

## Family Safeguarding

### Introduction

Surrey's Children's Services are committed to making a fundamental shift to early support and prevention, so that we do statutory work well and with the right children and families.

Children are at the heart of everything we do and over the last year we have been building a new approach to help better support the children of Surrey. Feedback from our partners has been positive and there has been significant improvement in performance, helping us provide children and their families with the right help at the right time.

Our approach is rooted in early engagement with families and tackling the causes of children being in need or at risk. It is not possible to provide great services without a fundamentally close connection with our children and families, and that's why we have implemented the Family Safeguarding model. This exciting new model is part of our family-centred approach, and the tools of our trade are our relationships with the children and the families we serve.

That's why we are inviting professionals from different disciplines to join our Family Safeguarding Teams, to work side by side with social workers. By bringing experts together we will achieve better outcomes for children and families in Surrey.

### What is Family Safeguarding?

In Surrey, the Family Safeguarding model brings together under one roof all the professionals needed to help children. This ground-breaking approach has proved highly successful in other authorities around the country, and Surrey is the first council in the South East to implement it, for the benefit of Surrey's children.

The Family Safeguarding model is based on a simple concept, to get people who are working with the same family to work in a team and share their concerns and risks to improve outcomes. Bringing together under one roof a blend of children's social workers and professionals who work with adults allows us to help families in a holistic way. We can provide intensive support to parents to address the substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse that place children at risk of significant harm.

### How does Family Safeguarding help families?

We know that there are many factors which can contribute to a child being in need of support or at risk of harm, such as alcohol and drug use, mental health issues or domestic abuse. Family Safeguarding is a strength based model which includes professionals who work with adults in teams supporting children and their families. It brings together social workers, family support workers, domestic abuse practitioners, recovery workers, mental health practitioners and psychologists so that the whole team can address all the issues facing a family. This means that problems such as a parent's alcohol abuse can be dealt with and they can understand the impact of their alcohol use on their children and their parenting.

Keeping families together is an important focus of the model and our Family Safeguarding teams work openly and honestly with families about their difficulties and how we can support them to change. Our teams are trained in Motivational Interviewing and work with parents to change behaviours that impair their children's development or subject them to significant harm. Wherever

compatible with the welfare of the child, the aim of these teams is to work alongside parents to support them to change while keeping children safe within their families.

### **The Family Safeguarding Team**

- Social worker
- Domestic abuse officer
- Drug & alcohol worker
- Psychologist
- Mental health practitioner
- Family support worker

### **What are the benefits for professionals?**

Roles within the family safeguarding teams suit a wide range of personality types, especially those who are resilient and are good at building relationships with families and colleagues. There are a number of benefits to team working for social workers and other professionals.

#### **Better outcomes**

The Family Safeguarding model has a proven track record of success, and being part of Surrey's Family Safeguarding teams will give professionals the opportunity to transform children and families' lives for the better. In pilot areas, the model has resulted in a 19% reduction in care proceedings and a 10% reduction in children being 'looked after'. We hope that with your help we will be able to achieve a similar impact on the lives of Surrey's children and families.

#### **Reduced caseload & less paperwork**

The Family Safeguarding model allows for caseloads to be reduced across the board so that professionals can spend more time working with families. The model means social workers can focus on doing what social workers are trained to do, without getting bogged down in bureaucracy and paperwork. By having professionals from different disciplines working under one roof, our teams are able to work closely together, minimising time spent on making referrals to other agencies for support.

#### **Shared responsibility & professional support**

It also means that the responsibility for a family is shared among a team of professionals, reducing the risk placed on any one individual. Instead, social workers, family support workers, domestic abuse practitioners, recovery workers, mental health practitioners and psychologists all work closely together to support families and keep children safe.

#### **Career progression**

There are significant opportunities for career progression as the skills developed on our Family Safeguarding teams become increasingly sought after nationally. The success of the Family Safeguarding model has been recognised by central government, and is set to be rolled out nationwide in the near future. As an early adopter of the model, Surrey is ahead of the game and members of our Family Safeguarding teams are at the leading edge of innovation in the sector.

We are seeking a number of probation officers and probation service officers who are motivated to help change the lives of some of the most vulnerable families in Surrey. The posts will be based within the Family Safeguarding Service of Surrey County Council (permanent posts with the National Probation Service on reviewable secondment to Surrey County Council). Our ground-breaking family safeguarding model will bring together all the professionals we need, under one roof, to provide intensive support to parents to address the substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse that place children at risk of significant harm. An important focus of our model is to invest in training all team members to a high standard in motivational interviewing, to engage parents and children in contributing to their own assessments of risk and change, to make group work and strengthening relationships work part of our everyday work.

You will be managed by the senior probation officer within the Safeguarding service and work alongside a team of social workers and other professionals with parents and their children where there is high risk of severe parenting problems including maltreatment and neglect. The posts will include carrying out risk assessments and providing group work or one to one interventions with perpetrators of domestic abuse, and offering consultations to the multi-disciplinary safeguarding service. You will join a dedicated and enthusiastic multi-disciplinary team committed to developing the highest standards of assessment and treatment for the most vulnerable infants, children and parents. There will be ample opportunity to develop and apply a wide range of skills.

The post-holders will be based at Surrey County Council offices. There are professional links across Surrey, with structures in place for supervision and governance.

This is an exciting opportunity for probation officers and PSOs with an interest in this field to contribute to the delivery and development of our family safeguarding service.

For further details:

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