



IMPACT REPORT

THE VOICE OF THE CHILD

CONFERENCE

2025

November 2025





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THE VOICE OF THE CHILD CONFERENCE VIDEO

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Voice of the Child Conference 2025 marked our second annual Contextual Safeguarding conference, bringing together professionals, organisations and young people to champion the power of youth voice in shaping safer systems.

We are deeply grateful to for the continued partnership with **Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)** and our partners, the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation**, **South London Partnership** and **BOXPARK** for supporting the continuation and growth of this vital Contextual Youth Work and Safeguarding space in its second year.



+ 75%
Increase in
attendees

+ 88%
Attendance
rate

Venue change
was key
enabler

Multi-agency
approach
strengthened

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

We extend our thanks to our speakers, **Professor Carlene Firmin, Joe Rich, Rebecca Smith, Victoria Eburn, Aisling Barker, Ollie Fritton, Charlotte Conway, Sarah McLaggan, Tyrell Marcus Davis-Douglin, John Blackman, Zachary Williams, Shaun P, Wayne Lindsay, Angela Parkes, Ellie Sandover** and the **Croydon Council Young Ambassadors** for sharing powerful insights on amplifying youth voice and building systems in which young people are genuinely heard. Throughout the day, strong themes of contextual safeguarding, meaningful participation and youth-led change were woven across discussions.



YOUTH BOARD

Central to the conference was our Youth Board, who represented youth voice in the space, shaped conversations and challenged the sector through honest dialogue and lived experience. Their leadership reinforced a clear message: young people are essential to safeguarding solutions that truly work.

This conference marks only the beginning. We remain committed to creating and sustaining spaces where young people's voices influence the decisions that impact their lives.



THE VENUE

The relocation to BoxPark Croydon was a strategic decision that directly supported our objectives.

- Increased max capacity from ~100 to 150+.
- Enabled an increase in invitations sent.
- Allowed for broader sector representation.
- Maintained high engagement despite size.
- Attendees responded positively to the venue facilities.



24/25 ATTENDANCE GROWTH

2025 ATTENDESS

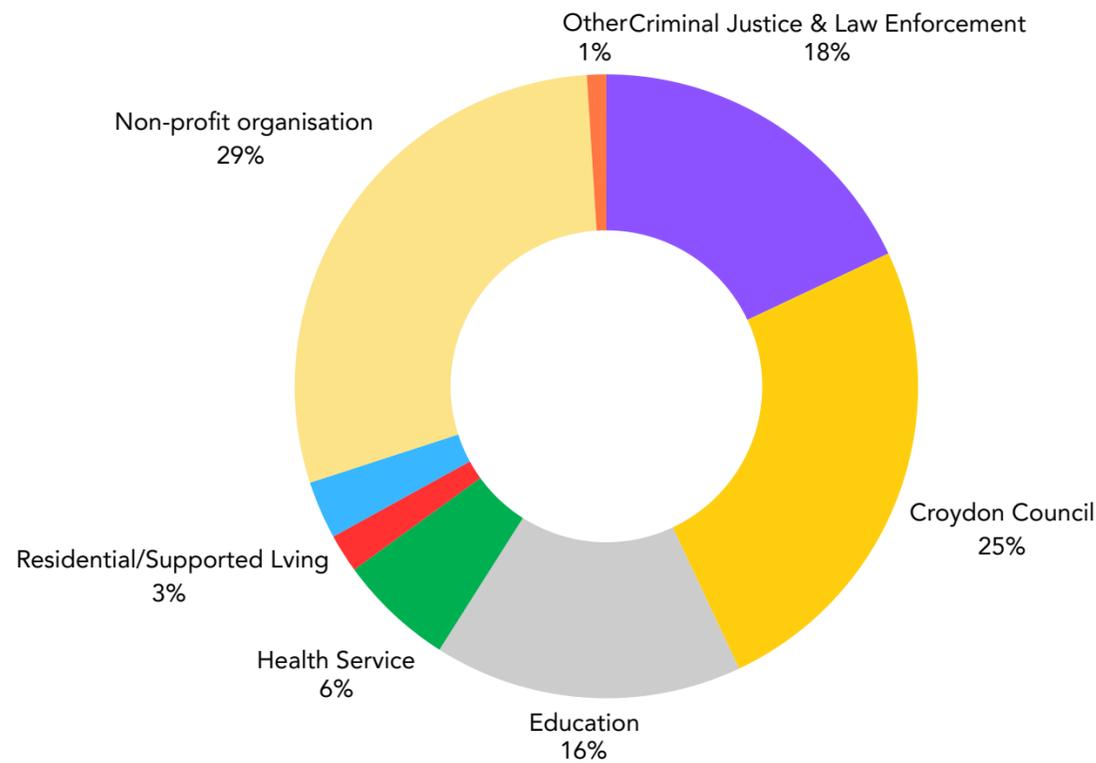
119

2024 ATTENDESS

88

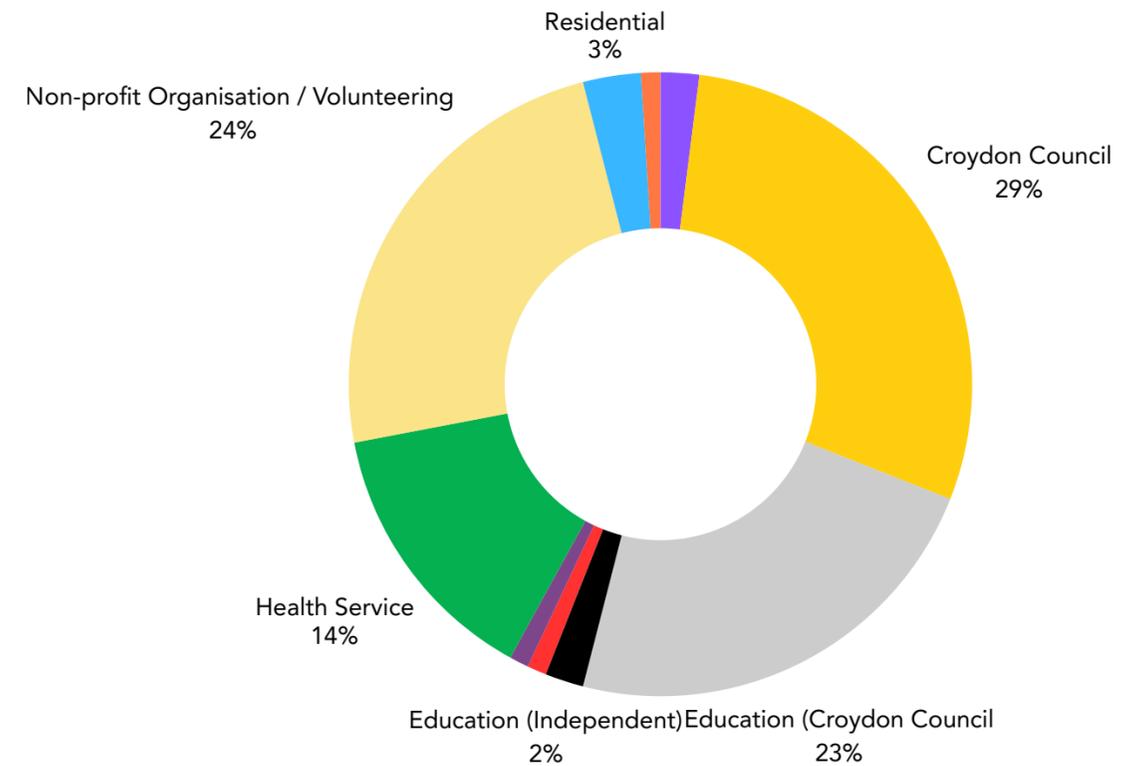


2024 ATTENDANCE PROFILE



- Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement
- Local Services
- Croydon Council
- Residential/Supported Living
- Education
- Non-profit organisations
- Health Service
- Other

2025 ATTENDANCE PROFILE



- Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement
- Further Education
- Croydon Council
- Health Service
- Education (Croydon Council)
- Non-profit organisations / volunteering
- Education (Independent)
- Residential
- Faith-based organisations
- Other

SECTORS IN ATTENDANCE



Sector	2024 Attendees	2025 Attendees	YOY Change
Croydon Children's Social Care	17	36	+19 (+112%)
Education	11	24	+13 (+118%)
Health Services	4	14	+10 (+250%)
Metropolitan Police	12	9	-3 (-25%)
Non-profit / Voluntary Organisations	13	29	+16 (+123%)
Residential / Supported Living	2	6	+4 (+200%)

SECTORS IN ATTENDANCE



Sector	2024 Attendees	2025 Attendees	YOY Change
<p>1</p> <p>Health Services</p> <p>Saw the largest relative growth (+250%), with attendance more than tripling. This was a direct benefit of the expanded venue capacity allowing for more external partners.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Education & VCS</p> <p>Both sectors more than doubled their representation. This reflects a strong desire for schools and voluntary organisations to engage in multi-agency safeguarding.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Croydon Children's Social Care</p> <p>Remains the largest single group (+112% growth), showing strong internal engagement and commitment to the contextual safeguarding framework.</p>	
Residential / Supported Living	2	6	+4 (+200%)

ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Underrepresented Sectors

Faith-Based Organisations, Private/Independent Schools, Foster Carers and Children's Homes

Consideration:

This represents a significant missed opportunity to engage with trusted community figures who often work directly with children, young people, and families. Their absence leaves a gap in the multi-agency safeguarding network.

25 % Decline

Despite the larger venue and increased capacity, Met Police attendance decreased from 12 delegates in 2024 to 9 in 2025.

Consideration:

Targeted outreach is needed for future events. This could be in the form of dedicated briefings or specific session to re-engage criminal justice partners and demonstrate value.



THE STRATEGIC GAP

Significant boost in confidence

The post-event survey revealed a significant positive shift. 85% of attendees affirmed the importance of amplifying the voice of the child. The majority reported a substantial increase in confidence when applying strategies, identifying barriers, and adapting communication approaches.

The most frequently cited benefit was “inspiration from youth-led practice,” which strongly validates the decision to place young people’s voices at the centre of the conference. However, organisational culture continues to present a barrier to driving meaningful and sustained change.



ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

“

I see young people's voices being used to support in the planning of community engagement days. For example, when shopping centres put on Christmas events, often times, the activities are targeted towards 7-11 yr old. Without their voices, they will always be missed out and overlooked. Also, funding project selection! Let's hear from the YP!.."

Pop Up Top Up

“

Excellent day to learn about what services are available in the community + how we can embed those into our dept."

Nurse, Health Care Service (inc. NHS/ICB SWL)

“

I feel that systemic change is needed - particularly within education."

DSL, Education (Secondary)



AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT



Desire for Longer / More In-Depth Session

Several delegates felt that some sessions, particularly the keynotes, were too short to cover complex topics adequately. One delegate from Children's Social Care explicitly suggested "**Longer time for keynote speakers**" to allow for deeper exploration of the subjects.

Need for more practical "How-To" Content

While the inspirational value was high, some comments indicated a need for more structured, practical application within the sessions themselves. A delegate requested "**more resources for direct work**" and another asked for "**more practical techniques to use to speak to a young person.**"

Interest in Different Speaker Perspectives

While the youth voice and voluntary sector perspectives were highly valued, a notable comment suggested a desire for a broader range of institutional experiences. A Head of Service from Children's Social Care recommended "**utilising speakers from statutory services not just voluntary as our pressures/themes/concerns are very different.**"

THE VOICE OF THE CHILD



[Click here](#) to watch the Voice of the Child Conference 2025



To get involved in future events and learn more about what we do, contact us at:
info@reachinghigher.org.uk