effective safeguarding goes beyond the work undertaken by the statutory Safeguarding Partner agencies; the crucial role our Relevant Agencies play is very much recognised in Kent and the Partnership ensures that these agencies are involved in the KSCMP's arrangements and have opportunities to

influence strategic planning and service development. Finally, whilst our work is guided by the Partnership's Priorities and Strategic Plan, the KSCMP's governance arrangements are flexible, responsive and able to adapt to emerging safeguarding risks, legislative reforms and changing local need whilst maintaining a consistent focus on safeguarding children and promoting their wellbeing.

Approach to Partnership Chair function

As required by Working Together to Safeguard Children the KSCMP has implemented a Partnership Chair role. This is rotated on a bi-annual basis through the KSCMP Executive (who are the Delegated Safeguarding Partners), ensuring that at no time is the same agency chair of both the Partnership and the Lead Safeguarding Partners meeting. The functions of the Partnership Chair are outlined in the KSCMP arrangements. During 2025/26 the Partnership Chair has rotated from Kent Police to KCC, with the next rotation due to take place in summer 2027.

Section Three: Scrutiny

Multi-agency Audits

Domestic Abuse Joint Targeted Area Inspection Benchmarking (JTAI)

As reported in the 2024-25 KSCMP Annual Report, the Partnership undertook a local benchmarking exercise to understand our local position against the published domestic abuse JTAI framework. Two activities were undertaken to achieve the benchmarking:

- 1) **Multi-agency strategic evidence collection:** The JTAI framework criteria was reviewed by a multi-agency working group to identify evidence which would provide insight into the local position.
- 2) **Multi-agency case audit:** The KSCMP supported a comprehensive multi-agency audit involving KCC Integrated Children's Services (ICS), Police, Health and Probation. The audit reviewed 24 multi-agency cases of children aged 0-7, including unborn babies, selected using JTAI criteria to reflect a diverse and representative cohort. The work included partner-specific pre-audit tools and two full days of in-person reflective discussions. KCC ICS also completed analysis of Front Door and internal KCC ICS audits.

A significant time commitment was made by partners to undertake the benchmarking, which is reflective of the importance placed on responding to children who are the victims of domestic abuse. The benchmarking identified that whilst there is a significant range of domestic abuse training available to professionals across partner agencies, there is no clarity on coverage of children as victims of domestic abuse, and nor was information provided to give assurance on how this is addressed through supervision. It was noted that Operation Encompass is valued by education colleagues and although some challenges had been noted, particularly regarding consistency and timeliness of notifications, these were already being addressed by Kent Police.

Strong evidence was seen of children's voices and experiences being used in the design and ongoing development of the Safe Accommodation Support Services. However, the voice of the child and consideration of the child's perspective as victim was an area for development noted within the case audits. Cultural considerations were also varied; for some agencies this meant protected characteristics had been recorded, whilst for others it meant active consideration of culture within practice responses. Circumstances were also identified where culture had not been suitably considered. This was in-keeping with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's (CSPRP) briefing on race and racism and was subsequently reflected in the Partnership's work to respond to that briefing³.

³ See page 25

The benchmarking work and findings were presented to SAAS and the results informed targeted improvements which are being led by the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Partnership. The benchmarking findings were also shared with an Independent Reviewer undertaking a LCSPR in Kent where circumstances include domestic abuse, for the review's themes to be compared with benchmarking findings and its recommendations informed by the actions already underway.

Child Sexual Abuse JTAI Benchmarking

Following publication of a JTAI framework of the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment in September 2025 and as outlined in the Kent Child Sexual Abuse action plan⁴, the KSCMP has begun a benchmarking exercise to understand the local position against the criteria in the framework. A multi-agency task and finish group is developing the benchmarking which will consist of case audit and the review of strategic arrangements. The benchmarking is due to conclude and report to SAAS in autumn 2026, with findings informing further actions in phase two of the Kent Child Sexual Abuse action plan.

Casey Review Benchmarking

Following the national audit on group-based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Abuse (Casey Review) in June 2025 the KSCMP Executive and Child Exploitation Oversight Group (CEOG) oversaw development of a Casey Benchmarking Tool covering 12 sections aligned to the Casey Review themes (e.g. culture, training, data etc.). The three Safeguarding Partner agencies completed the tool, which was subsequently analysed and collated into a detailed evidence slide deck containing national findings, local comparison and tabulated responses. An executive level summary report with key insights and discussion points was also produced and shared with CEOG in February 2026.

The impact of the activities includes a strengthened understanding of the system's readiness against the main Casey themes. It revealed where agencies aligned strongly and where gaps exist. Strengths included a strong commitment and professionalism across the system, and individual data systems. Information sharing does exist but practice is inconsistent. Gaps largely reflected those identified in the national audit, including inconsistent definitions of group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and limited survivor-informed learning. Kent Police were the only agency with a picture of group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and this was limited. All agencies had training in place, but it was noted that training needs to be more consistent and embedded.

Whilst it is too early to measure the impact of the benchmarking, the findings will continue to be used by CEOG to strengthen multi-agency data collection specific to CSE, to ensure that agreed definitions of CSE and group-based CSE are embedded across agencies and to discuss further multi-agency training needs. The learning from the benchmarking will feed into KSCMP priorities and shape future assurance, audit and improvement activity, supporting a sustained focus on prevention, early

⁴ See page 24

intervention and effective multi-agency responses for children and families at risk of exploitation.

Online Safety Training Audit

A multi-agency audit was designed and delivered in summer 2025 to understand: 1) which organisations provide online safety training, 2) whether training is mandatory, 3) types of training delivered, and 4) completion numbers. A survey was issued to key partner agencies (25 in total) including KCC ICS, Kent Police, NHS providers, councils, Probation, Kent Fire & Rescue and CAFCASS. 24 responses were received.

Findings demonstrated significant variation in how agencies deliver online safety training, while also showing strong engagement with KSCMP's training offer, which saw increased e-learning completions and virtual training attendance in 2025. The results were presented to SAAS in December 2025 and have informed the Partnership's ongoing assurance work and strategic planning for 2026-27. Future plans include ongoing monitoring of training engagement trends and opportunities for assurance on the effectiveness of single agency training.

By mapping training provision across the Partnership, the audit provided assurance about the system's capacity to recognise, assess and respond to online risks faced by children, including online exploitation, harmful content, grooming and child-on-child abuse. Improved visibility of training coverage has supported clearer identification of gaps and inconsistencies that may affect how confidently and consistently practitioners respond to concerns raised by children and families.

The engagement with KSCMP training contributes to a more informed workforce, confident to have safe and appropriate conversations with children, recognise early indicators of online harm, and provide accurate advice and support to families. This helps promote earlier intervention, clearer safeguarding responses and more consistent messages to children and parents about online safety and risk.

Father Inclusive Practice Training Audit

The audit aimed to understand whether KSCMP Father Inclusive Practice training improved practitioners' knowledge, confidence, and day-to-day practice when engaging and working with fathers. It specifically examined KSCMP courses such as:

- Barriers to Father Engagement and How to Overcome Them
- A Tough Nut to Crack? Working with Resistant or Challenging Fathers
- Understanding Kent Father Inclusive Guidance

The audit also sought to identify whether staff were using the Partnership resources (i.e., guidance, a one-minute guide, and a checklist).

The survey was sent to 144 individuals who had completed one or more of the Father Inclusive Practice training courses. 28 responses were received (20.6% response rate).

Respondents consistently reported positive outcomes, with all scoring their confidence at least 3 out of 5 and an average rating of around 4.2 across key areas such as understanding father inclusive practice, engaging fathers, recognising varied paternal roles, and applying strategies in their work. Despite this, uptake of supporting resources was low, with two-thirds of respondents not having accessed the guidance, one-minute guide, or checklist.

The completed audit was considered by SAAS, where key findings and implications were presented. SAAS agreed that whilst training is having a clear positive impact on practitioner confidence and awareness, future planning should focus on improving visibility and use of the resources, increasing multi-agency engagement, and continuing to monitor progress through ongoing reporting to SAAS of practice review learning themes. Engagement with fathers is monitored in the Partnership Learning Themes dashboard and is included in the 2026-27 KSCMP priorities, which will require ongoing attention to its recurrence in Rapid Reviews over the coming year.

Embedding father inclusive practice more consistently across the Partnership will ensure gains in practitioner confidence translate into sustained improvement in service delivery. This will ultimately improve engagement with fathers by practitioners across Kent and increases the likelihood that fathers are routinely included in plans to safeguard and support children.

Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group

Over the last year, SAAS has continued to provide challenge and assurance on the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Kent. Its work has focused on ensuring that learning from serious incidents, safeguarding practice reviews and audits lead to meaningful and sustained improvement. The group has scrutinised Serious Incident Notification decision-making by Safeguarding Partner agencies, strengthening confidence that serious harm and deaths are identified and referred appropriately, reducing the risk of under reporting and supporting a consistent approach across the system.

The Group has continued to place strong emphasis on the effective use of data and intelligence. Members scrutinised quarterly safeguarding data reports, moving beyond assurance based solely on individual cases, using cumulative data to identify recurring themes and patterns. The group supported the development of clearer, scorecard style reporting aligned to the KSCMP Strategic Plan, improving the ability of the Partnership to monitor progress, identify emerging risks and focus improvement activity where it is most needed.

The group has also played a key role in strengthening system accountability where safeguarding risks persist or progress has stalled. This included maintaining and escalating concerns relating to mental health responses for children at risk of self-harm or suicide, and the implementation of Kennedy sampling following child

deaths⁵. In doing so, the group has ensured senior leadership engagement, clearer expectations for information sharing and coordinated support, and greater transparency in decision making.

Analysis of areas with limited progress

Child's Voice

A great deal of work has been undertaken over a number of years to improve the regularity, consistency and quality of the KSCMP's engagement with children and families as part of the practice review process. The impact of this is evidenced in feedback received from both national bodies (such as the CSPRP) and from children and families themselves. However, the Partnership has not yet determined the best mechanism to obtain and respond to the voice of children and families in relation to the development, delivery and scrutiny of the KSCMP's arrangements. Work has been undertaken over the past year to gather the views of children and young people via established feedback channels within single partner agencies; the Partnership has also undertaken some direct work to gather the feedback of children and young people regarding their perceptions of safety and safeguarding. Nonetheless we know more work needs to be done and various options are being considered to inform our arrangements into the future, led by relevant Partnership subgroups.

Voluntary and Community Sector

The KSCMP Architecture Review and updated Partnership Arrangements in response to Working Together 2023 acknowledged it is not possible to include all voluntary, charity, social enterprise organisations and sports clubs as Relevant Agencies in Kent, given the geographic size of the local authority area, although their involvement and engagement is recognised as important. Instead, it was agreed an existing LCSPR recommendation to develop a communications strategy to reach third sector organisations would be taken forward. Subsequently a further relevant LCSPR recommendation requires consideration to be given to how this can be expanded to include private sector services for children.

In the 2024-25 annual report it was noted that the strategy was expected to be developed in summer 2025, however capacity challenges meant that this was delayed. The work is now underway, with dedicated activity in progress to develop and shape the approach, and completion targeted for November 2026. Opportunities to engage with the sector directly are being sought, in order to inform and shape the strategy.

Whilst this delay has meant that specific communication routes and resources for the voluntary and community sector have not yet been developed, there are a range of existing KSCMP resources which remain available for those organisations, and attendance has been seen from the sector at a number of the Partnership events in

⁵ See page 17

2025/26. Individual organisations have continued to be engaged within Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs where appropriate. This ongoing engagement provides a strong foundation to support the implementation of the communications strategy once it has been agreed.

Assessment and safety planning for children at risk of self-harm and suicide

In June 2025, in line with the Scrutiny and Assurance Framework the Learning and Improvement Group (LIG) escalated concerns regarding outstanding North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) actions relating to Kent practice reviews where children had died by suicide and suspected suicide. It also highlighted concerns about NELFT's connectivity to the wider Partnership in respect of safety planning.

The escalation was ultimately overseen by the KSCMP Executive, already mindful of the number and nature of Kent suicide related notifications, who steered and maintained oversight of issues highlighted by the LIG and required NELFT engagement at the highest level.

The escalation was successful in progressing relevant practice review recommendations and the results of an audit to measure impact of required change is due for presentation to the Partnership in May 2026. The LIG will then determine the steps required of multi-agency partners to build on NELFT's⁶ activity to improve the system response to children at risk.

Kennedy Samples

The LIG raised a second escalation in October 2025 after evidence an action previously agreed complete was not effectively embedded. The action relates to a Serious Case Review recommendation with implication for Kent, commissioned by another area and requiring the implementation of Kennedy guidelines⁷.

Kent Police presented recent evidence where Kennedy sampling was specifically requested and denied, hindering its ability to consider criminality where test results were not available for evidential use. Importantly, it also highlighted that by failing to implement guidelines there is potential for delay in the identification of abuse, leaving other children (typically siblings of the child harmed) in the care of the abuser(s).

After the action agreed to evidence more recent progress against the recommendation was unmet, the SAAS progressed the escalation for the attention of the KSCMP Executive where it currently remains. The outcome will be referenced in next year's annual report.

⁶ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services have subsequently transferred from NELFT to Kent and Medway Mental Health NHS Trust

⁷ Named after Baroness Helena Kennedy, who chaired the working group and wrote the multi-agency guidelines for the care and investigation of sudden unexpected deaths in infancy and childhood in 2016. [New guidelines for the investigation of sudden unexpected death in infancy launched](#)

Independent Scrutineer Evaluation

Over the past year the KSCMP has continued to build on the progress identified in the previous annual report, while operating in a changing and demanding safeguarding environment. Partnership arrangements have continued to mature, with further development of governance structures, refinement of subgroup functions, and ongoing work to strengthen assurance, challenge and learning across the system. At the same time, this year has brought a number of pressures, including changes in Executive membership, transition in the chairing of the SAAS, continuing recruitment and retention challenges across agencies, and wider financial pressures affecting public services.

The continued development of SAAS has been a significant feature of the year. Its evolution has helped provide a clearer route between subgroup activity, assurance work and Executive oversight. Revised Terms of Reference and changes in membership have supported this development, although the subgroup is still maturing and further work is needed to ensure that its role in scrutiny, escalation, assurance and follow-through is consistently understood and embedded across the Partnership. This should be seen as part of normal Partnership development within a wider context of changing national expectations for safeguarding partnerships.

The KSCMP Business Team continues to be a significant strength for the Partnership. The team has maintained oversight of a wide range of activity and has enabled the Partnership to continue progressing despite increasing demands. This includes support to subgroup development, business planning, audit activity, performance reporting, communications and dissemination of learning. The Partnership has also maintained a strong focus on translating learning from LCSPRs into accessible resources for practice. The most recent example is 'I'm Lucy' which includes a media clip and links to helpful tools in the mental health space, which builds on earlier work such as EatSafe and Father Inclusive Practice and reflects a continuing commitment to making learning practical, visible and relevant to frontline practitioners.

The year has also seen continued progress in the use of audit and performance information. Data dashboards are better established and provide a stronger basis for identifying themes, patterns and emerging issues. Multi-agency audit activity has continued to support reflection on frontline practice and system performance, and there is now greater openness across agencies in discussing areas for development. A further Section 11 audit is planned for autumn 2026, which will provide an important opportunity to test progress since the previous cycle and assess the impact of learning and assurance activity across the Partnership.

There have however, also been challenges. Executive meetings have not always achieved the depth of strategic discussion or continuity that the Partnership would ideally want, and changes in membership and leadership have inevitably affected momentum at times. The first formal escalations through SAAS during the year have been an important test of the Partnership's developing arrangements. They have demonstrated that the mechanisms for challenge and escalation are in place and

can be used, while also showing that confidence and consistency in using those mechanisms are still developing.

As in previous years, there remain areas where further development is needed. The Partnership has not yet secured a robust mechanism for capturing the voice and lived experience of children and families at a strategic level, distinct from review activity. VCSE engagement also remains an area of ongoing work. While these gaps are recognised and activity has taken place to explore solutions, they have not yet been fully resolved and should remain visible within future Partnership planning.

The wider operating environment for safeguarding partnerships remains challenging. Recruitment and retention pressures across agencies continue to affect stability and capacity. Financial constraints across the public sector are placing additional pressure on partner agencies and creating a risk that safeguarding capacity may be stretched if not carefully managed. These are not issues unique to Kent, but they require continued oversight because of their cumulative impact on leadership capacity, frontline practice and the ability of agencies to sustain improvement activity.

The national context has also continued to evolve. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 places a clearer emphasis on multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including accountability structures, stronger expectations around data sharing, analysis of disproportionality and racism, and the need for annual reports to evidence their impact on children and families. For Kent, this means that future reporting will need to continue moving beyond the description of activity and further towards demonstrating what difference Partnership work is making. At the time of writing key legislation, including the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the Crime and Policing Bill remain subject to the parliamentary process. The Partnership will therefore need to remain sighted on the eventual form of these reforms and any implications for local safeguarding arrangements, multi-agency practice and governance.

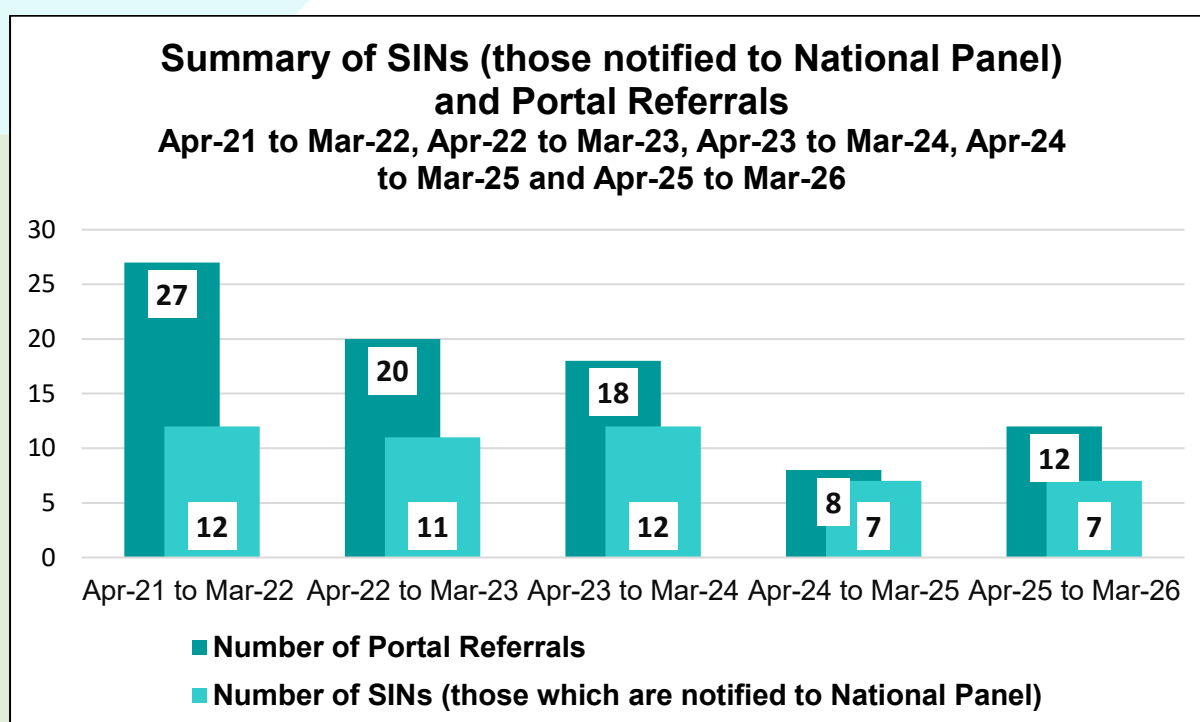
Overall the Partnership remains in a stronger position than it was a year ago. Governance arrangements are more developed, scrutiny and assurance activity is more visible, and there is continued commitment from partners and the Business Team to improvement. The challenge for the coming year will be to consolidate this progress, respond effectively to the revised Working Together framework and forthcoming legislation, maintain a grip in the context of workforce and resource pressures, and continue strengthening the Partnership's ability to evidence impact on the safety and welfare of children in Kent.

Samantha Haspell, KSCMP Independent Scrutineer

Section Four: Learning from Serious Incidents

Serious Incident Notifications

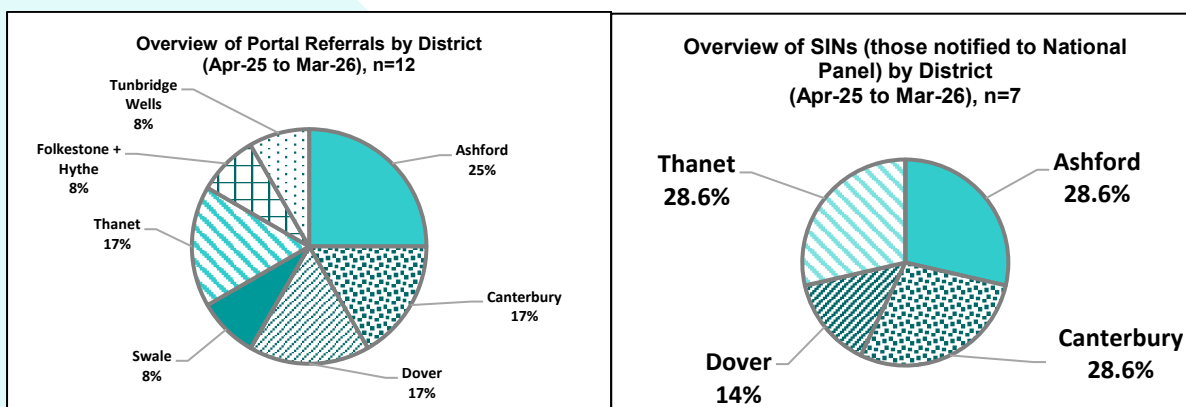
The KSCMP continues to track portal referrals and Serious Incident Notifications (SINs). Portal referrals can be made by any agency wishing to highlight a serious incident for consideration of notification. SINs are those cases notified to the CSPRP and go on to have a Rapid Review. The summary chart below illustrates the numbers of each for the last five-year period. It should be noted a serious incident may involve multiple children but will only result in one SIN.



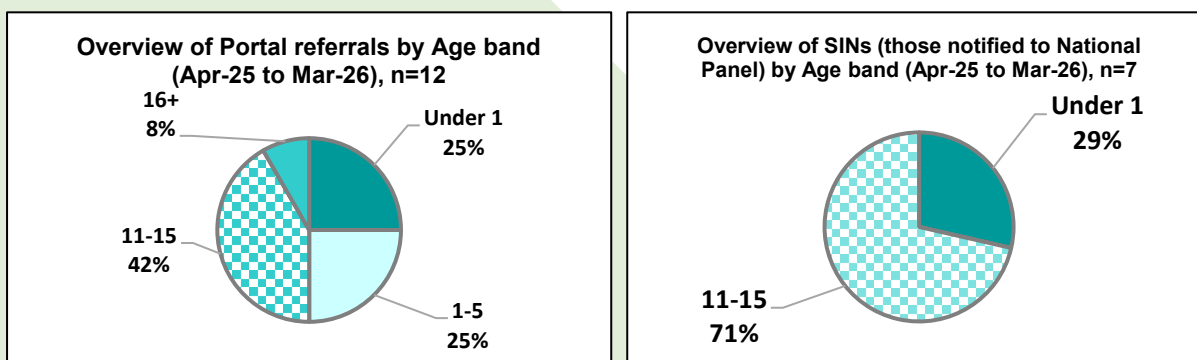
Yearly comparisons show referrals were down in 2024/25 compared to the previous three years but increased in 2025/26 (12 compared to 8 in 2024/25). As in 2024/25, 7 SINs were submitted to the CSPRP. All SINs in 2025/26 were referred to the Partnership in the same timeframe.

The chart below shows Rapid Review outcomes for the 2025/26 reporting period. All Rapid Reviews not progressing to LCSPR (noted below as 'No Further Action') produce an action plan and learning summary, with actions tracked to completion. This year, 3 of the 7 Rapid Reviews led to LCSPR commissioning in comparison to 1 in 2024/25.

The charts below show the geographic distribution of portal referrals and SINs. Ashford generated the most portal referrals during 2025/26, however, referrals resulting in notification to the CSPRP showed a more even split, with three districts featuring equally: Ashford, Canterbury and Thanet, who each constituted 28.6%.



The charts below show the split of portal referrals and SINS by age band of the child notified. Where a portal referral or SIN identified more than one child, the child who suffered most harm (e.g. in the cases of death) or the youngest age child is been represented in the charts. Kent has seen a year-on-year increase in the percentage of 11-15 year-olds subject of notification, from 0% in 2021/22 to 71% in 2025/26.



Rapid Reviews

Between April 2025 and March 2026 the KSCMP undertook 7 Rapid Reviews identifying a total of 37 relevant practice themes, and commissioned 3 LCSPRs.

The top 3 most frequently occurring themes across the Rapid Reviews were:

- 1) Assessment of risk/safety planning
- 2) Child's voice/lived experience
- 3) Impact of parental mental health on parenting capability

An Action Plan is created at each Rapid Review to consolidate immediate actions necessary to support and safeguard the relevant individuals or groups, to explore any missing information, and to embed identified learning over the longer term. Evidence against each action is submitted to the KSCMP Business Team before circulation to the Rapid Review Group, who endorse completion and closure.

A briefing for professionals identifying relevant learning themes and links to resources is produced and disseminated following each Rapid Review. Independent

Reviewers commissioned to author LCSPRs this year commented they are an excellent means of summarising an in depth report and sharing learning with frontline professionals quickly.

"I'm impressed that you produce these Rapid Review learning briefings – really excellent!"

Independent Reviewer

In addition to completing and embedding actions from Kent Rapid Reviews, the associated learning briefings were **viewed a total of 3,201** times by the end of the reporting year.

One briefing shared directly to a school who contributed to a Rapid Review highlighted the importance of following the Escalation Procedure when concerned about the action or inaction of another agency in their safeguarding response to a child. Having subsequently written the procedure into their own child protection policy, the school has since pursued concerns for other children to Stage 4 for Executive oversight.

This year the Partnership delivered its Risk of Harm from Pets webinar further to Rapid Review learning identified last year⁸.

Learning from another Rapid Review informed the development of the Partnership's seminar 'Working with resistant parents' during the Clear Minds, Safer Homes awareness week⁹.

Where LCSPRs were commissioned, Independent Reviewers commented on the quality of Rapid Review reports and how they have supported drafting Terms of Reference documents with key lines of enquiry clear from the outset, as highlighted in the quote below.

"Like my feedback on (previous child), the report is high quality, balanced and child centred."

Independent Reviewer

Following each Rapid Review, the Partnership's Learning Themes Dashboard is updated and informs the work of the LIG.

Learning Themes Dashboard

Learning themes from Rapid Reviews are tracked, with all identified, including those that are new, added to the dashboard following each review's completion. The dashboard makes frequently occurring themes clearly identifiable, assisting a prompt and timely system response via LIG.

⁸ See page 27

⁹ See page 31

The dashboard also enables us to look beyond the prevalence of specific learning themes across the county as a whole, to considering them in the context of age cohorts, local authority districts and Health Care Partnership areas. E.g. we can quickly filter to understand the most prevalent theme emerging from Rapid Reviews for 11-15 year olds, or 11-15 year olds in Thanet, and track how this has changed over time.

As noted in the previous section, the most common learning themes identified from Rapid Reviews across the county as a whole in this reporting year were:

- 1) Assessment of risk/safety planning
- 2) Child's voice/lived experience
- 3) Impact of parental mental health on parenting capability.

For more information on how the Dashboard informs the LIG's activity, please see page 26.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Between April 2025 and March 2026 the KSCMP published 1 LCSPR Executive Summary, 1 reference document and 3 LCSPR reports.

Child U

Child U was pre-school aged when they died and their review focused on whether the family's ethnicity and culture influenced service delivery, particularly in response to domestic abuse. The [Executive Summary for Child U](#) fact checks the LCSPR, highlights key learning themes and action taken since the incident, and makes further recommendations to the KSCMP for it to continue embedding improvements in safeguarding practice. The associated [reference document](#) aligns review themes with relevant guidance, newsletters, support services, training, campaigns and practitioner tools.

Eli & Micah

These babies from different families both suffered Non-Accidental-Injuries, with [their review benchmarking circumstances](#) against the Harm to Under 2's in Kent thematic LCSPR published in 2022. The purpose was to explore if any unique characteristics in their cases warranted recommendations in addition to those already being progressed by KSCMP, and contributed to learning in respect of parental cannabis use and children being considered protective factors for their parents' mental health.

Mira

Completed in 2022, [this review](#) was recently published further to conclusion of criminal proceedings prompted by the Non-Accidental-Injury of four-month-old Mira and considers cultural competence and father inclusive practice in response to domestic abuse. Though unable to engage in the review itself, Mira's mother met the

KSCMP Business Team prior to publication and her reflections, views, and learning from her experiences are to be included in the soon to be published learning briefing.

Molly

Further to CSPRP feedback that LCSPRs often lack appreciation of children's voices and lived experiences, [this review](#) trialled a methodology and style new to the Partnership, situating our understanding of what professional practice meant for Molly by writing the report 'to' her. In doing so, how Molly was impacted by her mother's health conditions, her role as a young carer, referral and service closures, and the fact she became Electively Home Educated, all contribute to our explanation of why we think she died by suicide and what we need to change for other young people in similar situations.

Where-as the 3 previously mentioned LCSPRs were completed some time ago and activity in relation to their recommendations referenced in previous annual reports or noted elsewhere this document (e.g., 'I'm Lucy'¹⁰ and Clear Minds, Safer Homes¹¹), plans to implement the recommendations of the more recently completed review 'Molly', will be determined by LIG in May 2026. Activity will include:

- Creation of a Kent Young Carers strategy
- Adoption of the 'No Wrong Doors for Young Carers – Memorandum of Understanding'
- Promotion of an Elective Home Education checklist for schools
- Awareness raising of the impact of unmanaged diabetes and long-term opiate use on parenting capacity.

National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The KSCMP recognises the importance of considering and responding to learning from National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and CSPRP briefings, as well as our local reviews. National reviews and briefings are considered by LIG to coordinate a response to the learning and recommendations set out.

Child Sexual Abuse within the family environment

The national review report 'I wanted them all to notice: protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse in the family environment' was considered by LIG in July 2025, leading to the development of the two-phase KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse action plan endorsed by the KSCMP Executive in September 2025. Phase one focuses on action to be achieved in the shorter-term and informs actions required in phase two. Activities undertaken in phase one include consideration of multi-agency child sexual abuse training in the KSCMP training needs assessment¹²,

¹⁰ See page 28

¹¹ See page 31

¹² See page 50

making relevant information more accessible on the KSCMP website, and revising the Kent and Medway CSA medical pathway to reflect changes to the Sexual Abuse Referral Centre processes. In addition, the Independent Scrutineer is underway with a dip-sample of local cases where police investigations resulted in no further action, to consider the safeguarding responses to the children. Activities in the action plan are tracked and overseen by LIG, with development of phase two scheduled for May 2026.

Following the publication of the Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse's guide to developing a strategic response, the KSCMP Executive agreed for scoping to be undertaken regarding the potential development of a KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse strategy. The scoping brought together a review of the current and future policy landscape, including national research and reviews, with data analysis and profiling of the current picture of child sexual abuse in Kent, and was considered by the KSCMP Executive in January 2026. Given the range of activities underway relevant to child sexual abuse (including action plan activities and JTAI benchmarking), they determined it necessary for those activities to be completed and brought together before development of a strategy can commence.

Race, racism and safeguarding children

The CSPRP briefing 'It's silent: Race, racism and safeguarding children' was considered by the KSCMP Executive in May 2025 who determined that two Partnership sub-groups would be responsible for coordinating a response to the briefing.

SAAS considered the practice review related recommendations in October 2025 and made a number of amendments to the KSCMP Practice Improvement Framework in order to respond to them, which were subsequently agreed by both the KSCMP Executive and Lead Safeguarding Partners. The revised framework was published in December 2025. The amendments included:

- Additional requirement of LCSPRs to consider the impact of intersectionality, and start from the position that children from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds will have experienced racism in their lives.
- Additional requirements to give regard to issues relating to racism or racial bias.
- Additional consideration to include a subject matter expert or suitable representative for the family in the Rapid Review and/or LCSPR panel, where it is identified that racism or racial bias is an issue.

The amendments are intended to address the learning identified by the CSPRP, but more importantly ensure that our practice review processes are considering and able to understand relevant issues, so that learning can be acted upon to improve system level support and responses to children and families from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds.

LIG considered the practice based recommendations in November 2025 and requested agencies respond directly to them with the aim of better understanding the

local context and practice gaps. It was also agreed to explore opportunities to include a criteria or survey questions on organisational culture in relation to racism and bias within the 2026 Section 11 audit.

A summary report was produced in March 2026 for LIG to consider agency responses, suggesting the CSPP recommendation to create conditions that empower practitioners is largely being met by individual agencies though approaches to doing so vary. However, it also indicated a disconnect between empowering conditions and positive impact for children and families as a result of frontline practice. Therefore, the LIG agreed further actions, including for all agencies to review their safeguarding training and to identify any gaps in relation to protected characteristics, and for development of a protected characteristics supervision toolkit to be explored. An update on the response to the learning and recommendations will be provided to the KSCMP Executive in 2026, and the summary report based on single agency submissions has been shared to the author of an ongoing LCSPR where practice in response to Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is a key line of enquiry.

Protecting all vulnerable babies

The national review 'Protecting all vulnerable babies better: national review into the broader safeguarding issues raised by the death of Baby Victoria Marten', published late in the 2025/26 year, has been considered by the KSCMP Executive, to ensure sight on the specific recommendations for Safeguarding Partners. The review will be considered by LIG later in 2026 for development of local actions in response, which will be reported in the 2026/27 annual report.

Learning and Improvement Group (LIG)

Completed LCSPRs¹³ and national reviews are timetabled at LIG which continues to ensure learning is disseminated and embedded through the Partnership. Key agency representatives offer insight into how recommendations can be translated into action in a meaningful and achievable way for their organisation, and commit to owning, following up, and measuring impact.

Updates and sign off are captured in the group's Power BI tracker providing members with a real time account of each organisation's performance against actions agreed. This year the LIG gave specific focus to actions requiring 'All Agencies' to evidence their response to particular learning for assurance the 'Partnership' is responsive.

In 2025/26 the Group realised its commitment to escalating actions causing specific concern due to the significance of risks posed to children or delay in completion using the Partnership's Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, to hold agencies to account whilst simultaneously supporting resolution via the SAAS and the KSCMP

¹³ LCSPR's are triaged via LIG once completed and are not subject to the delays often caused to publication.

Executive. Two escalations were made this year, highlighted in the analysis of areas with limited progress¹⁴.

During 2025/26 LIG considered 3 LCSPRs, 1 national review and 1 CSPRP briefing. In response to 20 recommendations, LIG set 44 actions, 28 of which are now agreed completed. A further 60 actions from reviews discussed over the previous 2 years were also completed in this year.

Having reached a point where newly completed LCSPRs can be timetabled for discussion at the *next* meeting, in 2026/27 the LIG aims to use the Learning Themes Dashboard more proactively to triangulate themes from most recent Rapid Reviews with actions already being tracked to measure impact – revisiting or agreeing new actions for repeat themes.

For example, in 2024/25, father inclusive practice was the most prevalent learning theme emerging from Kent Rapid Reviews. The LIG revisited recommendations and actions associated with this theme and prioritised those which remained outstanding. In 2025/26, the father inclusive practice theme decreased in prevalent, evidencing the LIG's positive impact.

The Group will continue to use the Learning Themes Dashboard to monitor any re-emerging themes, also considering if there are specific areas of the county or ages of children it is most relevant to, in order to target intervention.

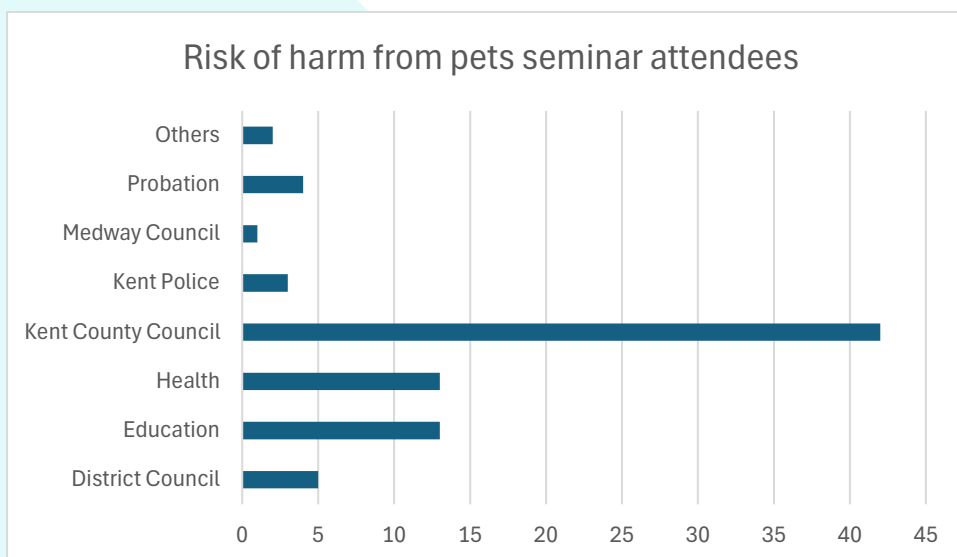
For further examples of how the LIG acts on and embeds learning, please see the sections below.

Acting on learning

Risk of Harm from Pets seminar

On 4th April 2025, the KSCMP hosted a Risk of Harm to Children from Pets seminar to share and act upon learning identified through a Kent Rapid Review. The seminar was attended by 83 professionals, with the agency breakdown of attendance shown in the chart below.

¹⁴ See page 17



A feedback form was sent to attendees after the event, to which 12 responses were received. The average rating for the seminar was 4.6 out of 5 and 10 of the respondents indicated they had learned something new to apply in their work.

“Very knowledgeable presenters who explained how this would be relevant to various job roles, including my own, for safeguarding purposes.”

“Providing clarity around action that can be taken where there are concerns about dangerous dogs. Additional information about other pets was also really informative.”

“I found it all very informative and how we as professionals can support those with children with dogs in the house and where we stand when visiting homes.”

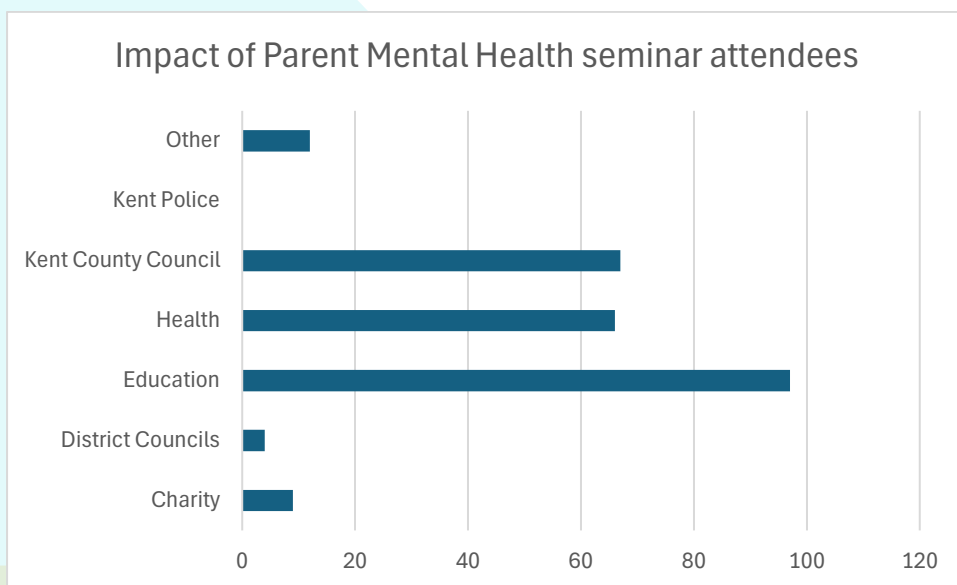
“I have a better understanding of what to do, if I have concerns about a pet in a child’s home during a home-visit.”

Risk of Harm to Children from Pets seminar attendees

The seminar was recorded and made available in the KSCMP MeLearning platform, so it can be accessed by those who could not attend on the day, and which has been completed 49 times.

I’m Lucy

On Thursday 19th June 2025 the KSCMP held a seminar on the Impact of Parent Mental Health on Children, which served as a launch for the ‘I’m Lucy’ resources. 255 people joined the event, with attendance by agency broken down in the chart below.



A feedback form was sent to attendees after the event, to which 32 responses were received. The average rating for the seminar was 4.53 out of 5, with all but one respondent indicating they learned something new that they could apply to their work. Respondents mostly indicated that key takeaways from the seminar were related to the 'I'm Lucy' resources and the concept that children should not be seen as protective factors for their parents' mental health, indicating these messages had a strong impact on attendees.

"Clearer understanding of how children are placed in a protective role and that their own needs are not always a major consideration."

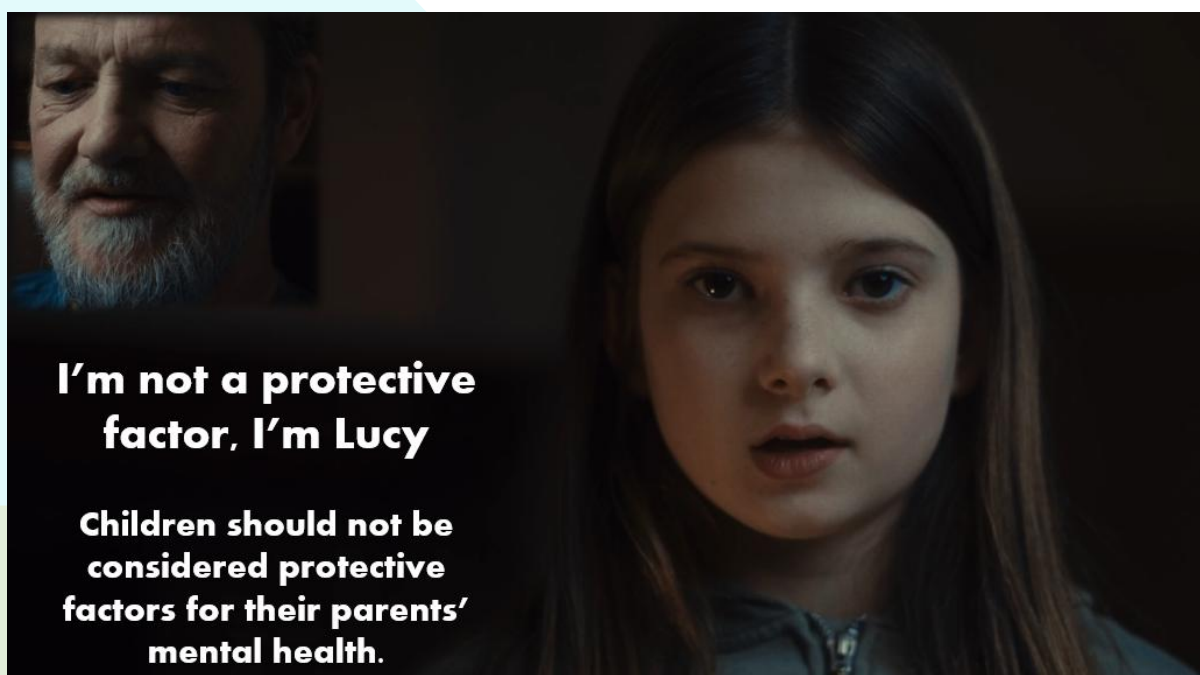
"The importance of looking at the whole picture and not considering the children as a protective actor in any family situation."

"Being more mindful around those parents where we know there to be mental health concerns and not to take on face value their engagement with us and other services necessarily being a sign that there are no concerns or means that there is no impact on the young person."

Impact of Parent Mental Health on Children seminar attendees

The KSCMP coordinated development of the 'I'm Lucy' resources which seek to highlight children should not be considered protective factors for their parent or carers' mental health, as the direct result of a LCSPR recommendation. The resources are outlined in the table below, showing the number of times they have been viewed/accessed up to the end of March 2026.

Resource	Views
I'm Lucy video	1,654
Reflection tool	148
Conversation tool	116
Understanding the impact of parent mental health on children factsheet	316



An evaluation of the use and impact of the resources will be undertaken in 2026, however, opportunities to measure the video's impact were created at its launch. During its screening at the KSCMP Conference in April 2025 and the seminar to promote associated resources, attendees were polled before and after watching to gain insight into its effectiveness at sharing the message, 'Children should not be considered protective factors for their parents' mental health.' The table below shows the average ratings.

Question	Rating (1-5, 1 low, 5 high)
Before: How likely are you to recall particular themes from a LCSPR?	3.0
Before: How likely are you to share a LCSPR report with a colleague?	3.2
After: How likely are you to remember the learning message behind a video?	4.5
After: How likely are to share a link to the video with a colleague?	4.4

Early findings therefore suggest that sharing learning from practice reviews in the form of a video such as 'I'm Lucy', as opposed to relying on more traditional reports and learning briefings, is likely to have a greater impact on practitioners.

Clear Minds, Safer Homes

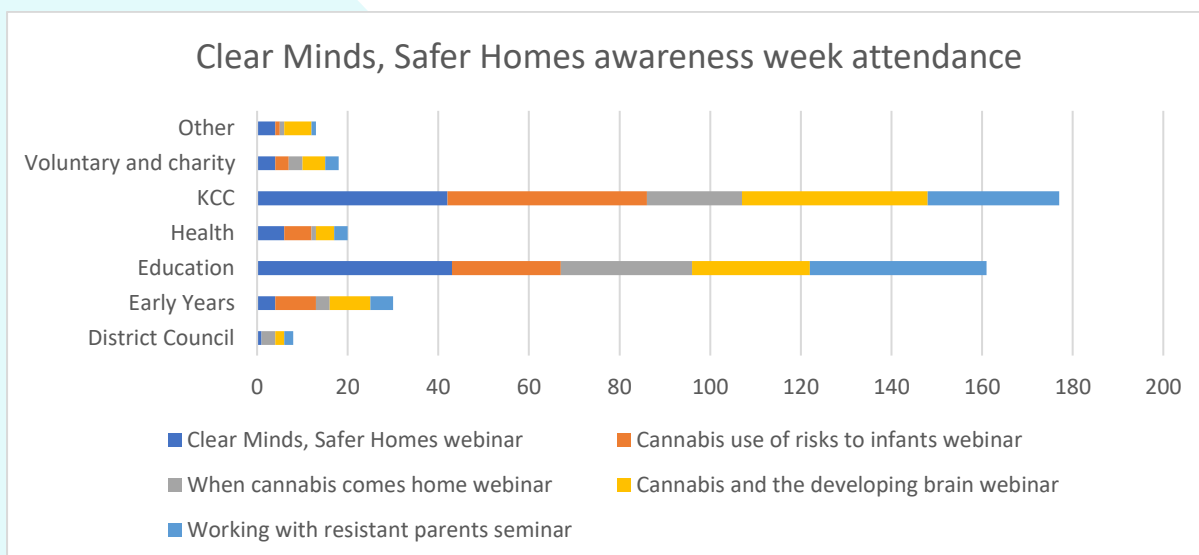


[Clear Minds, Safer Homes](#) is a KSCMP campaign to raise awareness of potential risks to children associated with parent and carer cannabis use. It was developed in response to learning identified in both Kent and national practice reviews, and specific recommendations of Kent LCSPRs. Its purpose is to raise awareness among professionals working with children and families about the potential risks posed by parental cannabis use.

The campaign has been delivered in two phases. Phase one launched on 6th October 2025 with the publication of an initial suite of resources to inform and support practitioners. Phase two commenced with an awareness week 16th-20th March 2026, which saw delivery of a learning event each day (recorded and subsequently added to the KSCMP training portal to be accessed alongside e-learning), as well as launch of additional resources and training. The resources are outlined in the table below, showing the number of times they have been viewed/accessed up to the end of March 2026. Two further training resources will be made available during 2026: an e-learning course and an interactive workshop.

Resource	Views
Responding to concerns about parental cannabis use practice guidance	521
Cannabis and parenting: what professionals need to know factsheet	543
When cannabis comes home poster	356
Cannabis use conversation tool	285
Cannabis and parenting leaflet for parents	597
When cannabis comes home video	53
Clear Minds, Safer Homes recorded webinar	1
Risks to infants and babies recorded webinar	0
When cannabis comes home recorded webinar	2
Cannabis impact on the developing brain recorded webinar	2
Engaging with resistant parents recorded seminar	3

The awareness week was well attended by a range of professionals and agencies, with positive reception and engagement from attendees. Attendance at the events is shown by agency in the chart below.



A feedback form was circulated to attendees of awareness week events, to which 19 responses we received. Respondents overwhelmingly found the week beneficial with 95% indicating the content was very useful, and the additional 1 respondent rating it as somewhat useful. All respondents indicated that they were likely to use the campaign resources in their practice. Feedback indicated that respondents valued factual, informative, non-biased content and the presenter's expertise, as well as repeatedly referencing the benefit of practical aids for conversations and assessment in practice.

"More confidence when using professional challenge, and I'm using the CMSH resources with several families!"

"A better understanding of how to work with families where cannabis use is a factor so that children in such families are better safeguarded."

"I feel more knowledgeable about the issue and therefore more able to have conversations with young people about cannabis use and able to support them to make informed choices about it."

"I feel more confident to advise practitioners about working with parents who use cannabis."

Clear Minds, Safer Homes awareness week attendees

An evaluation will be undertaken to provide insight into the usage and impact of the campaign. Both quantitative and qualitative information will be sought in order to provide an assessment of reach and effectiveness. The evaluation will be reported to the KSCMP Executive in late 2026. Anecdotal feedback has been received about the campaign and the resources, which has been overwhelmingly positive, and the KSCMP has been approached by other Partnerships seeking to create their own similar resources. A Kent district council also used the campaign resources and principles to create their own bespoke leaflet, which was subsequently shared with the KSCMP District Council Safeguarding Group.

"I recently came across your infographic for the 'Clear Minds Safer Homes' campaign on LinkedIn, and I just wanted to say how fantastic it looks and what a great start you have had with the campaign!"

I also wanted to share that our school is currently working towards the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA), which includes strengthening communication with families and sharing valuable resources from our partner agencies. With that in mind, shortly after your campaign materials were published, we sent a letter to all 250 families in our school community, including your resources as part of our outreach.

Cannabis use among parents is a real concern in our school community, and we have been working hard to engage families in a supportive and constructive way. I am pleased to share that we're already seeing a positive impact with some key families."

Assistant Headteacher, Kent Secondary School

Section Five: Key decisions and actions taken by Safeguarding Partners

Lead Safeguarding Partner decisions

The Lead Safeguarding Partners met in November 2025 in order to review the overall effectiveness of the KSCMP, taking assurance on safeguarding activity, scrutiny arrangements and system leadership. They received updates on the Partnership's response to serious incidents, practice reviews and inspections, noting strong multi-agency responsiveness, positive feedback from the recent Ofsted ILACS inspection and examples of effective partnership working. The Independent Scrutineer highlighted strengths in subgroup activity and practice review quality, whilst also raising concerns about the maturity and clarity of scrutiny governance, particularly the role and responsibilities of the SAAS. The LSPs agreed that scrutiny arrangements were improving but required further embedding and clearer oversight.

The meeting also considered financial sustainability, with agreement in principle that Safeguarding Partner contributions required increasing to address budget pressures, and a commitment to progress a 'right-sized' budget for future years. The LSPs also agreed to rotate the chair of the LSP group in line with the KSCMP arrangements, confirming that Kent and Medway NHS Integrated Care Board (KMICB) will assume the chair role.

Decisions made by the LSPs in 2025/26 include:

- Scrutiny governance and implementation to be considered at a future LSP meeting.
- Learning themes emerging from practice reviews and persistent challenges in implementing actions to be considered at a future LSP meeting.
- Endorsement of the KSCMP 2026-27 priorities and strategic plan.
- Sign-off of the revised KSCMP Arrangements, Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, and Practice Improvement Framework.
- To 'right size' the KSCMP budget to ensure the Partnership has sufficient funding to meet its obligations and ambitions.

Executive decisions

The KSCMP Executive (the Delegated Safeguarding Partners) have continued to meet frequently in both scheduled and extraordinary meetings throughout the year, providing strategic leadership with a sustained focus on learning from harm and readiness for significant national and local reform. A notable area of activity was the oversight of practice reviews and serious incident responses, including scrutiny of recurring learning themes, review backlogs and escalation where agreed actions were not being progress at pace.

The Executive also shaped the Partnership's strategic direction, agreeing to refocus the KSCMP strategic priorities for 2026/27¹⁵ on three clear outcomes: fewer children experiencing abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Executive further considered updates to the Partnership's arrangements, ensuring alignment with Working Together and reinforcing clear escalation pathways. Particular attention was given to strengthening scrutiny governance, clarifying the role of the subgroups, and supporting the Independent Scrutineer through the development of a structured scrutiny workplan.

The Executive gave significant attention to preparation for, and response to, national policy and system change, including the Families First reforms and the development of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs). The Executive agreed key design principles for MACPTs, including multi-agency ownership, workforce experience, and flexibility to respond to local government reorganisation and wider health and policing reforms. The Executive also considered evidence and assurance from audits, data dashboards and benchmarking activity, using this intelligence to guide decision-making on child sexual abuse strategy development, exploitation responses, education engagement and learning and development priorities.

Financial sustainability was another key area of Executive activity, scrutinising the Partnership's budget position and acknowledging risks posed by rising costs and static contributions. The Executive agreed that Safeguarding Partner funding would need to be reviewed and 'right-sized' for future years.

Decisions made by the Executive in 2025/26 include:

- A KSCMP response to the CSPRP's briefing on race and racism to be developed by both SAAS and LIG.
- Agreed recommendations of the Training Needs Analysis to be implemented¹⁶.
- Agreed recommendations in response to the Learning Support and Capability Project Report.
- Agreed 2026-27 KSCMP priorities and strategic plan.
- Sign-off of the revised KSCMP Arrangements, Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, and Practice Improvement Framework.
- The KSCMP Child Exploitation Oversight Group to undertake local benchmarking against the Casey Audit of group-based child sexual exploitation¹⁷.
- Safeguarding Partners to increase the annual funding contribution to the KSCMP.
- Endorsed the KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse action plan.
- Endorsed a review of the Kent Support Levels Guidance to be undertaken.
- Endorsed a Kent LCSPR.

¹⁵ See page 49

¹⁶ See page 50

¹⁷ See page 13

- Defined key principles and boundaries for the development of MACPTs in Kent.
- A Scrutiny Plan to be developed to focus work of the Independent Scrutineer.
- Introduction of a training administration charge for non-financially contributing partners.

Section Six: Financial breakdown and value for money

Funding arrangements

Breakdown of funding from each Safeguarding Partner

Agency	Contributions in 2025/2026
Kent County Council	£325,520.53
Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board	£62,662.95
Kent Health providers	£53,711.10
Kent Police	£45,933.98
District and Borough Councils	£18,000
Kent, Surrey and Sussex Probation Service	£2,910.40
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	£5,000
Training income	£42,308
Total	£556,046.96

Changes to funding arrangements compared to previous years

Following detailed assessments, triangulating the KSCMP's financial position, agreed work programmes aligning with the Partnership's priorities and projected operating costs for future financial years, the KSCMP LSPs and Executive agreed to an uplift in financial contributions from Kent Police and KMICB statutory Safeguarding Partner agencies. This 'right sizing' of the KSCMP budget puts the Partnership in a strong position to continue to deliver a comprehensive programme of work that is focused on addressing identified areas for improvement as well as building on areas of strength.

Breakdown of Partnership expenditure

Expenditure	Amount
Staffing (including Independent Scrutineer)	£465,681.98
Learning and development	£62,393.37
Practice Reviews	£11,247.50
IT	£13,916.71
Other	£2,807.40
Total	£556,046.96

Assessment of impact and value for money

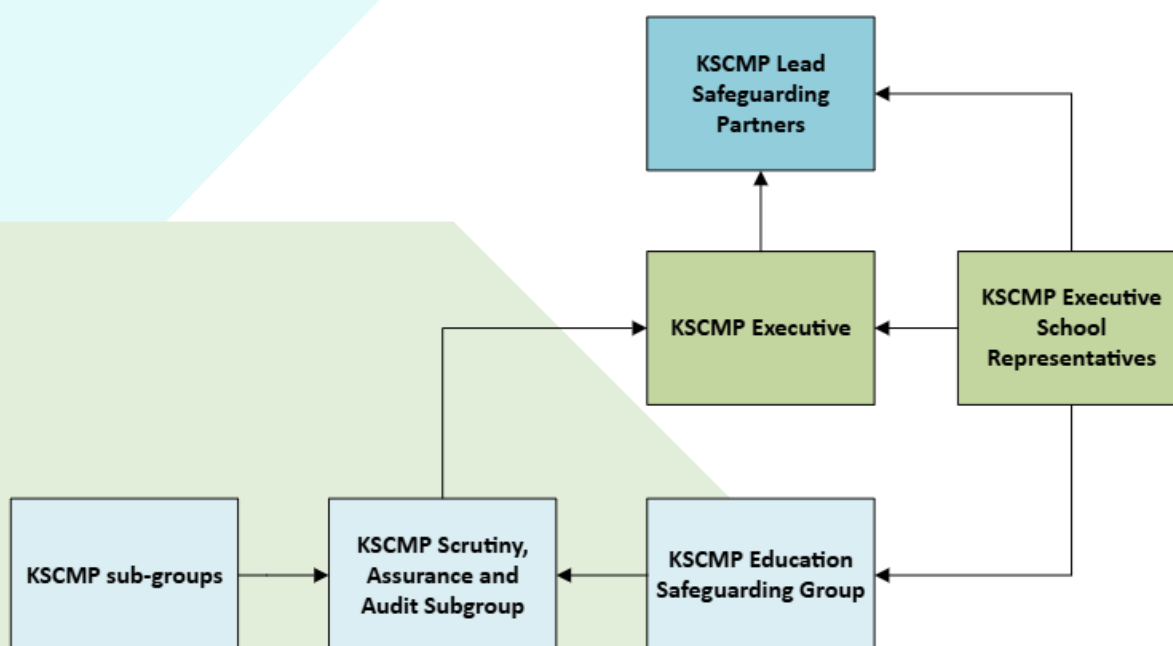
Whilst coordinating a large number of activities and projects, the KSCMP works hard to really assess the 'so what?' question – how do we know we are doing the right things and how do we know they are making a difference? The Partnership has a number of approaches that we use to help us answer these questions and one is our process of formal scrutiny. The KSCMP's Independent Scrutineer can 'deep dive into any area of Partnership work she deems merit her attention to assure herself, and the Partnership as a whole, that we are doing the right things in the right way. The Partnership subgroups also provide forum for partner agencies to hold each other to account and constructively challenge one another – most notably the SAAS which oversees Partnership performance holistically and our LIG, which works to translate LCSPR recommendations into achievable and measurable actions the evidence against which is then assessed by this multi-agency group of professionals to ensure its sufficiency. The Partnership also undertakes benchmarking exercises to assess our performance, patterns and local presentations of harm against national learning – both in relation to reports issued by the national CSPRP or against inspection frameworks (both single and JTAI frameworks). To add to this, the Partnership also undertakes a comprehensive multi-agency audit programme to better understand areas of challenge and assess whether work we are undertaking to address concerns are making a difference.

We also know we are making a difference by whether we are able to effect national change. As a direct result of the KSCMP's EatSafe campaign and subsequent liaison between the Partnership and Department for Education (DfE), there have been significant changes made to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. The Partnership was also consulted on the whole document and supported the updating of the allergy section of the guidance, again drawing directly on findings and learning from our practice reviews. On top of this the Partnership helped co-produce updates to the EYFS nutrition guidance again using what we have learnt from relevant practice reviews to inform particularly the sections related to allergies. We use all these mechanisms to assess where we are in terms of our individual and collective provision, how we measure up against national learning and best practice, and to help us work out where to best target our efforts and focus our attention in order to make a measurable difference for children, to ensure we are using our resources effectively, that Partnership investment is appropriately aligned to our priorities and outcomes set out in our strategic plan.

Section Seven: Representation of education sector

Education representation in the Partnership

The structure chart below gives an overview of how education is represented within the KSCMP.



Representation in Partnership Leadership

Strategic education representation in the KSCMP was established in response to the requirements of Working Together 2023, enhancing the existing Partnership Education Safeguarding Group. The KSCMP Executive membership was extended to include two Kent school leaders, one primary and one secondary representing both local authority maintained and academy schools, who began to attend KSCMP Executive meetings from January 2025.

The role of the school representatives is to provide a view from a Kent school leader, not to represent or speak on behalf of all schools or education in Kent, which individual school leaders are not able to do. They act in an advisory capacity, to enable the KSCMP Executive to consider a school perspective in their discussions and decision making. The KSCMP Arrangements also outline that the representatives will be invited to attend the LSP meetings. Whilst this was not possible in 2025 owing to the LSP meetings still being established, the representatives have been invited to the planned LSP meetings in 2026/27.

Education Safeguarding Group

The Education Safeguarding Group has a core group of members from across the education sector as well as a range of KCC services. The Group has met four times this year. Over the past six months, the Group's membership was expanded to strengthen the education voice contributing to Partnership learning and strategic development. This has resulted in improved representation from early years settings, alongside the inclusion of additional secondary school representatives and an independent school representative. The Group now has 20 members from a wide variety of education establishments across Kent.

The Group provides a structured forum through which education influences Partnership learning, identifies emerging risks, supports dissemination of practice review learning and national developments, and comments on priorities.

Education Engagement Events

The KSCMP began hosting twice annual education engagement events in 2025/26, to offer an opportunity for education settings to hear about and engage directly Partnership activities.

In May 2025 the first two virtual events were attended by a total of 165 education colleagues. Each event covered the same agenda, focusing on how education is represented in the Partnership, promoting training, education relevant resources, practice review learning, and the role and work of the KSCMP Education Safeguarding Group. Feedback was sought from attendees about future agenda items they would like covered.

In November 2025 the second set of events were held, attended by 112 education colleagues. These covered learning from the LCSPR 'James', updates on education relevant Partnership activity, an overview of the Navigate Wellbeing resource, and an update from Kent Police on Operation Encompass.

Education Newsletter

A bespoke KSCMP education newsletter supports improved safeguarding awareness, consistency in practice and engagement with training and relevant updates for those working in the education sector.

Five KSCMP education newsletters were circulated in this year:

- [May 2025](#) viewed 1,072 times
- [July 2025](#) viewed 597 times
- [October 2025](#) viewed 472 times
- [January 2026](#) viewed 1,502 times
- [March 2026](#) viewed 874 times¹⁸

¹⁸ Views are as at 31/03/26

Outreach

In 2025/26, the KSCMP maintained strong engagement with The Education People (TEP) and KCC's LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS) through regular representation at key network meetings.

In December 2025, the KSCMP Business Team presented an overview of key Partnership activity and learning particularly relevant to early years providers at the TEP Early Years and Childcare Service Away Day. Engagement with TEP, who offer direct support and guidance to early years providers, ensures they have up-to-date information about KSCMP work and priorities to share onwards. Through the away day, links were made to consult with early years providers on the impact of the EatSafe campaign, and members were identified for the working group currently developing its second phase.

Attendance at relevant network meetings also supported KSCMP engagement with the education sector. Throughout February 2026, the KSCMP Business Team attended TEP Early Years and Childcare network sessions to highlight and share education relevant materials produced by the Partnership on a wide range of themes. LESAS Designated Safeguarding Lead meetings were also attended by the KSCMP Business Team to share Partnership resources, notably the mental health and wellbeing signposting work.

This has supported improved communication with a wide range of education settings, strengthened sector awareness of KSCMP resources, and helped ensure key safeguarding messages reach practitioners across the county.

Section Eight: Use of data and information sharing

Data

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Partnership uses a range of data to support continuous learning and improvement and to strengthen outcomes for children and families. Data relating to learning themes from Rapid Reviews, audits, training activity, and Partnership communications is analysed and triangulated to identify risks, test the effectiveness of practice, and inform proportionate multi-agency action.

The Partnership draws on a wide range of data sources, including multi-agency audit findings, performance dashboards, practice reviews, and workforce development data, to build comprehensive understanding of safeguarding practice across the system. This enables the identification of both strengths and systemic gaps, including issues relating to thresholds, assessment quality, the child's voice and information sharing.

The Partnership routinely collects and reviews a range of performance, learning and engagement data aligned with the current KSCMP priorities. This includes performance dashboards and trend data, learning themes dashboards, workforce development and training data, and engagement with safeguarding resources. This data comes from a wide range of partners including KCC ICS, Kent Police and Health partners, alongside data held by the KSCMP Business Team in relation to their own work. As previously highlighted in this report, the SAAS group supported the development of clearer, scorecard style reporting aligned to the KSCMP Strategic Plan, improving the ability of the Partnership to monitor progress, identify emerging risks and focus improvement activity where it is most needed. This scorecard approach will monitor the 43 success measures of the Strategic Plan. Data and audits are reviewed through established governance structures (SAAS and the Executive) and are used to monitor progress, identify emerging issues, and ensure that improvement activity remains responsive and proportionate.

Data is routinely used to inform targeted improvement activity, including the development of action plans, training programmes, and policy updates. For example, findings from multi-agency audits have identified areas requiring strengthening, such as awareness of the LADO and safer recruitment procedures (Section 11 2024), use of the escalation policy, consistency of online training across agencies, which have directly informed Partnership improvement plans and workforce development activity.

This approach is contributing to improved multi-agency working and practice quality. Audit evidence indicates strengthened information sharing and escalation, alongside a reduction in some previously recurring themes. In addition, projects such as the EatSafe campaign have used engagement and feedback data to refine resources and improve their reach and effectiveness, supporting safer practice across education settings.

Overall, this approach ensures that data is used dynamically across the Partnership to inform understanding, drive improvement, and provide robust assurance of safeguarding effectiveness. By combining performance data, audit findings and learning from practice, the Partnership is able to identify risk at an earlier stage, respond proportionately and strengthen multi-agency practice. As a result, KSCMP hopes that children and families benefit from more timely, informed and consistent safeguarding responses, with ongoing work to improve measurable and sustained improvement across the system.

Section Nine: Implementation of national reforms

Families First Partnership Programme

The Kent Families First Partnership Programme aims to ensure that every child and family in Kent, as appropriate, has access to tailored support from the right professionals at the earliest opportunity. Through improved multi-agency collaboration, integrated strengths-based services and enhanced workforce development, the Programme's goal is to empower children and families to thrive, build resilience and reach their full potential. The Programme has brought together Safeguarding Partner agencies to design and deliver the new approaches to practice, in-line with legislation and guidance. Shared commitments are set out in the Family First Vision, Strategic Partnership Agreement and governance arrangements, focusing on integrated delivery, joint planning, and effective data sharing.

KCC leads programme coordination, working to ensure integration across Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education. Kent Police and KMICB are contributing to the design and implementation of the Programme at both operational and strategic levels e.g. all Safeguarding Partner agencies are standing members of the Families First Programme Board. The KSCMP Executive and LSP Board are provided with updates in relation to the Programme progress and endorse key elements of Programme activity. Both groups also provide an advisory function in relation to progress and deliverables whilst the Kent Strategic Reset Programme Board provides oversight and assurance on progress, quality, and delivery.

Section Ten: Strategic Priorities

2024-26 Partnership Priorities

The 2024-26 KSCMP priorities were:

- **Mental health of children and young people:** Children to be supported in their social and emotional wellbeing and attunement and receive early intervention in line with their needs.
- **Impact of parent mental health:** Children not to be unsafe due to parental mental health needs.
- **Effective multi-agency working:** Professionals to be courageous and confident in multi-agency working, being able to share information and risk effectively.
- **Online safety:** Children to be supported to be safe online and be able to access advice and support where needed.

The 2024-26 Strategic Plan set out what activity the Partnership expected to undertake and how progress would be measured. Delivery of the plan was monitored via SAAS quarterly, as well as the priority data dashboard, which outlined key data associated with the priority themes. At the end of the two-year plan cycle in December 2025, 24 of the 31 actions had been completed, with 2 others discontinued, and 2 in progress and expected to be completed. The chart below provides an overview of the actions status.



Mental Health of Children and Young People

In 2025/26 the Partnership commissioned an LCSPR where exploring professional understanding of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLs) thresholds and their

application is a key line of enquiry. At the time of writing, a first draft of the report is pending.

Collated learning from Kent practice reviews relevant to the mental health of children and young people was also presented to the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Network.

The KSCMP Business Team submitted evidence to the Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy 2026-2030 consultation, consolidating system learning identified as a result of Kent Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs.

The KSCMP has also ran a further Youth Mental Health First Aid course in this year, which was completed by 18 professionals.

Navigate Wellbeing: Mental Health signposting for education settings



In response to feedback from the Education Safeguarding Group highlighting difficulties accessing the wealth of mental health resources that are on offer to them at times of crisis, KSCMP convened a dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group to co-design a practical solution with education practitioners. This work led to the development of the [Navigate Wellbeing: Mental Health signposting for education settings resource](#), launched in November 2025, which provides clear, accessible signposting to support. It has been positively received across the sector, demonstrating strong engagement and ongoing demand as a tool that supports day-to-day safeguarding practice for education professionals working with and supporting children and families in Kent. The initial version of the tool had **been downloaded 342 times** and version 2 was launched in 25th March 2026. The tool contains live links and so is reviewed and refreshed quarterly with additional themes and updated links.

“The fact that it has information suitable for school professionals, the child and parents in one place. We also find the split into proactive/preventative, short and long term support very useful. Though we will carry out due diligence, it is helpful to know that the resources have been pre-vetted as being suitable. The areas covered are comprehensive. We have previously collated all this information ourselves so having it in this format, and regularly updated, for all our pastoral and SEND team members to use is great and we can pick and choose the most suitable resources. Thank you for your work on this.”

Education professional

“Self-harm, Bereavement and Anxiety resources and sign posting. It really [sic] useful to have all the potential support and resources on one document.”

Education professional

Impact of Parent Mental Health

As highlighted earlier in this report¹⁹ this year saw the Partnership complete development of and launch a video campaign, ‘I’m Lucy’ which seeks to raise awareness of the fact that children should not be considered protective factors for their parent or carer’s mental health.

Audit of Children as Protective Factors

Kent and Medway Mental Health Service (KMMH – formerly Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust) undertook an audit and reported findings to LIG, evidencing the extent to which learning that children should not be seen as protective factors for their parent or carer’s mental health had been embedded in practice. KMMH reported how the learning from the audit had already been acted on to support further improvement and would continue to be considered in future. The audit is a strong example of LIG’s intended audit and assurance cycle, demonstrating how recommendations from reviews lead to tangible practice changes and follow-up.

Effective Multi-agency Working

Escalation

Consistent and appropriate use of escalation processes has continued to be an area of learning identified in Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs. Previous annual reports have highlighted efforts undertaken to build assurance and promote the use of escalation processes. Following further exploration by LIG and the Policy and Procedure

¹⁹ See page 28

Group, as well as learning from Rapid Reviews in this year, the Kent Escalation and Professional Challenge Policy was comprehensively revised and a new [Kent Safeguarding Children Escalation Procedure](#) published in March 2026. The revised procedure places emphasis on the professional duty to use the escalation procedure where a concern is held about the action or inaction of another agency to safeguard a child, as well as clearly outlining responsibilities of those receiving escalations (for example, to respond within given timeframes, and provide relevant contact details to support escalation). Further supporting resources will be developed in 2026 to promote the procedure and professional responsibilities.

In addition, further related actions have been agreed from Rapid Reviews, including KCC's LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS) amending training for education to be more explicit in outlining the requirement to use the escalation process when relevant, and a similar request being made to TEP to include the responsibility within the template child protection policy for education providers.

Information Sharing

In response to consistent learning identified regarding a lack of confidence in information sharing and building upon previous activities to support practitioners in sharing information to safeguard children appropriately, a new video explainer '[consent and safeguarding children](#)' was developed by the KSCMP. Following publication in August 2025 it has been **viewed 317 times** up to the end of March 2026.

Following sharing of the video explainer, a school contacted the KSCMP to express thanks for the resource and also request consideration be given to developing a similar video which considers the transfer of safeguarding files within education. The KSCMP recognised this as another area of learning which had been identified in practice reviews, as well as an area which had been considered by the KSCMP Education Safeguarding Group previously, and so produced a video explainer '[sharing education safeguarding files](#)'. Following publication in January 2026 it has been **viewed 147 times** up to the end of March 2026.

Online Safety

As reported elsewhere in this report²⁰ an audit was undertaken of single agency training regarding online safety. In addition LIG continued to track an action arising from a LCSPR to seek assurance from agencies on how the use of social media and online spaces is factored into agencies' assessments of risks and needs of children.

The KSCMP learning and development programme continued to include commissioned Online Safety training this year, with a further 4 workshops held **attended by 84 professionals**.

²⁰ See page 14

2026-27 Partnership Priorities

The KSCMP Arrangements and the Scrutiny and Assurance Framework outline an expectation that each KSCMP subgroup and Relevant Agency will contribute towards the agreed priorities, with progress against the strategic plan monitored by 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. The Partnership priorities are to deliver a safeguarding system which means that:

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

In recognition that these priorities are broad in nature, areas of focus have also been identified within each priority. These areas of focus, alongside the clear success measures, and Partnership activities are outlined in the [KSCMP Strategic Plan 2026-27](#). The plan came into effect in January 2026, with a new performance data pack agreed with SAAS to enable oversight of progress of success measures.

Section Eleven: Workforce development and capacity

Workforce

There are a number of challenges facing the multi-agency workforce in Kent, in common with the national picture. Recruitment and retention is a perennial challenge particularly in specialist areas, and agencies continue to work to maintain workforce stability and resilience. This situation may be compounded as we move into a time of strategic change, with the Families First Programme, Local Government Reorganisation, changes within health and the reforms that are anticipated within policing. The Partnership is mindful of this and agencies will continue to work together to ensure developments and risks are monitored and discussed to aid our collective understanding and, where appropriate, to facilitate joint action. Moreover, the Partnership works to ensure multi-agency training and development opportunities are available to all partners and that we are championing a Partnership-wide learning culture as well as pursuing opportunities to strengthen multi-agency practice and collaboration.

KSCMP Learning & Development Programme

Training Needs Analysis

A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was completed and discussed with the KSCMP Executive in May 2025. The TNA found that overall the existing KSCMP Learning and Development programme offers a broad and suitable range of training which learners indicate has a positive impact on their practice. The gap analysis did not highlight significant areas as being 'missing' from the programme, with only two themes identified where further development is recommended, and a third area identified for consideration in regards to education specific content within KSCMP training.

The TNA did highlight that delivery and take-up of training is at times a challenge. The KSCMP Business Team does not have a training delivery resource, necessitating reliance on volunteers from partner organisations through the Associate Trainer programme, which has reciprocal benefits but also brings challenges in consistency and availability, and restricts the ability to offer more effective and interactive training courses.

The TNA made five recommendations, all of which were accepted by the KSCMP Executive, as well as additional actions being identified to take forward. Developments and activities agreed include:

- Incorporation of the 'I'm Lucy' resources into relevant KSCMP courses.

- Development of standalone Safer Recruitment training and resources, which are not only education specific.
- Review of KSCMP developed training courses content to incorporate case studies which share the voice of children and families, including positive practice examples.
- Development of education specific training content, including in relation to the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, to the KSCMP training offer.
- Development of an information overview of the KSCMP Learning and Development offer with links to the KSCMP training catalogue and portal, to share with partner agencies and encourage sharing to new staff as part of induction or internal safeguarding training.

The TNA also acknowledged the need for the programme to keep pace with changes in legislation and policy over the coming months, with considerations required about what the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and Crime and Policing Bill might mean in terms of the Partnership training needs. This will be kept under review by the KSCMP Business Team and reported via the regular learning and development reports to the LIG.

Training administration charge

Following the TNA and in the context of Partnership consideration of future financial sustainability, the KSCMP Executive agreed to implement a training administration charge from 1st April 2026. A £50 charge will be introduced for each attendance at a delivered training course for attendees who are from organisations that do not financially contribute to the Partnership. E-learning and recorded webinars will continue to be free to access for all learners, and the charge will not apply to courses delivered by the Kent and Medway Prevent Team or those which are directly funded. A process has also been introduced for small voluntary and community organisations to be able to apply for an exemption to the charge. Implementation of the charge and its impact on the accessibility and attendance of Partnership courses will be evaluated after six months.

KSCMP Training – e-learning

One new e-learning course was added to the KSCMP e-learning offer this year, exploring the Kent Practice Framework. The framework was developed in response to government reforms for multi-agency working when safeguarding children and strengthens the approach to how partners work with children and families in Kent. The e-learning course gives an overview of the six Practice Framework components and has been **completed 116 times** since it went live in August 2025.

In 2025/26 there were **49,579 completions** of e-learning courses by learners in Kent, a 14.5% increase on 2024/25. The chart below shows the courses with over 1,000 completions in this reporting year.



KSCMP Training – recorded webinars

A further eight recorded webinars were added to the KSCMP learning and development programme this year. Seven are highlighted elsewhere in this report and are recordings of live webinars and seminars; Risk of harm to children from pets seminar, Impact of Parent Mental Health on Children seminar, and the five Clear Minds, Safer Homes webinars. The final recorded webinar produced this year was Safer Recruitment for Non-Education Organisations, which was developed in response to findings from the TNA.

The KSCMP recorded webinars were **completed 2,972 times** in this year. The table below provides an overview of completions by course.

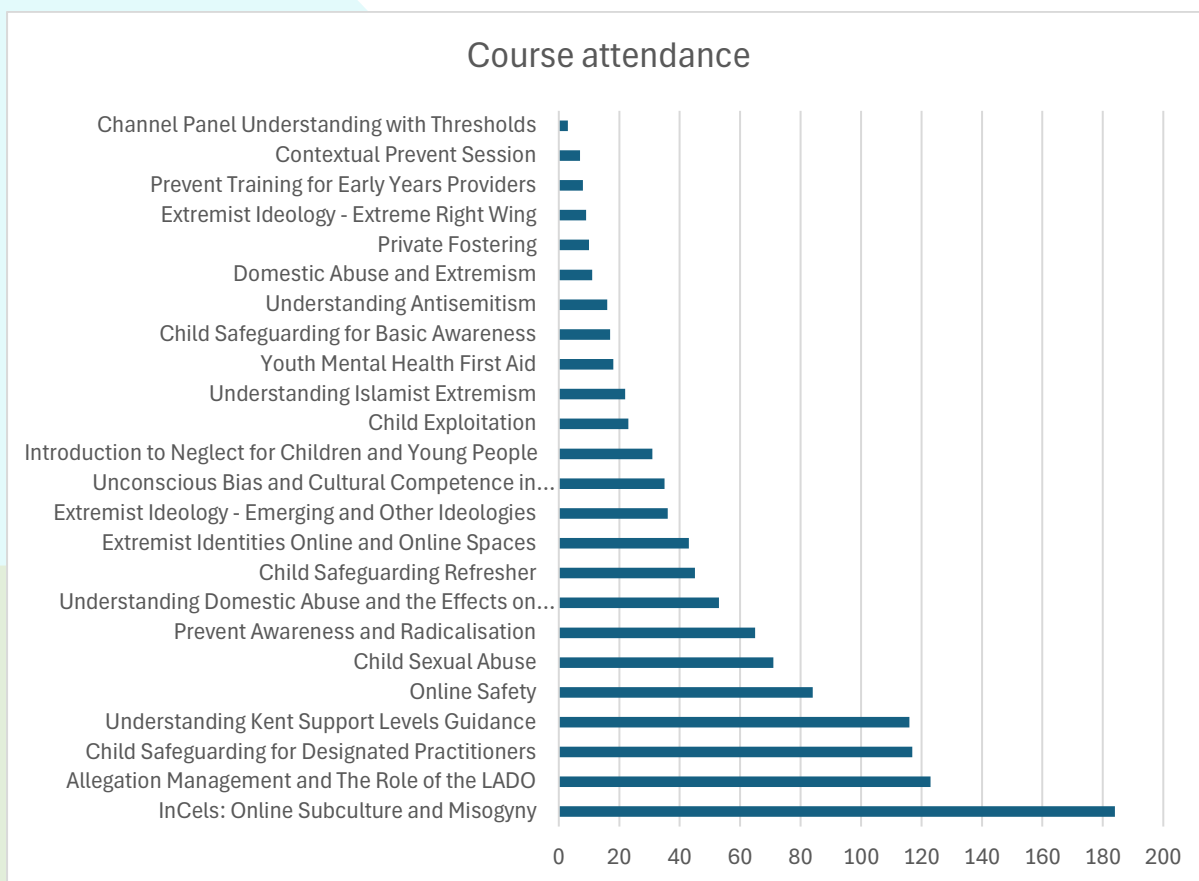
Course title	Completions
Cannabis and the Developing Brain	2
Child Exploitation Intelligence Portal	87
Clear Minds, Safer Homes	1
Cumulative Harm seminar	96
EatSafe: Safer Eating in Early Years Settings	1,882
Elective Home Education	115
Impact of Parent Mental Health on Children seminar	82
Providing Agency Reports for Practice Reviews	122
Public Law Outline and Pre-Proceedings	45
Rapid Reviews: Purpose and Agency Roles	73
Report Writing for Child Protection Conference	142
Risk of Harm to Children from Pets seminar	48
Role of LCSPR Panel Members	98
Safer Recruitment for Non-Education Organisations	103
Understanding Kent Father Inclusive Guidance	71
When Cannabis Comes Home	2
Working with Resistant Parents seminar	3
TOTAL	2,972

Note: the five webinars associated with the Clear Minds, Safer Homes campaign were only made live a week before the end of the reporting year.

KSCMP Training – delivered

One new delivered course was included into the KSCMP learning and development programme in 2025/26, the Understanding and Responding to Child Exploitation course. The Partnership had ambitions for a local child exploitation course for some time, which it was able to develop this year following completed revision of the Kent and Medway Child Exploitation Identification Tool.

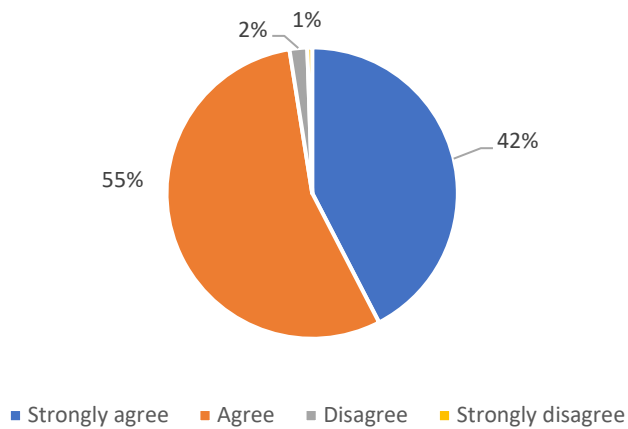
In this year, KSCMP delivered courses have been **attended 1,147 times**. The chart below shows attendance breakdown by course.



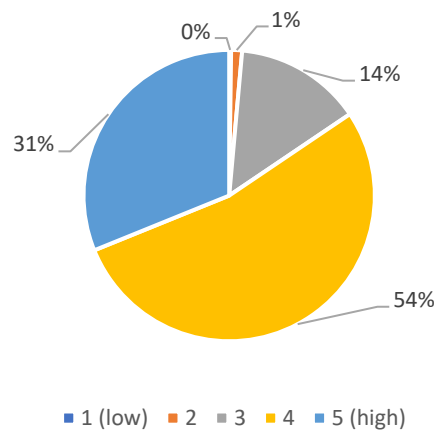
Impact of training

Feedback is routinely collected from learners who complete KSCMP training, looking to ascertain both views on the quality and content as well as evidence of impact of learning on professionals' knowledge. The feedback data is collated within the Partnership learning and development dashboard, reviewed regularly by the KSCMP Business Team and in quarterly reports to LIG. The charts below show feedback gathered from learners since July 2022 when the new training portal came online. Due to the way the MeLearning system records feedback, it is not possible to break feedback down by the date a course was completed, only by when it was submitted. As it is not possible to know whether feedback submitted relates to recent or older completion of learning, the feedback is viewed in totality. Whilst the chart represents feedback related to all KSCMP courses (e-learning, recorded webinars and delivered courses), it can be filtered by individual course and is reviewed by course to identify any specific issues or feedback.

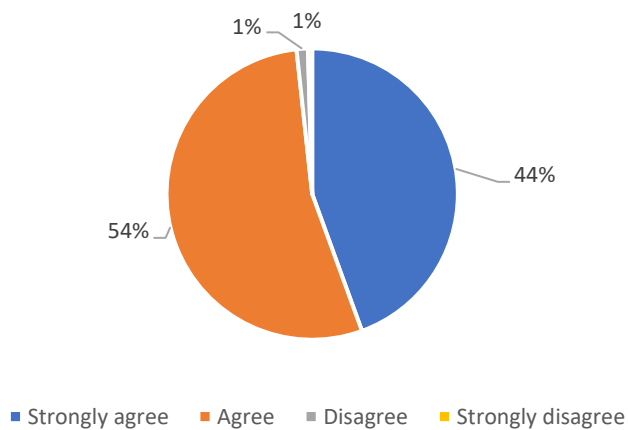
To what extent do you agree that the course was engaging and interesting?



How would you rate your level of knowledge after completing the course?



To what extent would agree you have improved knowledge after completing the course?



“Very clear, detailed, and thorough course, answered a lot of my questions and helped me become more knowledgeable in this area.”

“An excellent course which looked at DA and the impact on children in a much broader context which is both accurate and helpful.”

“The course was clear, informative, and easy to follow. It gave a good understanding of safeguarding principles. I feel more confident in recognising and responding to concerns.”

KSCMP learners

Section Twelve: Future planning

Planned activities for 2026-27

Partnership Conference 2026

In May 2026 the KSCMP will build on last year's conference by hosting its second in-person event, open to a range of agencies and professionals. Agenda items include the revised KSCMP priorities, local responses to Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation, practice review learning and hearing directly about a family's experience of being engaged in a Kent LCSPR.

Section 11 – Review and planning for 2026 audit

Through its focus on leadership, governance, workforce capability, information sharing and multi-agency working, the Section 11 audit provides critical assurance that organisations are discharging their statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. By identifying strengths and areas for development across agencies, the audit supports early identification of practice gaps that could otherwise impact the quality or consistency of safeguarding responses experienced by children and families.

Planning for the 2026 Section 11 audit built directly on the strengths and learning from the 2024 cycle, including positive feedback about the electronic audit system, reducing panel meeting times to a focused two-hour, and the use of survey data packs to support triangulation. The 2024 audit saw strong partner engagement and a significant increase in survey responses, which reinforced the decision to maintain the same overall structure and joint approach with Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2026.

Several improvements have taken place ready for 2026, including refining success criteria wording and updating survey questions to reflect new Partnership priorities, alongside seeking more in relation to implementation of practice review learning, and exploring enhancements within the electronic audit system. These changes aim to strengthen clarity, consistency, and the overall quality of evidence submitted, and the link between audit findings and safeguarding practice.

The 2026 audit will follow a similar timetable to 2024, launching in May 2026 with submissions due by early September, panel meetings in October, second stage of audit submission in November and analysis completed by December ahead of reporting in early 2027.

Learning in Practice events

In 2026/27 the KSCMP Business Team is running three pilot events designed to support professionals currently working with children and families where needs are complex and escalating. These sessions will draw on learning from Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs to provide a structured, supportive space to think through real-life

challenges in practice, supporting direct work with families and the development of multi-agency action plans. The sessions will be fully evaluated to measure impact.

Section Thirteen: Conclusion

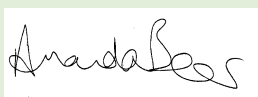
Conclusion by the Lead Safeguarding Partners

This annual report demonstrates our collective commitment as Lead Safeguarding Partners to maintaining robust, effective and collaborative safeguarding arrangements for children in Kent. Over the last year, the Partnership has continued to operate within a challenging and evolving landscape, marked by increasing demand, workforce pressures and significant national reform. Despite this, partners have remained focused on learning from harm, responding to scrutiny and inspection, and strengthening the system's ability to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

As Lead Safeguarding Partners, we have taken assurance on how the Partnership meets its statutory responsibilities, including leadership and scrutiny. This report evidences progress in the maturity of Partnership arrangements, clearer escalation pathways, and continued alignment between learning from serious incidents and KSCMP activity and priorities.

We recognise that Working Together to Safeguard Children places a clear expectation on Lead Safeguarding Partners to hold the system to account and to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. In response, we have supported the strengthening of scrutiny and assurance structures, and endorsed revised Partnership arrangements and strategic priorities.

Over the next year we will look to consolidate progress, respond confidently to national reform, and maintain a focus on outcomes. We remain committed to supporting the Partnership to deliver a safeguarding system in which children are protected from harm.



Amanda Beer,
Chief Executive,
Kent County Council



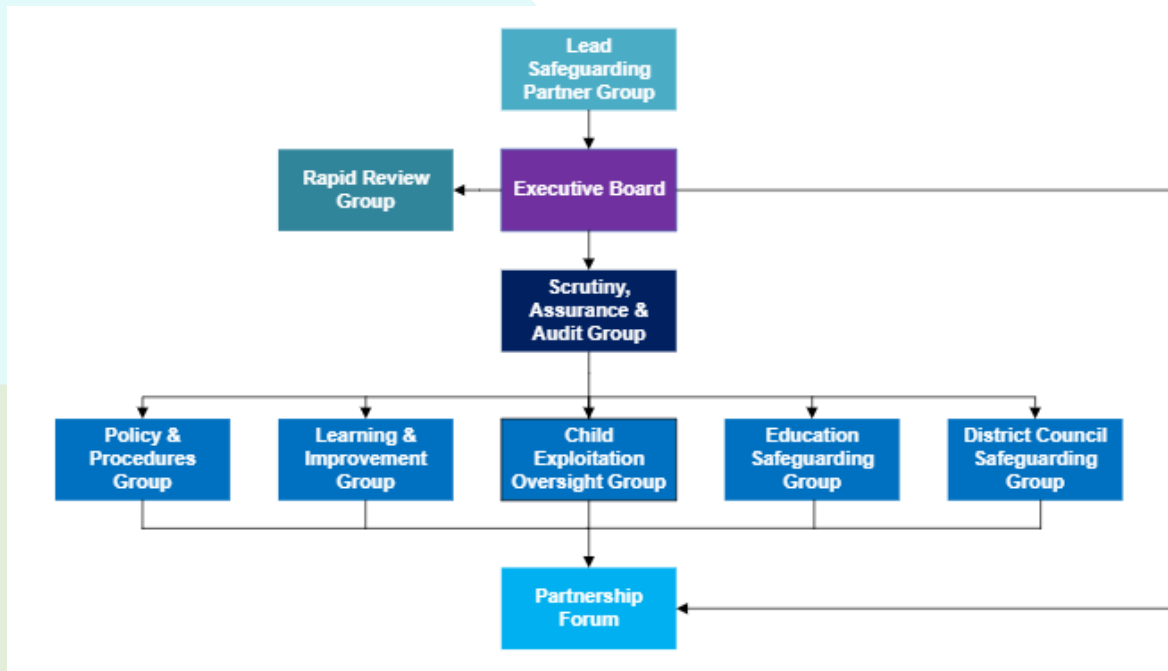
Adam Doyle,
Chief Executive,
Kent and Medway NHS
Integrated Care Board



Tim Smith,
Chief Constable,
Kent Police

Appendices

Appendix One: KSCMP Structure



Appendix Two: Data references

1. 2024 Mid Year Population. Source: ONS, from Kent Analytics (KCC).
2. Children living in **relative** low income families (defined as a family in low income before housing costs in the reference year. Source DWP (2023/24), from Kent Analytics (KCC)
3. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
4. Number of missing episodes – open to CSW, EH, OLA or not open to CSWS (totalled). Source: MIU, KCC.
5. Referrals are for the NELFT single point of access and include referrals to Kent Children and Young People's mental health service and the Neurodevelopmental diagnostic assessment service. (This figure includes Crisis, Neuro and Locality together.) NELFT are one of four providers of ND assessments in Kent, and provide them for 11+ in West and North Kent and 8+ in East Kent. Referral data is across Kent (excludes Medway) in the 12 months up to and including March 2025. Source: NELFT (Kent and Medway ICB).
6. Ethnic minority categories excluded are: White English, White British, Other White British, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish, Not obtained, refused and not stated. Ethnic Minority includes pupils classed as White Other. Source: January 2026 School census from MIU, KCC.
7. Source: January 2026 School Census from MIU, KCC.
8. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
9. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
10. Breakdown of Youth Justice Caseload population (Snapshot). Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as of month end Mar 2026. (This indicator has changed slightly since the previous KSCMP annual report in 2025. It now includes out-of-court resolutions).
11. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
12. Number of young people at high risk of child exploitation (number of YP who have had a risk of CSE identified Apr 25 to Mar 26) split by involvement with EH or CSWS. Source MIU, KCC. (This indicator has changed since the previous KSCMP annual report in 2025 and also some additional data changes and validation work has impacted on the measure).
13. Number of C&F assessments where one of the factors identified was young carers (Apr 25 – Mar 26) Source: MIU, KCC.
14. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
15. Number of C&F assessments where domestic abuse was identified as a factor of the assessment, broken down into 3 categories (Domestic Violence – Child,

Domestic Violence – Parent, Domestic Violence – Other) (Apr 25 – Mar 26)
Source: MIU, KCC.

16. Number of Referrals to Family Group Conferencing (now renamed to Social Connections Service, by families and individuals received between Apr 25 and Mar 26. Source: MIU, KCC.