



Contextual Safeguarding in Brent

An Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Report

Chair, Councillor Orleen Hylton

Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

March 2019

Task group membership

Councillor Orleen Hylton, task group chair

Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson

Councillor Luke Patterson

The task group was set up by Brent Council's Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 8 October 2018.

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Chair's Foreword

Many residents will be aware of the serious incidents of youth violence in Brent involving adolescent children. Sadly, some people have been affected personally by incidents of knife crime, acts of serious youth violence, and gangs.

To address this situation Brent Council is now developing its own approach to what is called contextual safeguarding. Simply put, it means addressing risks to adolescents which are outside their families. Contextual safeguarding is new and the council is at an early stage of developing its approach. That has meant that as members we have been able to review contextual safeguarding and offer our perspectives at a timely stage. While we are not safeguarding professionals we do represent our communities and are well aware of the problems many adolescent children have and what the risks to them are in the borough's high streets, parks, and from the digital world of social media.

I think that the task group has come away with a sense that even in these difficult times for local government there are things that can be done across the local authority to help safeguard adolescent children using a 'contextual' approach, and we look forward to seeing how they will develop.

I would like to thank all those who gave up their time to meet with me and the other members of the task group while we carried out our work, and thank them for the many discussions we had. Finally, I would like to say a thank you to Councillor Luke Patterson and Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, who served on the task group, for their valuable input and suggestions.

Councillor Orleen Hylton

Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Task Group

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Task Group makes the following recommendations to Brent Council's Cabinet:

Recommendation 1: To support bringing together representatives from Transport for London, bus companies, and employee representatives with schools, further education colleges, the council, and statutory Boards to address concerns about adolescents on the transportation and bus network.

Recommendation 2: To further support organisations working with young people to promote and develop extra-school activities, particularly in the summer months, for Brent's adolescent children.

Recommendation 3: Brent's approach to contextual safeguarding should specifically develop its work with further education colleges to help address the risks faced by adolescent children in this context.

Recommendation 4: A future Social Media Strategy should include how the local authority can work in partnership with external organisations or companies to address areas of concern in adolescents using social media and being online which are identified by Brent Council's approach to contextual safeguarding.

Recommendation 5: To develop a one-off public information campaign working with partner organisations and the community to support the development of contextual safeguarding in Brent.

Methodology

As part of this review the task group has focused on face-to-face meetings to gather qualitative evidence and to help inform its understanding of the contextual safeguarding approach. Members have met with the Strategic Director for Children and Young People, Operational Director Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy, Operational Director Integration and Improved Outcomes, and the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care. The task group also met with officers outside of the Children and Young People Department such as the Head of Community Protection, and Head of Planning, Transport and Licensing as well as representatives from secondary schools, a pupil referral unit, and the Independent Chair of the Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Members of the task group took part in four meetings, set out in Appendix A, corresponding to the terms of reference in the original scoping paper, based around four themes. Broadly, the themes for each of the meetings were:

- overview of contextual safeguarding and the council
- implementing contextual safeguarding
- working with schools and the community
- resources, budget and strategic priorities.

The task group's work was focused on understanding contextual safeguarding from the perspectives of different stakeholders, and it concentrated on the terms of reference of evaluating whether it is applicable to the borough, how it can be developed as a cross-cutting local authority initiative, and understanding how Brent's approach is being developed. The scoping paper limited the task group to making up to five recommendations to the council's Cabinet on the basis of the evidence it gathered. The task group gave an interim report to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 30 January 2019 so there could be early input into the areas for recommendation by the committee. At that stage the task group had broad areas for recommendations. The task group has worked within the limits of the terms of reference, time and a fixed number of meetings. That means that the report is a partial evaluation and cannot be the complete picture. Working within the wider community will be a substantial area and when contextual safeguarding is looked at again by the scrutiny committee this area should be developed in more detail, including what input there could be from community

groups.

Chapter 1: Contextual Safeguarding

Background

1. Brent Council, working with partner organisations and agencies, has specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The council works with other agencies to safeguard children by protecting them from abuse and maltreatment, promoting health and development, and ensuring they can grow up in a safe and caring environment. The local authority has powers to protect a child who is suffering or thought likely to be suffering from significant harm or neglect, and interventions are co-ordinated through a multi-agency child protection system. At a strategic level, the Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) brings together the local authority, police, NHS bodies and partner organisations in the borough to ensure there is co-ordinated and effective multi-agency work to safeguard children.¹

2. Traditionally, the focus of children's safeguarding has been on risks to children which exist within a family such as domestic abuse or neglect. However, it is increasingly recognised by safeguarding practitioners that risks to an adolescent child can emerge outside their family homes. This challenges practitioners to recognise the limits of the current focus. In recent years, this awareness has crystallised into a new approach called contextual safeguarding, which has been developed by Dr Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire's International Centre. The approach as developed by Dr Firmin and other academics asks practitioners to address the risks present in 'contexts' outside the home such as peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods in which an adolescent child lives. Contextual safeguarding recognises that the adolescent child is increasingly spending a greater part of their time outside of the family and in these other 'contexts'. These contexts are often outside of the influence of families but can have an effect on them.

3. The risks can include youth violence, gangs, involvement in crime and county lines, and child sexual exploitation. In the context of neighbourhoods the risks to

¹ Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016-17, p6

adolescents could be from street victimisation and robbery in parks and shopping centres. Within schools there can be risks from bullying, including sexual bullying, 'corridor culture', and issues with social media. In peer groups the risks can include partner violence, gangs, peer group violence, and harmful sexual behaviour. These risks can overlap and an adolescent child can be vulnerable to multiple risks.² Contextual safeguarding requires that these 'contexts' are assessed and effective interventions devised for safeguarding adolescent children.³

4. Contextual safeguarding is increasingly influential. Working with the Contextual Safeguarding Network, which has developed toolkits and leads on learning events, local authorities are integrating the approach into their practice. The London Borough of Hackney with the University of Bedfordshire was awarded £2million by Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Fund in 2017 to introduce a contextual safeguarding framework.⁴ So far, Hackney has introduced an initial framework for Contextual Safeguarding Conferences which is being piloted. The conference provides a multi-agency response to risks and is developing neighbourhood interventions in a particular area. There have also been school pilots, including a whole school assessment in a secondary school which focused on extra-familial risks; as well as a review of the Child and Family Assessment Framework. The Contextual Safeguarding Team in Hackney is also working with Children in Need, Looked After Children and Youth Offending Service to develop and support the practice.⁵

Guidance and Procedures

5. Contextual safeguarding has been incorporated into guidance and procedures which Brent Council follows. In July 2018 the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' was updated and makes reference to contextual safeguarding. It emphasises that as well as threats to children's welfare

² Carlene Firmin, *Contextual Risk, Individualised Responses: An Assessment of Safeguarding Responses to Nine Cases of Peer-on-Peer Abuse*, Child Abuse Review Vol. 27:42–57 (2018); Published online 21 February 2017 in Wiley Online Library, p43

³ Carlene Firmin, *Contextual Safeguarding: An Overview of the Operational, Strategic and Conceptual Approach* (Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2017), pp.2-3

⁴ www.hackney.gov.uk/contextual-safeguarding

⁵ Full Year Report to Members 2017/18 Children and Families Service (London Borough of Hackney, October 2018), p10

from within a family, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside such as at a school or other educational institution, in peer groups, the wider community, or online. Threats include exploitation by criminal gangs, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and extremism leading to radicalisation. The updated national guidance is clear that assessments in these cases should focus on the environment of the child, and interventions should address that environment. ⁶

6. The London Safeguarding Children Board is at present updating its own policies and procedures. The Board is developing a supplementary chapter on safeguarding adolescents in the London Child Protection Procedures. Informing this work is the London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group, supported by the University of Bedfordshire. The guidance will outline the procedures professionals should follow when responding to the risks young people face outside of the home. ⁷

London Borough of Brent and Council

7. The London Borough of Brent is an outer London area, and the sixth largest in the capital in terms of population with an estimated 332,100 residents. Population has grown significantly, and it is one of the most multi-cultural areas in the country with many different languages spoken in the borough. Brent is the mostly densely populated outer London borough. ⁸ Brent is characterised by large estates of regenerated former council housing such as at South Kilburn, Stonebridge, and Chalkhill, as well as neighbourhoods with high rates of owner occupation which have experienced significant gentrification. Around one third of households live in private-rented sector housing. In recent years, private-sector led redevelopment, particularly at Wembley Park, has led to new high-rise housing. The borough's largest town centres are in Harlesden, Willesden, Kilburn, Kingsbury, Neasden, and Wembley. While there has been investment and improvement of the town centres they have also experienced decline. The borough has approximately 1,000 acres of open space; the largest include Fryent Country Park, and Roundwood Park in Harlesden.

⁶ *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, HM Government (July 2018), p23

⁷ www.londonscb.gov.uk/london-safeguarding-adolescents-steering-group

⁸ London Datastore, Greater London Authority

8. Brent Council is organised into five departments: Chief Executive's, Children and Young People; Community Wellbeing; Regeneration, Growth and Environmental Services; Resources. Children and Young People is led by a Strategic Director. Political leadership is provided by the Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care, and Statutory Lead Member for Schools, Employment and Skills. Ofsted inspected the Children and Young People department in May 2018, rating it as Good for overall effectiveness and outstanding for the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers, but the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection were judged as Requires Improvement.⁹ As well as working with pre-school and school-age children and young people, the department supports some young people, for example care leavers, up until the age of 25.

9. While the borough's population has grown, the council's core funding from central government has fallen by 63% in real terms since 2010, and departmental expenditure has declined.¹⁰ Non-statutory services have reduced. After Council reduced the budget for Youth Services by £900,000 in 2015 all youth centres (except for Roundwood) and the detached Youth Work Team ceased from March 2016.

Brent's Adolescent Population

10. Brent's adolescent population reflects the multi-cultural character of the area. There are an estimated 78,777 under 18s, or 24.3% of the total population. In secondary schools 55.2% of pupils have English as an additional language.¹¹ The largest minority ethnic groups of children are Asian/Asian British and Black African.

11. A significant number of adolescent children live in poverty. The proportion of secondary school pupils entitled to free school meals is 12.5%, and 18.2% of children live in low-income households. Despite this relative deprivation, Brent's adolescent children perform well at secondary school. Secondary school attainment is above the national and London average.¹² The College of North West London, which has about 10,000 students, was rated Good by Ofsted in 2016. Brent has four special schools

⁹ Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services, Ofsted (July, 2018)

¹⁰ Draft Budget Proposals 2019/20-2020/21, Brent Council Cabinet 15 October 2019, pp.

¹¹ Brent Council, Children and Young People Department, 3 December 2016

¹² Annual School Standards and Effectiveness Report 2016/17 (Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, March 2018)

and two pupil referral units.

12. While attainment for Brent's secondary school pupils is strong, some groups of children are performing less well. These include Black Caribbean boys, Somali boys and girls, and Travellers of Irish heritage. Improving the outcomes for these pupils and those children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is a priority for the council and schools.

Chapter 2: Task Group Findings

Brent's Approach

13. Brent Council is now developing its own approach to contextual safeguarding, which is being led by the leadership team in Children and Young People in co-operation with officers in other departments. This work is at an early stage although a commitment to contextual safeguarding is in the Borough Plan 2019-2023, which was agreed by Council on 25 February 2019. So far, there has been discussion and commitments made by senior managers which have informed actions in the new Borough plan, and research is being done to better understand activity across the council. A report will be made to the Council Management Team which will set out Brent Council's approach, including governance and developing a co-ordination across departments. The task group is of the view that this should start to develop specific outcomes which can be monitored.

14. Brent's approach envisages that all departments view the services they run through the 'lens' of contextual safeguarding, and it will be a cross-council initiative to influence the different 'contexts'.¹³ There is an emphasis on all departments contributing where they can, but there will be a particularly important role for Regeneration, Growth and Environmental Services, which oversees the council's responsibility for neighbourhoods and community safety. At the same time, it also sees a role for community organisations and leaders as well as organisations working with young people, such as Young Brent Foundation, to support contextual safeguarding.

¹³ Task Group Meeting 4

15. Contextual safeguarding is a generic model which can be adapted to suit the particular risks and needs of adolescent children in a local authority area. For its approach, Brent is defining adolescent children as those of secondary school age (11-18), starting from Year 7. The approach is also thinking about adolescent children as two discrete groups: the most high-risk, which is very small in number and who will probably already be in contact with services. For this group it is about adapting existing front-line work so it is informed by contextual safeguarding. The second group in effect encompasses every child. The approach with this group is emphasising public realm, and neighbourhood initiatives to minimize risks.

16. The development of Brent's approach is informed by key principles. One of the principles is the local authority working closely with two statutory boards – the Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Brent Community Safety Partnership. Brent LSCB is also committed to a contextual safeguarding approach in its work. In January 2018, it organised a community learning event to after high-profile incidents of youth violence, which was addressed by Dr Carlene Firmin.¹⁴ The approach strongly informs the Safer Brent Community Strategy 2018-2021, which commits to reducing vulnerability and increasing safeguarding as priorities, safeguarding those at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, and reducing the impact of gangs and knife crime.¹⁵ The other principles of Brent's approach include being preventative and responsive, and listening to the views of adolescent children, and their families.

17. Contextual safeguarding has already started to influence practice in the local authority ahead of any formal plan to develop it. The task group was given an example of how after stabbings of two young people in Kingsbury, there was a response by agencies, including representatives from the Youth Offending Service and Police, which developed a 'map' based on contextual safeguarding. It looked at how the area around the town centre could be made safer and what resources needed to be put in. Another example has been the day-to-day work of the Youth Offending Service which has already introduced Safety Mapping for those young people it works with. They are asked to indicate the neighbourhoods in the borough which they feel safe, using a red-amber-green system, and if a young person feels

¹⁴ Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017-18

¹⁵ Safer Brent: Brent Community Safety Strategy 2018-2021, pp.8-42

unsafe, for example, in travelling to school or attending an appointment then an appropriate plan is put in place while they are in the area.¹⁶

18. Contextual safeguarding has already started to influence existing internal structures. A Vulnerable Adolescents' Panel was set up in late 2016 and is chaired by the Operational Director for Integration and Improved Outcomes, and is attended by the Head of Community Protection, as well as police and health representatives. The Panel has assessed case studies to look at the relationship between vulnerability and the contexts which exist for vulnerable adolescents in Brent.¹⁷

Contexts

19. The 'context' of neighbourhoods will be a considerable area of work in developing contextual safeguarding in Brent. Young people often have a perception of particular areas as risky. The task group heard that some young people may not feel comfortable about travelling through all parts of the borough; there are public spaces such as parks and shopping centres which may not feel safe for some adolescents, and different groups of young people often won't go to particular neighbourhoods.

20. Neighbourhoods for some time have seen a contextual safeguarding approach by the local authority without it being labelled as such. For example, to improve neighbourhoods, Community Protection has been working jointly with the police to develop ongoing initiatives to improve the public realm and tackle issues of anti-social behaviour, crime and tackling safety issues through the Joint Action Groups covering Kilburn, Harlesden and Wembley. Often, this is in response to what residents say about a neighbourhood, and what makes them feel at risk. In the borough's high streets there is an ongoing monitoring for issues of gangs or child sexual exploitation at certain large fast-food restaurants with training offered to staff. There has also been engagement with the owners of smaller takeaway food shops.

21. In the local authority there has been work about how else neighbourhoods can be shaped to make them safer for adolescent children. For example, there has been

¹⁶ Task Group Meetings, 2 and 4

¹⁷ Task Group Meeting 1

discussion with town centre managers about how they can contribute, and training. Also, as part of the London Borough of Culture 2020 there will be a research project, involving Brent Youth Parliament, Young Ambassadors, Young Brent Foundation (an umbrella organisation for third-sector organisations working with young people), LSE Cities and the developers, Quintain, which will develop a charter for young people in public-private spaces. The charter will make recommendations for development that is welcoming for young people and supports youth culture.¹⁸

22. One key project has been identifying places of safety for adolescent children. Safe Spaces is looking at how the council and partners can develop a Safe Space in every neighbourhood. This type of approach is not new. London Citizens set up CitySafe in 2008, and CitySafe Havens are identified businesses, schools or public buildings which are a place of safety for those who feel at risk. Across London there are 600 CitySafe Havens, including some in Brent. A separate initiative is led by the Safe Places National Network. In certain neighbourhoods these initiatives are developed. For example, Newman Catholic College has been working with Citizens UK on initiatives to improve the safety of young people in the Harlesden area, including the creation of a Safe Space scheme involving shops in Park Parade and Harlesden High Street. A delegation of pupils from the school addressed a Council meeting last year, calling for funding to light up parts of Roundwood Park.

23. One aspect of neighbourhoods which was cited as an area of concern by different stakeholders was transportation and the transition from school to home. The task group heard that there are issues about the journey home from school. Many young people feel vulnerable, and fear crime.¹⁹ Transport is highlighted by the council as part of its actions around child sexual exploitation. It will be working with British Transport Police and Transport for London (TfL) to assess bus and Tube stations as potential places of vulnerability.

24. The bus network was also highlighted. Schools report having to deal with a large number of children using the bus network after school. At times, children are in uniform but sometimes they don't have an Oyster card and cannot get on a bus which means they end up hanging around in a nearby park. The Independent Chair of Brent LSCB said that there needs to be closer collaboration and more people

¹⁸ Task group meetings 1, 2

¹⁹ Task Group Meeting 2

taking responsibility for transport provision, and has proposed a workshop or summit which would bring together transportation and bus operators, police and schools.

25. As members we are aware of concerns of residents about many schoolchildren moving around the transportation network, particularly buses, in the after school hours and recognise the concerns and feelings of vulnerability which some young people may have. On that basis, we would like to make a recommendation to the Cabinet.

Recommendation 1: To support bringing together representatives from Transport for London, bus companies, and employee representatives with schools, further education colleges, the council, and statutory Boards to address concerns about adolescents on the transportation and bus network.

26. Schools are another important context. Schools are often a place of safety for children, especially when there are significant difficulties at home. Schools often have a strong relationship with the Police's Safer Schools Officers. But there is the issue of what happens to children outside of school hours or term-time. The task group was told that a school-age child can spend as little as 15% of his or her life in school. The task group was told that there can be an issue with 'losing' children over the summer holidays. Some children may even become gang affected at this time.²⁰ As mentioned, a role for organisations working with young people to develop contextual safeguarding is envisaged. Developing out-of-term activities is one in which these organisations could play an important role. So this area is another recommendation to the Cabinet.

Recommendation 2: To further support organisations working with young people to promote and develop extra-school activities, particularly in the summer months, for Brent's adolescent children.

27. While the academic literature refers to schools as a 'context', in Brent there needs to be a greater focus on further education, which the Children and Young People

²⁰ Task group meeting 3

department have recognised. The task group was told of the high number of adolescent children in further education. Many of Brent's young people, including vulnerable adolescents, leave school at 16 and go to college. But while schools have Safer Schools Officers, further education colleges do not have that dedicated police resource, and are covered by ward-level policing.²¹ The high number of adolescents in further education, and the importance of the borough's further education college means the task group would also like to make this recommendation to the Cabinet.

Recommendation 3: Brent's approach to contextual safeguarding should specifically develop its work with further education colleges to help address the risks faced by adolescent children in this context.

28. Peer groups is another context in which work has developed in advance of a formal plan or approach to contextual safeguarding being agreed. For example, Brent Council's Youth Offending Service has developed peer-network mapping to better understand what is going on in the peer groups of the young people it works with. The service has also commissioned organisations to help some of those young people develop a better understanding of positive and negative behaviours in peer groups.²² Schools support anti-bullying initiatives and the local authority works with schools and young people to organise a cross-borough event for National Anti-Bullying Week.

29. Social media and digital technology influences the contexts of neighbourhoods, schools and peer groups. It can be a positive force. For example, Community Protection is helping the borough to sign up to a new online platform called OWL (Online Watch Link). The platform allows local Neighbourhood Watch coordinators to communicate with residents, and to receive local crime alerts by email or SMS.²³

30. The task group heard about the issues which social media in particular can cause. Social media is a growing part of the world of the adolescent child, and it's thought that some children are spending a considerable amount of time on social media

²¹ Task group meeting 4

²² Task Group Meeting 2

²³ www.owl.co.uk/met/

outside of school with the rise of social networking through smartphones and online gaming. This technology is not new, but it has grown considerably in popularity.

31. However, the task group also heard about the problems it can cause in schools. Issues can include behavioural problems being made worse in a school because of social media and a resulting increase in vulnerability for some children. Problems can occur because of a child's or a parent's lack of knowledge in using smartphones and their settings. These are issues which many schools are addressing. The task group believes that social media is also a problem for further education colleges as well.

32. Brent Council has developed a Digital Strategy 2017-2020, agreed by Cabinet in 2017, which focuses on enabling the local authority to digitise services, and developing digital technology. The task group is of the view that any new Social Media Strategy should look at how it can help to address issues around social media and being online for Brent's adolescent children. This is another recommendation for the Cabinet.

Recommendation 4: A future Social Media Strategy should include how the local authority can work in partnership with external organisations or companies to address areas of concern in adolescents using social media and being online which are identified by Brent Council's approach to contextual safeguarding.

Risks

33. Risks described in the contextual safeguarding model, and referred to in the updated national guidance 'Working Together', are all present in Brent. A significant number of adolescents in Brent face one or more risks. The main focus for Brent's approach is on the issues of gangs, serious youth violence including county lines and child sexual exploitation (CSE). Radicalisation is not a significant priority in terms of scale and the work is done through Prevent, which works on a case-by-case basis.

34. Gang-related activity and county lines has a significant presence within the borough. There is a strong partnership response to keeping young people safe between the police and Children's Services. Gang intervention programmes have

been commissioned to work with children and young people on the periphery of gangs, and a gang mentor works with young people through Early Help, including the Youth Offending Service. The task group heard how gang involvement can start in a low-key way and then build up. There is a higher risk for some young people because they are in a particular environment and then get drawn into it. It can start out with a social dimension. For some young people the gang replicates a family environment. But money draws in young people and by selling drugs they can build up a 'debt' to their own gang.”²⁴ Knife crime and youth violence is clearly a major issue in the context of schools and neighbourhoods. Stabbings of adolescents do take place, and there have been high-profile incidents. Secondary schools work with their Safer School Officers, who operate screening arches in some schools and run talks about knife crime.²⁵

35. However, it should be remembered that while working with contextual safeguarding, there are risks are to children which emerge from within the family and which will still be present. In 2017 Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board commissioned a multi-agency audit on the theme of domestic abuse. That found that Domestic abuse is the most commonly referred concern to Brent Family Front Door, which is a contact point for concerns about children and families in Brent, and incorporates the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).²⁶

Community

36. Brent Council has no additional funding for contextual safeguarding, and its overall expenditure is falling. The council's overall spending has dropped considerably since 2010. On 25 February 2019 Council agreed the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 Budget. The new Budget cuts the Children and Young People department's expenditure to £40.7million for 2019/2020 excluding the ring-fenced budget for schools, and the overall day-to-day expenditure across all departments, or the General Fund, will fall from £242.2million to £238.6million. Further savings are planned after 2020/2021.²⁷

²⁴ Task Group Meeting 1

²⁵ Task Group meeting 3

²⁶ LSCB Annual Report 2017/18

²⁷ Proposed Revenue Budget 2019/2020, Budget and Council Tax 2019/2020 and 2020/21

Contextual safeguarding appears not to qualify as what government calls a 'new burden' and activity, including training, will be paid for from the General Fund.²⁸

37. Brent's approach envisages community organisations playing a role in supporting contextual safeguarding. This could include supporting extra activities for adolescent children, and working with more young people.²⁹ While the task group is supportive of this it is mindful that residents' organisations vary in how vocal and active they are. Also, there are many community groups, churches, mosques, temples and other organisations already running activities for the young. The task group would like to see these community organisations supported to help them understand contextual safeguarding and working with adolescents.

38. When it comes to working with the community we are of the view that contextual safeguarding needs to help remind residents and people working on the front line of high street businesses that safeguarding young people is everyone's responsibility as well.³⁰

39. While the council's resources are declining, the task group would challenge the Cabinet to see how expenditure can be re-focused or brought together from across departments for a public information campaign, to promote contextual safeguarding and safeguarding adolescents.

Recommendation 5: To develop a one-off public information campaign working with partner organisations and the community to support the development of contextual safeguarding in Brent.

²⁸ New Burdens Doctrine: Guidance for Departments (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2011) pp.4-5

²⁹ Task group meeting 1

³⁰ Task group meeting 3

Appendix A

Work Plan and Activities: Contextual Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Task Group

Meeting 1: Overview of Contextual Safeguarding and Children's Social Care

Themes

Understanding the contextual safeguarding model

Practice of contextual safeguarding

Role of the Contextual Safeguarding Network

National and local guidance

Existing safeguarding system and multi-agency working

Risks to adolescent children in Brent outside the family e.g. gangs, county lines, extremism and radicalisation

Contextual safeguarding and looked after children

Attendees

Operational Director Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy

Operational Director Integration and Improved Outcomes

Strategic Director Children and Young People

Cabinet Member Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care

Meeting 2: Implementing Contextual Safeguarding in Brent

Themes

Projects to put contextual safeguarding in place

Assessments and an adolescent child's environment

Examples of contextual safeguarding approaches to make public places safer

Mapping risks in public places

Developing knowledge of contextual safeguarding in children's services
Best practice and learning from other boroughs or nationally
Governance and working groups in the council
Role of officers in departments across the council to evaluate risk in public spaces
Partnerships with transport providers, businesses, fast food restaurants

Attendees

Operational Director Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy
Head of Community Protection
Head of Early Help
Head of Planning, Transport and Licensing
Cabinet Member Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care

Meeting 3: Contextual Safeguarding and Working with the Community

Themes

Working with the community to identify risks to adolescent children
Partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children Board; Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Priority Group
The role of parents
Engaging with schools, educational institutions
Learning events with the community on particular risks
Multi-agency working with partners in health and the police
Particular risks associated with schools, peer groups, the wider community, or online

Attendees

Brent LSCB Independent Chair,
Senior leadership representatives from Capital City Academy, and Newman Catholic College, Brent River College
Operational Director Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy

Meeting 4: Contextual Safeguarding and Brent's Strategic Priorities

Themes

Budgets for children's services and implementing contextual safeguarding

How contextual safeguarding meets strategic priorities

Commitments in the Borough Plan

Partnership with other local authorities

Partnership with police and other safeguarding partners

Task group recommendations to Cabinet

Attendees

Strategic Director Children and Young People

Cabinet Member Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care

Appendix B

Terms of Reference

- a) Understand the model of contextual safeguarding and the applicability of its implementation in Brent.
- b) Challenge the council's Cabinet in how they are supporting contextual safeguarding as a cross-cutting local authority initiative and as part of an improvement to children's services.
- c) Review the extent to which contextual safeguarding will help address priorities in the new borough plan.
- d) Understand contextual safeguarding from the perspective of front-line practitioners and those working in children's services.
- e) Understand Brent's particular social demographics and the scale of the risks for adolescent children in Brent.
- f) Develop recommendations for the council's Cabinet which are focused on the development of contextual safeguarding by the council and its partners.