

	<p align="center"><b>Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</b> 30 July 2024</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership</b></p>
	<p align="center"><b>Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and School - Councillor Grahl</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements) Report October 2022 - March 2024</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	One Appendix A - Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report Oct 2022 – Mar 2024
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<b>Zoe Tattersall</b> Strategic Partnership Lead for Safeguarding Children <a href="mailto:zoe.tattersall@brent.gov.uk">zoe.tattersall@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. To enable members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to consider the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) annual report covering the period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2024.
- 1.2. The decision to cover an eighteen month period was taken in consultation with statutory partners to facilitate coming into line with the Safeguarding Adults Board period of reporting, thus reflecting the broader approach to more collaborative and transitional working between the strategic safeguarding partnerships.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the safeguarding children partnership annual report (Appendix A)

### **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 made provision for the locally determined arrangements agreed and delivered by three statutory safeguarding partners – local authorities, ICBs and Police.
- 3.2 Statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) is referenced for the purposes of the report, which sets out the framework for local safeguarding oversight arrangements.
- 3.3 As set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018, the three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In December 2023 Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) was updated, with compliance with the guidance required by December 2024. A number of changes to the statutory functions of the Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements have been set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). To note these changes, there is an additional layer of strategic oversight in the form of Lead Safeguarding Partners and changes to the role of Independent Chair and Independent Scrutiny.

#### Safeguarding Partners

- 3.4 The responsibility for the strategic oversight of this join-up locally rests with the three safeguarding partners (Brent Council, Metropolitan Police and North West London Integrated Care Board) who have a shared and equal duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Brent.

#### Independent Scrutiny

- 3.5 The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Brent, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. The independent scrutiny is part of a wider external inspection system administered by Ofsted, CQC and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.
- 3.6 The decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is made locally and Brent safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.
- 3.7 Following the longstanding Independent Scrutineer's retirement in autumn 2023 a new Scrutineer took up the role. The Independent Scrutineer should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.

### Brent's safeguarding partnership arrangements

3.8 Brent's safeguarding children partnership arrangements consist of a three-tier structure:

- Tier 1 - The Executive Group - provides high-level strategic leadership
- Tier 2 - Brent Safeguarding Children Forum - diverse and wider-ranging partnership group
- Tier 3 - Delivery focussed sub-groups - responsible for carrying out specific statutory duties of the partnership, these include:
  - Case Review Group
  - Joint partnerships (Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board) Learning and Development Group
  - Multi-agency Audit Group

3.9 With the appointments of new Business Managers, Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board and an Independent Scrutineer over the forthcoming year the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board are undertaking a review of joint working arrangements and how closer collaboration can be achieved. One practical area of focus is Transitional Safeguarding, refreshing the work through the development of a joint sub-group driven by both safeguarding partnerships.

### The Executive Group

3.10 The Executive Group membership includes senior representatives from the three safeguarding partners - Brent Council (Corporate Director of Children and Young People), North West London Integrated Care Board (Director of Quality, Nursing and Safeguarding) and Metropolitan Police (Superintendent, Public Protection-Safeguarding Lead, North West BCU).

3.11 The Independent Scrutineer is a standing member of the Executive Group as is the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, providing political accountability for ensuring the Local Authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

### Brent Safeguarding Children Forum

3.12 The Brent Safeguarding Children Forum is the wider partnership forum accountable to the Executive Group, it is chaired by the Independent Scrutineer.

3.13 In line with the statutory guidance, The Brent Safeguarding Partners selected the agencies and organisations as members of the Forum. These agencies and organisations have been chosen as they provide key strategic and operational insight for the safeguarding of children and young people in Brent.

3.14 The membership of the Forum includes representation from the safeguarding partners, identified relevant agencies (including schools and other education

settings, health service providers, the Probation Service, CAFCASS) and lay members.

- 3.15 The Safeguarding Partners recognise the importance of involving the local community and therefore the Forum currently has two lay members. The lay members act as valuable ambassadors to help build stronger links with the local community as part of the new arrangements and are encouraged to:
- promote awareness of safeguarding across Brent's communities
  - represent the community voice at Safeguarding Forum meetings
  - engage with Brent's people and local groups to support community cohesion

#### Partnership support staff arrangements

- 3.16 Support staffing arrangements for the Brent safeguarding children partnership arrangements are funded and resourced by Brent Council.
- 3.17 The Strategic Partnerships Team is responsible for leading the coordination of the arrangements and is managed by the Strategic Partnerships Manager. The team is based in the Partnerships, Housing and Residents Services Department of the Council.
- 3.18 Alongside the safeguarding children partnership arrangements, the Strategic Partnerships Team also currently coordinates activities for other strategic partnerships in Brent including Brent Safeguarding Adults Board, Brent Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Partnership Board and Brent Children's Trust.
- 3.19 This staffing structure enables stronger strategic coordination between the strategic partnerships in Brent to both avoid duplication and develop joint initiatives. It also successfully facilitates a level of independence from the operational safeguarding activity of the council.
- 3.20 The Brent Council Governance Team provide some administration support for both the Executive Group and Safeguarding Forum meetings (approximately 1 day a month).
- 3.21 During the period of reporting, the Brent Safeguarding Children's Partnership carried out a range of activities, see the annual report (Appendix A) for further information. Further details of the functions and activity of the Executive Group, Forum and subgroups are laid out in the annual report (Appendix A).

#### **4.0 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context**

- 4.1 The Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) work has connections to the following outcomes within the Borough Plan:
- 4.2 **Prosperity and Stability in Brent** – The BSCP considers the impact on communities during a cost-of-living crisis and works with agencies such as housing and voluntary community sector members to have insight into the

evolving landscape. The learning and development programme is working towards ensuring practitioners are equipped to recognise signs, indicators and provide suitable intervention.

- 4.3 **Thriving Communities** – The BSCP has community engagement including Lay Members and voluntary community sector members. The Lay Members help to engage with Brent’s people and local groups to support community cohesion. One of the priorities for the next 12 months is to expand this reach.

There is representation from the BSCP at the Safer Brent Partnership and Community Safety is a standing member of the Safeguarding Children Forum.

- 4.4 **The Best Start in Life** – One of the priorities for the BSCP over the next 12 months is to broaden the voice of young people in its membership, planning and activities.

- 4.5 **A Healthier Brent** – The BSCP works to address health inequalities in the context of safeguarding children and recognises that children’s wellbeing and mental health is a safeguarding priority. Auditing is carried out with all statutory partners to monitor and review the safeguarding provision in this area.

The BSCP has representation at the North West London Child Sexual Abuse steering group.

The partnerships multiagency learning and development programme is informed by learning identified from Rapid Reviews and Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Work is underway to develop a joint BSCP and Safeguarding Adults Board, Transitional sub-group to ensure continuity of support and intervention from services from childhood into adulthood, this follows on from the work that has already been undertaken in Brent to date.

## 5.0 **Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

The Lead Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools is a core member of the Executive Group providing high level strategic leadership for the BSCP and regularly attends key meetings and inputs to the work of the partnerships.

## 6.0 **Financial Considerations**

- 6.1 The safeguarding partners agree the partnership financial funding to support the local arrangements on an annual basis and the financial year runs from the 1 April to the 31 March the following year.

- 6.2 For the 2023/24 financial year, the Safeguarding Children Partnership had an annual budget of £65,619.75 excluding staff costs.

6.3 The contributions that make up the safeguarding partnership budget are:

- Metropolitan Police £5,000
- NWL Integrated Care Board £45,900
- Probation Service £3,719.75
- London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust £11,000

6.4 The local authority makes additional contributions in the form of staffing costs to support the running and coordination of the safeguarding partnership arrangements.

6.5 A full breakdown of the budget is included in in the annual report (please see Appendix A).

## **7.0 Legal Considerations**

7.1 The safeguarding partnership is exercising its functions within the legislative framework of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

7.2 The statutory guidance in the form of Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out the framework for local safeguarding oversight arrangements.

7.3 The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations sets out the duties on local authorities to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel of serious safeguarding incidents that meet the reporting threshold. It also sets out the legislative requirements of the safeguarding partners in meeting their obligations to review the partnership working in these cases and implement learning across the partnership to improve systems and practice.

## **8.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

8.1 The multi-agency safeguarding children's arrangements in Brent have been jointly developed by Brent Council, NWL Integrated Care Board and the North West Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police.

8.2 The three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Brent. In discharging their duty safeguarding partners must be assured by partner agencies in the borough that multi-agency services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of Brent's children and young people, including those with additional needs and/or vulnerabilities.

8.3 The safeguarding partners also ensure that services are culturally aware and skilled in identifying, assessing, and meeting the individual needs of Brent children and their families.

## **9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

9.1 This report has no direct impact on the Council's environmental objectives and climate emergency strategy.

**10.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

10.1 This report does not relate to any HR or property related issues.

**11.0 Communication Considerations**

11.1 This is not within the scope of consideration.

**Report sign off:**

***Nigel Chapman***

Corporate Director of Children and Young People