



Brent

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Monday 8 October 2018 at 6.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ketan Sheth (Chair), Afzal, Conneely, Hector, Knight, Mashari and Thakkar

Co-opted Members Mr Frederick, Ms Askwith and Mr Goulden

Appointed observer Ms Roberts

**Also Present:** Councillors Farah, Hylton and M Patel

**Absent:** Co-opted Members Mr Milani and Ms Yaqub, and Appointed observer Ms Bokrugji

1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

The following apologies for absence were received:

- Councillor Colwill
- Councillor Shahzad
- Lesley Gouldbourne (Appointed observer)
- Ms Sotira Michael (Appointed observer)

2. **Declarations of interests**

Councillor Ketan Sheth declared that he was a lead governor at Central and North West London (CNWL) National Health Service (NHS) Foundation Trust.

3. **Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations received.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 10 July 2018, be approved as an accurate record.

5. **Matters arising (if any)**

None.

6. **Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/2018**

Mike Howard (Independent Chair, Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) presented the report which outlined the activities of the Brent LSCB in the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. He reminded Members that the LSCB's role was to coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of the services which were

provided to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the Borough. Mr Howard emphasised that the LSCB did not commission or deliver frontline services and each partner agency maintained their individual accountability as per Section 11 of The Children Act 2004.

Members heard that the LSCB had four priorities for 2017-18 – domestic abuse; neglect; child sexual abuse; and child and parental mental ill health. Throughout the year, the LSCB had carried out a range of activities to address these priorities which had been outlined in Section five of the annual report (pages 26-46 of the Agenda pack). The Board had been successful in involving new partners – four new lay members had been recruited which had improved the LSCB's links with the local community. With various backgrounds, all of them were Brent residents who had an interest in working with children. In addition, the Board's involvement with many of the Borough's schools had been improved. Mr Howard said that he had spoken to 60 senior heads at a development day at Stonebridge Primary School and had addressed a schools' conference earlier in the year. He reported that many schools had participated in a recent Section 11 audit which had enabled them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their safeguarding arrangements.

Mr Howard expressed concern that the Board had not made sufficient progress in performance management which had been one of the areas identified as requiring improvement during the 2015 Ofsted review of the effectiveness of Brent LSCB. One of the reasons for this was the fact that many agencies had decided not to collect and analyse data due to a lack of resources. Gail Tolley (the Council's Strategic Director of Children and Young People) clarified that this did not mean that data would no longer be available - statutory partners would continue to collect data; however, the challenge would be to combine it together. Overcoming this would require distinct resources to fund a Data Analyst post which had not been found in the budget for the year ahead. This view was supported by Duncan Ambrose (Brent CCG's Assistant Director) who confirmed that while all health providers commissioned by the CCG supplied data, analysing it to understand what the numbers meant in the context of Brent remained challenging.

As far as training was concerned, the LSCB was reviewing its training offer in order to maximise its efficiency. The Board remained keen to deliver multiagency training as it allowed staff from various organisations to understand safeguarding from a collective point of view. Despite the negative effect of staff shortages and budgetary pressures, the LSCB had been able to deliver a very successful training event in January 2018 which had explored themes emerging from serious youth violence. Key highlights of the event were a presentation on contextual safeguarding delivered by Dr Carlene Firmin, Principal Research Fellow at the University of Bedfordshire, and a panel discussion involving Gail Tolley, Andrew Dunne (Deputy Headteacher at Newman Catholic College), representatives of the Police, Red Thread and the local youth community.

Mr Howard directed Members' attention to Section six of the report (pages 47-51 of the Agenda pack) which outlined the future of the LSCB. He explained that following the publication of the 2018 Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance, Brent LSCB had entered a transitional period during which it would carry out all statutory functions until the new safeguarding partner arrangements would begin to operate in Brent. Under the new structure, there would be three statutory partners responsible for safeguarding children – the Local Authority, the Police and

Health, and meetings between Brent Council's Chief Executive, Brent CCG Chief Officer and the Brent Police Borough Commander had already started taking place.

The Members of the Committee welcomed the report and asked questions that related to the difference the Board had made over the last year; issues causing concerns and the Chair's ability to provide robust challenge to partner organisations and safeguarding standards. Mr Howard explained that a key role for the LSCB was to promote awareness of safeguarding and by involving a wider range of partners, it had contributed to creating an environment where agencies could feel that they had the support of the wider safeguarding community. Furthermore, LSCB funding remained a major concern – although Brent had a small budget compared to other London Boroughs such as Bexley and Camden, the Chair expressed confidence that the Board had been efficient in fulfilling its functions. The LSCB had been lobbying the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to increase the Police's contribution but it had not been successful. Nevertheless, Mr Howard said that he had challenged individual partners in cases when he had felt that there were issues. For instance, the engagement of the Community Rehabilitation Company had improved after Mr Howard's intervention. As far as challenging safeguarding standards was concerned, Mr Howard gave operation Encompass as an example and explained that it had taken three years to persuade the Police that the model, originally developed in the London Borough of Wandsworth, would work in Brent. In response to a follow-up question about the effectiveness of operation Encompass in Brent, Mr Howard said that he did not have data that would allow him to benchmark performance against other boroughs, some of which may have introduced the practice much earlier than Brent. However, he emphasised that his role as an Independent Chair of the LSCB was to question schools on their actions upon a referral and this would be one of the topics discussed at the LSCB meeting in December 2018.

The Committee questioned the LSCB's effectiveness in addressing the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) report on London North West University Healthcare National Health Service Trust published in August 2018; tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE); and measuring the long-term impact of its initiatives. Mr Howard said that he had had conversations with Mr Ambrose and Dr Arlene Boroda, Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children at Brent CCG, and that he would be meeting Carol Ann Williams, Head of Safeguarding at the Trust to discuss the paper. Mr Howard noted that the findings of the report had also been raised at a recent meeting of Brent Children's Trust. He informed Members that once he had held meetings with stakeholders, he would brief Gail Tolley and they would decide on a joint approach to the Trust to ensure that the findings that relate to children services and maternity services would be addressed properly.

In relation to CSE, the Committee heard that the Board had raised awareness through a number of initiatives, including a Section 11 audit. He acknowledged that although it was difficult to quantify results and measure long-term impact, the number of referrals to the Brent Family Front Door (BFFD) and police enquiries and investigations could be an indicator of the effectiveness of the Board. Councillor Mili Patel (Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care) commented on Children, Young People and Contextual Safeguarding Task Group scoping paper included in the agenda for the present meeting and encouraged the Task Group to include recommendations related to measuring the long-term impact of the LSCB's initiatives.

Members enquired about the LSCB's work related to gangs, online abuse and radicalisation. Mr Howard said that the role of the Board was to increase awareness of all forms of exploitation. He added that he was confident in the work undertaken by the LSCB as a number of agencies, including children's services, adult social services, community protection and the Police, were members of the Board. In addition, in order to broaden engagement, a Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation sub-group had been formed following a recent restructure of the LSCB. It would be co-chaired by a lay member who was a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and a former Detective Inspector who was currently Head of Safeguarding at Queen's Park Rangers. Nevertheless, Mr Howard emphasised that it would be essential for the three statutory partners under new arrangements to coordinate their work in order to sustain the progress achieved by the Board.

A Member of the Committee asked whether the Independent Chair of the LSCB considered the cuts to funding made as a result of austerity would have an impact on the provision of his independent challenge to the agencies involved in safeguarding children. Mr Howard explained that reducing the funding available to certain organisations and abolishing the statutory nature of LSCBs were decisions made by the government. In his view, an independent oversight would be provided, but it would be the responsibility of the three safeguarding partners to make the new arrangements work. He directed the Committee's attention to section six of the report and said that he had discussed the transitional arrangements with Carolyn Downs (the Council's Chief Executive) and Gail Tolley who had expressed their support for the structure that had been put in place.

In response to a question that related to the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) and its impact on children in Brent, Mr Howard said that the decision to roll UC out had been made by the government and it had not been included in the report as commenting on it was outside of the remit of the LSCB. The Board had acknowledged that children live in poverty (page 17 of the Agenda pack) and the Neglect sub-group would examine any cases referred to the BFFD and assess whether poverty had been a cause of neglect. Furthermore, Gail Tolley explained that the Council rather than the LSCB had a statutory responsibility for the wellbeing of children and noted that not all children who lived in poverty were at risk of harm or abuse.

The Committee enquired about the reasons why a high proportion of training sessions had been cancelled (32.7%). Mr Howard responded that these were outlined on page 33 of the Agenda pack. He added that the Brent LSCB had worked closely with its counterpart in Harrow to try to offset some of the costs associated with running the sessions, but this approach had not delivered the expected results and was being reconsidered. Moreover, there had been changes to the LSCB Training Coordinator role which had been replaced by a Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Co-ordinator, with the main difference being that the new role was jointly funded by the Community Wellbeing Department, the Children and Young People Department, and the Chief Executive's Department at Brent Council, with the aim to provide a joint approach to the training needs of the LSCB and the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board. In response to a question about overseeing training delivered by other organisations, Mr Howard said that while the LSCB was aware of sessions being offered by partner

organisations, the content of these was often specific to the agency organising the training.

Members directed their attention to the recruitment of lay members and youth engagement in the process. Mr Howard pointed out that young people had not been involved and explained how the four new lay members had been recruited, emphasising the important role they had in engaging with the community. A Member of the Committee raised the lack of engagement with foodbanks as an issue and Gail Tolley responded that this fell outside of the remit of the LSCB as outreach to voluntary sector organisations regarding responses to concerns and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks was a responsibility of the Council and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose work had been complimented by Ofsted during the recent inspection. Gail Tolley assured Members that voluntary organisations, including foodbanks, had been considered and had been made aware of the Council's training offer. She added that if there were any foodbanks that could benefit from safeguarding training, these should contact the LADO.

The Committee scrutinised the Board's finances and enquired how the Board had balanced its budget having in mind that expenditure in 2017/2018 had exceeded funding by over £38,000. Mr Howard explained that the shortfall had been covered by reserves which had been spent. Looking into the future, it would be hard to predict what else, apart from data collection and analysis, the LSCB might not be in position to deliver as this would depend on the safeguarding partners and their budgets for the year ahead.

A specific issue that Members discussed was the lack of engagement and irregular attendance on behalf of the Police. A number of safeguarding leads for Brent had been appointed over the 12 months covered in the report. Turnover had been reduced following the appointment of Det Supt Owain Richards as Head of Safeguarding, but it could become an issue again once the tri-borough policing arrangements came into force. Nevertheless, Mr Howard remained positive that the momentum established by Det Supt Richards would be maintained and continued into the new safeguarding arrangements.

Mr Howard reflected that the Brent LSCB had achieved more than some of the other London Boroughs in relation to preparing for the new safeguarding arrangements. However, he pointed out that the quality of safeguarding would depend on the three statutory partners and their willingness to use the new structure that had been put in place by the Board. Mr Howard emphasised that the only recommendation he would ask the Committee to make was to encourage the Local Authority, the Police, and Health to recognise the importance of using their time and resources to commit staff to safeguarding as the new structure would be effective only if stakeholders gave their time and got involved.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) The contents of the Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/2018, be noted;
- (ii) The Scrutiny Committee reiterates that the Local Authority, the Police, and Health recognise the importance of using their time and resources to commit staff to safeguarding children.

*Councillor Hylton (in attendance) joined the meeting at 6:10 pm.*

*Helen Askwith (Co-Opted Member) joined the meeting at 6:48 pm.*

## **7. Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2017/2018**

Michael Preston-Shoot (Independent Chair, Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)) introduced the report which provided a summary of safeguarding activity carried out by Brent SAB partners across social care, health and criminal justice in response to the priorities of the Board as out in paragraph 3.4 of the cover report (page 54 of the Agenda pack). Mr Preston-Shoot commented on four sections of The Care Act 2014 which were closely related to the functioning of the SAB:

- **Section 42** – Enquiry by local authority – Members heard that the Board had continued to receive data relating to number of notifications made to the Local Authority and it had scrutinised this information against the information available on National Health Service (NHS) Digital. Findings had indicated that performance in the Borough was better than in other areas, but the Board recognised that there were outstanding challenges related to understanding modern slavery, self-neglect and human trafficking. Furthermore, there were ongoing issues raised by family members and partners relating to feedback they had received following a notification. These were often linked to the standards of adult safeguarding in care homes and the Board continued to monitor the situation.
- **Section 43** – Safeguarding Adults Boards – Mr Preston-Shoot reminded Members that it was a duty for the Local Authority to have a Safeguarding Adults Board with three statutory partners being members – the Local Authority, the Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). He said that while he did not have concerns about the membership of the Council and the CCG, there had been ongoing issues related to the engagement of the Police. Mr Preston-Shoot informed Members that he had raised these with a number of senior police officers and he had participated in a three-way discussion with Mike Howard (Independent Chair, Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)) and Carolyn Downs (the Council's Chief Executive). Mr Preston-Shoot said that he was hopeful that the situation would improve once the tri-borough policing arrangements came into force. However, while the Board's the engagement of the National Probation Service had been intermittent, the SAB was working well with Trading Standards and the Department for Work Pensions.
- **Section 44** – Safeguarding Adult Reviews – In 2017-2018 the Board had conducted four reviews which examined different cases. A key concern that had been identified related to care settings that had been classified as housing rather than residential or nursing care as there were gaps in the system for protecting adults from risk. Mr Preston-Shoot added that he was also concerned about some local authority and CCG placements, in cases where the host authority had not been notified that it would receive a placement from outside its boundaries.
- **Section 45** – Supply of information – Mr Preston-Shoot noted that the Board had not had to use its powers under Section 45 to demand information from stakeholders. The SAB had been successful in establishing a performance management framework and analysing health performance data from the two NHS Trusts operating the Borough. One of the findings had been that the

Police in Brent had been dealing with more cases of hate crime and mental health crises than in other areas of London.

The Members of the Committee welcomed the report and asked questions that related to the effectiveness of the adult safeguarding system in Brent; the actions that had been taken to highlight the impact of cuts; and the Board's community engagement plan. Mr Preston-Shoot explained that although the operational collaboration in the Borough was good, with the majority of the referrals coming through the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), there were concerns related to frontline police officers' understanding of certain sections of The Mental Capacity Act 2005. These had been addressed by the Independent Chair who had held discussions on ways to strengthen knowledge of statutory areas. Furthermore, joint training sessions had been delivered in collaboration with the CCG and there had been good engagement between the NHS Trusts, the Local Authority, the ambulance trusts and the London Fire Brigade, with the latter offering home visits to elderly residents to conduct fire risk assessments and working closely with the SAB to raise awareness of hoarding and the risks associated with it.

Referring to highlighting the impact of cuts, Mr Preston-Shoot said that he had raised the question of contributions by the Police and the CCG in his capacity of Chair of the London Safeguarding Adults Board with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). Moreover, a meeting with NHS England had been organised to discuss achieving consistency in funding allocations and the London SAB would be making a representation to the Department of Health and Social Care. It was noted that the current budget of the SAB was not sustainable so it would be difficult to fund an increased number of safeguarding adult reviews (the approximate cost of a review was £10,000).

The Committee heard that Brent SAB's community engagement plan had been reconfigured by the Community Engagement and Awareness Sub-Group. The membership of the Sub-Group had been refreshed and a new Chair, representing a third sector organisation, had been elected. Several meetings had taken place and the Sub-Group had devised a strategy of rolling out awareness raising sessions. These would include lunch time discussions and sessions with faith and community groups – in fact, Mr Preston-Shoot said that he had already attended successful events at a carer organisation and a faith organisation which were interested in finding out how they could protect better the members of Brent's diverse community. This led to a question about training of frontline staff and Mr Preston-Shoot reflected on a training session on self-neglect which he had presented and remarked that he had been impressed by understanding of adult safeguarding demonstrated by General Practitioners (GPs). Nevertheless, Mr Preston-Shoot acknowledged that sometimes the Board received a high number of notifications of issues as in certain cases frontline staff had been reluctant to make a referral based on a concern they had. Helen Woodland (the Council's Operational Director of Social Care) emphasised the importance of early referrals to the Adult Safeguarding Team. She added that despite the fact that the Team received a comparable rate of referrals to its counterparts in other local authorities, there had been concerns related to some care homes in the Borough which had not made any referrals and information on these had been passed to the Council's Quality Commissioning Team. Members heard that Mr Preston-Shoot and Ms Woodland had met with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspector covering Brent and it

had been decided to establish dedicated meetings to oversee the provision of domiciliary and residential care.

An additional question that was raised as part of the discussion related to the commitment of the Police to the SAB. The Chair of the Committee said that last year he had written a letter to the Deputy Mayor's Office and that he had not been satisfied with the reply he had received. Mr Preston-Shoot added that Mr Howard and he had raised their concerns with Ms Downs who would escalate the issue in her capacity of Chief Executive of the Local Authority if necessary.

The Chair asked Mr Preston-Shoot to comment on the work that would be undertaken by the SAB in relation to the recent report on the London North West Hospital Trust (LNWHT) published by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in August 2018. Mr Preston-Shoot said that a year ago he had had a telephone conversation with representatives of the Trust and the CCG to discuss some of the concerns the Board and the CCG had had at the time. The SAB monitored the position for approximately four months as requested by the CCG, following which it provided feedback to the CCG and the Trust on good practices and areas that had required improvement. The recent CQC report would be discussed at the next Board meeting which would be attended by representatives of the Trust and the CCG.

In relation to the reason for the high number of safeguarding adult reviews undertaken by the Board over the last year, Mr Preston-Shoot clarified that the reviews covered different types of cases and commented that it was good that the Board received an increased number of referrals. The SAB may also consider conducting proportionate reviews in future if similar cases were referred. However, reviews required a considerable amount of effort to coordinate the work of multiple stakeholders. Nevertheless, he assured Members that the Board would continue to ensure that learning continued to be embedded in practice among agencies. This led to a question about the increased number of concerns that had resulted in enquiries. In the view of Mr Preston-Shoot, the rising figures demonstrated greater awareness of adult safeguarding issues, especially in relation to new forms of abuse such as human trafficking, modern slavery and self-neglect. As the provision of services shrank, the support available to vulnerable adults had been reduced which had led to a situation in which concerns received by the Safeguarding Adults Team were more complex and more acute.

A Member of the Committee referred to the work of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) based at Brent Civic Centre and shared that the experience of some Councillors had been that staff working in the Customer Service Centre were not aware of the presence of an IDVA and did not make referrals to them. They questioned whether every member of frontline staff had received adult safeguarding training. Ms Woodland responded that training had been offered to all frontline staff, but she would not be able to guarantee that everyone had completed it. Gail Tolley (the Council's Strategic Director of Children and Young People) clarified that the IDVA role was part of the Children and Young People Department and the IDVA had been commended during the recent Ofsted inspection. The Committee noted that a small proportion of cases of domestic violence were referred to the SAB. Mr Preston-Shoot explained that although the Care Act 2014 included domestic violence as a form of abuse adults could experience, it was addressed through the Safer Brent Partnership. He highlighted

that he attended meetings of the Partnership on a regular basis, had delivered a presentation on adult safeguarding and had contributed to discussions when appropriate, providing a point of view focused on safeguarding adults.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) The contents of the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2017/2018, be noted;
- (ii) The Safeguarding Adults Board continues to monitor the standards of safeguarding adults in care settings and pays specific attention to gaps in the system related to unregulated providers which might place adults at risk;
- (iii) The Scrutiny Committees notes the variation in funding provided by Brent Clinical Commissioning Group and the local Trust towards the Safeguarding Adults Board;
- (iv) The Safeguarding Adults Board takes appropriate measures to ensure that all frontline staff working in the Customer Service Centre receive mandatory training on safeguarding adults and The Mental Capacity Act 2005;
- (v) The Safeguarding Adults Board takes appropriate measures to raise awareness about the role of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor based at Brent Civic Centre; and
- (vi) Brent Council works with Safeguarding Adults Board to provide clear guidance on where the response to domestic violence sits operationally.

*Councillor Hylton left the meeting at 7:40 pm.*

**8. Children, Young People and Contextual Safeguarding Task Group**

The Chair introduced the report which recommended Members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to set up a Task Group to review contextual safeguarding. He referred Members to the Scoping Paper (page 87 of the Agenda pack) which outlined the model of contextual safeguarding as developed by academics.

The Committee noted that the Task Group would be chaired by Councillor Hylton, with Councillors Patterson and Donnelly-Jackson being confirmed as Members.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) The contents of the Children, Young People and Contextual Safeguarding Task Group report, be noted;
- (ii) The contents of the Children, Young People and Contextual Safeguarding Task Group report and scoping paper be agreed; and
- (iii) A Task Group with the terms of reference and membership outlined in Appendix A be set up.

*Councillor Farah left the meeting at 8:02 pm*

9. **Update on the scrutiny work programme**

The Chair informed Members that the communication he had had with Public Health England in relation to cases of measles had been included as an appendix to the report for information (page 105 of the Agenda pack).

He also sought the Committee's agreement to schedule to additional meetings to consider the inspection report published by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on the London North West Hospitals Trust (LNWHT) and the authority's preparation for being the London Borough of Culture in 2020.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) The contents of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/2019 Update report, be noted; and
- (ii) The Scrutiny Officer and the Governance Officer, supporting the Committee, be authorised to schedule two additional meetings to discuss the matters raised by the Chair.

10. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.09 pm

COUNCILLOR KETAN SHETH  
Chair