



MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **Held on Wednesday 1 February 2017 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Ketan Sheth (Chair), Councillor Kansagra (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Conneely, Hector, Hoda-Benn, Jones, Nerva and Shahzad, and Co-opted Members Ms Cargill, Dr Levison and appointed observer Mr Patel

Also Present: Councillors S Chaudhary, Harrison, Hirani and M Patel

Apologies were received from: appointed observers Brown, Gouldbourne, Michael, Roberts, Dattani, Trivedi and Varsani

1. Declarations of interests

Councillor Conneely declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 6 (Scoping Paper for Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) Scrutiny Task Group) by virtue of the fact that she was a Mental Health and Liaison Officer at Brent Centre for Young People.

2. Deputations (if any)

There were no deputations received.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 23 November 2016, be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising (if any)

There were no matters arising.

5. Signs of Safety Scrutiny Task Group Report

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Hoda-Benn, introduced the report on the implementation of Signs of Safety, which was a practice framework for working with children and families and child protection. She explained that the report had been produced as a result of recommendations for scrutiny made by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) in 2015 to give more consideration to child safety and the implementation of Signs of Safety. Cllr Hoda-Benn highlighted that the task group had made four recommendations and that these were detailed in page 22 to the Agenda. She summarised that Signs of Safety was a good model for social work in Brent and expressed her gratitude to all officers involved, including front-line staff who had given up their time to support the work of the Task Group.

The Chair invited Councillor Mili Patel (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Gail Tolley (the Council's Strategic Director of Children and Young People) to comment on the report. Councillor Patel thanked the Task Group and the former Cabinet Member for Children and Young people for their work and stated that she would be able to provide annual updates to the Committee about the progress in implementing Signs of Safety. Ms Tolley acknowledged that the work completed by the Task Group had been extremely helpful and said that the recommendations had already been incorporated. She informed the Committee that Dr Andrew Turnell and Professor Eileen Munro (Child Protection Consultants) had received the report and had sent very positive feedback.

In response to a Member's question regarding resources that would be available if Brent's application to receive funding during stage three of the Innovation Programme was successful, Ms Tolley explained that if the bid was successful, the Children and Young People Department would be enabled to access more funding for implementing Signs of Safety and build on the progress that had been achieved so far. In response to a Member's question as to whether the Council could generate income from offering training to other bodies once the potential additional funding had been received. Ms Tolley responded that Signs of Safety was a branded product which meant that it was unlikely for Brent to be able to conduct training. Nevertheless, she pointed out that two of the Council's practice leaders had been coached to deliver elements of the training but they firstly had to be validated for quality and it would not be possible for them to train outside of the organisation. In response to a Member's question about the future of the model if funding was stopped, Ms Tolley assured the Committee the model would still be used, with existing progress being embedded to become business as usual. Moreover, Brian Grady (the Council's Operational Director of Safeguarding, Performance and Strategy) said that collaboration would be encouraged, forming a strong partnership with the other nine local authorities to share learning. However, he estimated that there would be a negative effect on staff retention.

In response to a Member's question related to turnover and retention of officers, Councillor Hoda-Benn acknowledged that the retention of social workers had been a problem, but was confident that the Signs of Safety model had been well received and could encourage social workers to remain in their jobs. Ms Tolley added that the overall percentage of permanent social work staff had increased from 33% to 66% in the period between 2014 and 2016, with 72% of front-line social work staff being employed on permanent contracts. She said that retention was linked to other underlying issues, such as the cost of housing, which were not affecting social workers exclusively.

In response to a Member's question in respect of collaborative working and best practice, Ms Tolley stated that Brent employees had visited Suffolk County Council and had received a visit by representatives of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, both of which had allowed for helpful elements to be identified to be built up on.

The Chair thanked the Members of the Task Group and Brent Council staff involved in the preparation of the report.

Councillor Hoda-Benn left the meeting at 7:28 pm.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the Signs of Safety Scrutiny Task Group Report be noted;
- (ii) An engagement programme with partners such as schools, GPs and other health professionals to help raise awareness of Signs of Safety be developed;
- (iii) The effectiveness of training in Signs of Safety be monitored, using existing workplace surveys to benchmark effectiveness and highlight any issues which may prevent the proper development of training;
- (iv) On an annual basis, the Committee be updated by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People about progress in implementing Signs of Safety, including social worker retention and other factors which may affect development practice; and
- (v) Measurements be developed for assessing how effective Signs of Safety had been in the long-term in improving outcomes for children and young people and information about developing measurements for assessing the effectiveness of the model be shared with other local authorities who use Signs of Safety.

6. Scoping paper for Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) Scrutiny Task Group

Councillor Shahzad presented the report and emphasised that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were very important for Brent as one in ten school children in the Borough had experienced a mental health issue. He noted that a lot of change was needed in the area, which had to be implemented in accordance with the Local Transformation Plan which had been adopted across North London. He informed the Committee that the Task Group's report had been agreed with the Brent Care Commissioning Group (CCG), the National Health Service (NHS) and the Leader of Brent Council. Councillor Shahzad reminded Members that as the issue had been examined in February 2016, it was time to revisit it. He explained that the scope of the Task Group had been detailed in paragraph 12 on page 47 to the Agenda Pack, where six key priorities had been listed. Councillor Shahzad summarised that the Task Group would evaluate the effectiveness of the existing model and how it could be adopted to better meet the needs of the local population.

The Chair invited contributions from the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, the Director of Children and Young People and the Operational Director of Safeguarding, Performance and Strategy. Brian Grady (the Council's Operational Director of Safeguarding, Performance and Strategy) welcomed the suggested focus areas as and said it was important to make a commitment to issues which were the subject of national conversation and debate.

The Chair commented that the Task Group had been formed at a time when it had been necessary to examine how the existing arrangements had worked for Brent residents and said that he was looking forward to reading the report.

Councillor Nerva entered the meeting at 7:34 pm.

Councillor Mili Patel left the meeting at 7:35 pm.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the Scoping Paper for the CAMHS Scrutiny Task Group be noted; and
- (ii) Councillor Nerva and a named representative of the Brent Youth Parliament be added to the Task Group's membership.

7. Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2015-16

The Chair welcomed Councillor Hirani (Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing), Professor Michael Preston-Shoot (Independent Chair, Brent Safeguarding Adults' Board (the Board)) and Phil Porter (the Council's Strategic Director for Community Wellbeing) to the meeting. Professor Preston-Shoot introduced himself and talked about his experience in scrutiny and his engagement on the Board.

Professor Preston-Shoot introduced the annual report of the Board and clarified that it had been prepared under the supervision of the previous Independent Chair as his term had started in September 2016. The Committee was informed that according to the Care Act 2014, Brent was required to set up a Safeguarding Adults Board. The Committee heard that the Board issued an Annual Business Plan and an Annual Report, with briefing sessions conducted to inform members of the Board about their responsibilities under the Care Act.

Professor Preston-Shoot informed Members that the Annual Report had provided a summary of safeguarding activity which had been carried out by the Board's partners across the social care, health and criminal justice sectors in Brent. He pointed out that the report had been divided into the following four sections:

- Prevalence of Abuse;
- Multi-agency response to safeguarding risks;
- The Board's strategic priorities; and
- Learning from case reviews to improve practice.

The report set the profile of abuse faced by those in need of care and support and examined how well agencies, including the Council's Safeguarding Adults Team, were meeting the needs of those who were at risk or experiencing abuse and neglect, with the information being benchmarked against national comparators. Last but not least, Professor Preston-Shoot highlighted that the Board's work would be coordinated with the Safer Brent Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in terms of scrutiny and at Lead Members, Chairs and business manager levels.

Councillor Hirani emphasised that safeguarding had been a priority within adult social care since 2012 when a poster campaign had been launched to raise awareness of the issue and which had led to an increased number of safeguarding concerns reported. He added that reporting in Brent was currently higher than in other areas of the country and noted that expanding the Board's membership had been discussed to include the voluntary sector and social care providers.

Members of the Committee enquired about why some types of adult abuse had been more prevalent than others and how the Independent Chair's assessment of compliance with the Care Act had changed since his appointment. In response to the first question, Professor Preston-Shoot said that awareness had to be raised around the issues of modern slavery and self-neglect as these categories so far had been underreported. He noted that, in some cases, self-neglect could be a life choice by mentally capable individuals, while modern slavery could be associated with the circumstances in which people had been employed on low-paid jobs which meant that closer cooperation with Trading Standards could be required to address the issue. Professor Preston-Shoot said that people found it difficult to ask questions which related to institutional abuse and that this applied to both victims and front-line staff working with vulnerable adults. In terms of compliance with the Care Act, Professor Preston-Shoot stated that, at the time of his appointment, the Council had been Care Act compliant as three statutory partners were members of the Board, it had prepared an annual report, sub-committees had been established, a business plan produced and terms of reference agreed, and Brent had considered what additional partners could be included. However, no Business Manager had been appointed, which limited detailed oversight and left tasks unfinished. Professor Preston-Shoot said that a potential inspection would have given the Board a 'requires improvement' status. Phil Porter added that the Safeguarding Adults Team had started working on the issue 18 months before the Act had come into force and that a number of services had been classified as 'good' with no services identified as 'inadequate'.

Members enquired about levels of commitment from statutory partners, the opportunities for local community and voluntary organisations to get involved in the work of the Board and the overall safeguarding performance across the partnership. Professor Preston-Shoot explained that positive operational and strategic discussions had been held in relation to opportunities for collaborative working between the Council, the police and partners and that work in relation to concerns associated with specific providers had been effective. However, he noted that no feedback had been given on concerns which could have deterred people from further engagement. He recommended that each referral had to get a detailed assessment to decide if a specific agency had to intervene, noting that multi-agency working could be challenging in complex case procedures. In relation to involvement of third sector organisations, there was more to be done and therefore organisations of service users and organisations of carers had been engaged. It was noted that this process had been started at a Board Development Day, held in January 2017, and the Board Executive had planned to get involved with such groups. Conversations had been focused on how the LSCB and the Board could work more effectively to address issues such as transition. The overall levels of commitment of Board members had been high and an Executive had been set up to drive the work of the Board and oversee the work of the sub-groups. Engagement of the CCG had increased, with the recruitment of a designated nurse to the Board being a priority. Professor Preston-Shoot highlighted the lack of consistent attendance at meetings by Metropolitan Police representatives, noting that similar issues had been experienced by the London Borough of Lewisham. However, Mr Porter reminded the Committee that members of the Safeguarding Adult Team presided on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and that there was good cooperation between the Metropolitan Police and officers. He advised if Members had any concerns in this regard that these be sent to him.

In terms of safeguarding practice, the Committee asked how well the agencies had been meeting the needs of those experiencing abuse and neglect and enquired about learning points from case reviews and steps which could be taken to 'make safeguarding personal'. Professor Preston-Shoot explained that Brent had done well in identifying the outcomes people had wanted and evaluating the degree to which these had been achieved. He acknowledged that, although the Board had received regular presentations by the Safeguarding Adult Manager, more could be done to ensure detailed scrutiny on the Board with papers presented by the CCG, the NHS and the Metropolitan Police being examined. He said that a key priority for 2017/2018 would be to complete a dataset of people who had been identified as being at risk to be analysed in order to identify areas of concern. Mr Porter added that a major problem had been that issues had not been raised. Professor Preston-Shoot explained that the Board had requested a review of cases in which adults had not been able to manage their finances securely. It found that the level of understanding of mental capacity was not as good as it had been expected, but this had been addressed and training had commenced. The review had identified a number of cases which had raised concerns about the level of care provided by residential care providers, including how people had been supported and looked after, which, in some cases, linked to level of knowledge, skills and expertise of staff. He emphasised that the need for a clear strategic and operational link between children and adult social care was essential (at both board and officer levels) and noted that, in some cases, mental capacity assessments had been inadequate and had to be reviewed as a priority. The Committee heard that the Board 'makes safeguarding personal' through appropriate training, supervision and audit of cases, which had been implemented to raise awareness of safeguarding among all parties and ensure that they continued to meet the required standards. He recognised that more work needed to be done in relation to training, supervision and conducting focused audits to demonstrate excellence where it existed. Mr Porter commented that the business processes of the Safeguarding Adult Team had been redesigned and embedded in Mosaic to ensure processes were being followed at all times

A Member of the Committee asked how Brent had performed in terms of concerns raised by the public compared to other boroughs. Professor Preston-Shoot said that 10% of concerns in Brent were raised by the public, with some authorities achieving similar or better rates, while others achieved lower rates of concerns raised by the public. He expressed his confidence in the established process and praised the Team for its openness to challenge, good level of legal awareness and commitment to making safeguarding personal. In response to a Member's question that related to the low levels of engagement from community and faith groups, Professor Preston-Shoot said that sub-groups had been working well and that he was surprised that there had not been higher levels of engagement with the third sector and faith groups given the make-up of the local community. He acknowledged that although it would be difficult to invite a large number of representatives to sit on the Board, the Board remained open to work with the third sector to raise awareness of self-neglect, modern slavery, abuse, and other issues. Professor Preston-Shoot said that it would be an effective strategy to train people in each organisation to become safeguarding champions. Training could be delivered alongside a children safeguarding session in order that community representatives would be aware what they would need to do when they were concerned for a member of the community. He stated that such a programme could be included in the 2017/2018 priorities of

the Board. Such actions would likely make professionals more confident in activating Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 where they suspected an adult had met at risk and met clauses (a), (b) or (c) of the Section.

In the context of supported accommodation and potential lessons learned, the Committee enquired about the trend of reports of neglect or abuse from care homes which had fallen to 20%, and allegations of sexual abuse rising from seven to sixty-five percent. Professor Preston-Shoot explained that he and Mr Porter had been working with the Housing Teams to engage officers with the work of the Board and to ensure that they were aware of safeguarding. He added that processes would be audited and engagement would be extended as far as the Board's resources would allow. However, given the context of austerity, Professor Preston-Shoot informed the Committee that he would make his priorities clear and alert the Council when there was an issue which related to funding that could not be resolved using the relationships he had already created with officers. He noted that issues with unregulated providers had been experienced by other local authorities such as the London Borough of Lewisham. Referring to the number of allegations of sexual abuse, Professor Preston-Shoot stated that abuse of adults in institutions had been very well hidden and that it was difficult to identify specific organisations to monitor. He explained that it could take considerable effort to raise an issue due to the time it could take until the victim, a relative or a carer disclosed an incident.

A Member of the Committee commented that the number of modern slavery and self-neglect abuses had been disagreed with the classification of self-neglect as a life-style choice rather than a sign of mental health issue or dementia. Professor Preston-Shoot explained that self-neglect was not part of Adult Social Care despite the fact that some adult boards had monitored it prior to the introduction of the Care Act 2014. He noted that awareness had to be raised around the issue, but challenging adults capable of taking independent decisions, remained difficult. This led to a short discussion about the link between the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Care Act 2014.

A Committee Member asked if the Council could request mandatory engagement from Brent's Contractors and whether such an obligation could be added to potential new commissioning contracts. Professor Preston-Shoot confirmed that this had been possible as it provided clarity in terms of responsibilities.

Members asked questions that related to the resources available to the Board and its position compared to other London safeguarding boards. Professor Preston-Shoot informed the Committee that the Board anticipated to recruit a permanent Board Business Manager and that he had been liaising with the Council's Head of Strategy and Partnerships to complete the process. If more resources had been provided, it would have been possible to recruit a Data Analyst, provide interagency training and explore to what degree Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) had been an issue in Brent, including potential actions that could have been taken against it. Another activity could have been organising a Safeguarding Week, along with the Children and Young People's Department, to promote safeguarding and raise awareness. This was being reviewed with the Council's Communications Team and could be included in the Brent Connects forums. Mr Porter explained that the CCG and the Council shared the budget for the Board, with the Metropolitan Police committing less resources than in other locations. Mr Porter went on to say that the current budget could cope with additional statutory work and that statutory

requirements would be fulfilled, while individual business cases had to be made for additional expenditure or multiagency training.

Members enquired about any measures which had been taken to reduce the risk of financial and material abuse through Direct Payments and Individual Budgets. Professor Preston-Shoot said that regular reviews had been carried out to ensure that Individual Budgets met the needs of users and Councillor Hirani informed the Committee that Direct Payments were being made by a card and regular reviews had been in place to prevent the misuse of funds.

The Chair expressed his gratitude to Professor Preston-Shoot for the comprehensive and educational report.

Councillor Harrison left the meeting at 8:52 pm.

Ms Cargill left the meeting at 8:53 pm.

Mr J Patel left the meeting at 9:05 pm.

RESOLVED that :

- (i) The contents of the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2015-2016, be noted;
- (ii) The proposed plans for engagement with local communities, be endorsed;
- (iii) Efforts to raise awareness of adult safeguarding among local communities, be endorsed;
- (iv) Specific information about Brent Safeguarding Adults Board's interface with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and involvement with third sector organisations, be provided in the Board's 2016-17 report;
- (v) A report on participation by the Metropolitan Police and its attendance at relevant meetings of the Board, be presented to the Committee by the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board; and
- (vi) Brent Council's Contracts with housing and social care providers be designed to encourage engagement with Brent Safeguarding Adults Board and attendance by the Contractors at the Board's relevant meetings.

8. Update on scrutiny work programme (If any)

RESOLVED that :

- (i) The update on the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Work Programme be noted; and
- (ii) An update on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) be presented to a meeting of the Committee in March or May 2017.

9. Any other urgent business

None.

10. **Date of next meeting**

The committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 29 March 2017.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

COUNCILLOR KETAN SHETH
Chair