

BRENT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

YEARLY REPORT

OCTOBER 22 - MARCH 24

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Foreword by the Independent Scrutineer of the Safeguarding Children Partnership - Keith Makin

The Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) in consultation with all partners has taken the decision to provide an eighteen-month period of reporting. The rationale for this is twofold; firstly, the partnership has been through a period of significant change since the last annual report; there have been changes in staffing including where key roles were vacant within the Local Authority and Independent Scrutiny. However, since October 2023 it has seen the appointment of a new Partnership Lead and an Independent Scrutineer. Secondly, by moving the reporting year to cover the period April-March the BSCP can come into line with the reporting cycle of the Safeguarding Adults Board. This is reflective of a broader approach to more collaborative and transitional working between the Strategic Partnerships.

For the purposes of this report Working Together 2018 will be referenced. To note Working Together 2023 was finalised and published in December 2023 and the BSCP is well ahead on the work it has undertaken with partners to embed this guidance, including an interim workshop with the Executive Group in February 2024 to ensure that it is compliant in advance of the December 2024 deadline.

02 INTRODUCTION

Local organisations and agencies have a duty to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions.

In addition, there is also a shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

The responsibility for the strategic oversight of this join-up locally rests with the three safeguarding partners, who have a shared and equal duty to arrange to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

The three safeguarding partners in relation to a local area in England are defined as:



1. The local authority
2. The Integrated Care Board
3. The police

The three safeguarding partners must:

- agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services
- act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others
- implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents

BRENT MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The purpose of the local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- **Children are safeguarded** and their welfare promoted;
- **Partner organisations and agencies collaborate**, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- **Organisations and agencies challenge** appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- **There is early identification and analysis** of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- **Learning is promoted and embedded** in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- **Information is shared effectively** to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.



To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners have set out jointly how they work together and with other relevant agencies in the Brent multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements.

Brent's statutory multi-agency safeguarding children partnership arrangements were published on the Brent Safeguarding Partnerships website in June 2019 and implemented on 30 September 2019.

The published arrangements were reviewed and updated by the Partnership in November 2021.

These will be subject to a review and potential change once Working Together 2023 is embedded within the partnership.

Brent's Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements consist of a three-tier structure:

Tier 1 The Executive Group - high-level strategic leadership group

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
- Multi-agency Audit Group
- Learning and Development Group (joint sub group of Brent's Safeguarding Children Partnership and Brent Safeguarding Adults Board)

The Executive Group fulfilled the objectives, functions and responsibilities set out in Working Together 2018 to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Brent by:

- agreeing the overarching strategic vision and local priorities for safeguarding children
- challenging and holding the Safeguarding Forum to account
- agreeing, publishing, and reviewing the safeguarding oversight arrangements
- monitoring serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance
- ensuring that the arrangements to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area are effective and robust
- identifying any new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- making strategic links with other Brent partnerships
- making provision for independent scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements

The Executive Group membership includes:

Brent Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Director of Children and Young People • The Leader of Brent Council • Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools
North West London Integrated Care Board (ICB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Quality, Nursing and Safeguarding
Metropolitan Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent (Public Protection-Safeguarding Lead, North West BCU)
Independent Chair and Scrutineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Chair for Brent Safeguarding Children Forum

The Brent Safeguarding Children Forum is a wider partnership forum accountable to the Executive Group.

The Forum co-ordinated and monitored multi-agency safeguarding oversight arrangements as set out in Working Together 2018 and is led by an Independent Chair.

The Forum is responsible for;

- driving delivery of local safeguarding priorities set by the Executive Group
- building relationships with other strategic partnerships, the local community, local schools, and other educational establishments
- seeking assurance on behalf of the Executive Group that partners are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities, sharing information effectively and have robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place through multi-agency audits and challenge at Forum meetings
- ensuring that safeguarding partners and relevant agencies follow the London Safeguarding Children Procedures
- developing and maintaining a Brent Thresholds document giving guidance on children getting the right help at the right time
- developing, implementing, and monitoring the impact of an interagency safeguarding children learning and development programme, incorporating local and national learning from serious child safeguarding cases
- analysing and considering partnership responses to any new safeguarding issues and emerging threats identified by the Executive Group
- undertaking Local Learning Reviews on behalf of the Executive Group
- developing ways for the safeguarding oversight arrangements to include the voices of children and families in Brent (e.g., refining rapid reviews to include agencies who can properly represent the voice of the child/ren, such as schools)
- considering multi-agency management information (e.g., scrutinising annual reports presented to the Forum) and intelligence to establish an overview of and assess the effectiveness of safeguarding activity within Brent
- supporting agencies in resolving disputes that have been appropriately escalated
- scrutinising the learning, good practice, and implementation of recommendations from rapid reviews
- responding effectively to emerging safeguarding issues

The membership of the Forum includes representation from the following partners, relevant agencies and lay members:

SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS		AGENCY/ORGANISATION	
North West London ICB	Designated Safeguarding Children Professionals for Brent Named GP for Safeguarding, Brent	Education establishments	College of North West London / United Colleges Group Newman Catholic College Lyon Park Primary School The Village and Woodfield Special Schools Kingsbury High School Preston Manor School
Brent Council	Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services (Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care) Children and Young People Housing Needs Safeguarding Adults Public Health Community Safety		Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH)
Metropolitan Police	North West Basic Command Unit (BCU) Public Protection		Central North West London Mental Health Foundation NHS Trust (CNWL)
			Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
			London Ambulance Service (LAS)
			London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWUHT)
			Probation Service

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.

The selected relevant agencies form the core membership of the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum. Forum members are expected to;

- **proactively and enthusiastically engage with the partnership safeguarding arrangements**
- **be able to influence the strategic planning for safeguarding children within their agency**
- **be able to secure appropriate information from their agency to support the partnership work**
- **ensure that decisions of the Forum are taken forward within their own agency, and any impediments or delays to their implementation are reported to the Board**
- **be responsible for communicating the partnership work effectively within their agency**

The Safeguarding Partners recognise the importance of involving the local community and therefore the Forum 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

The Forum continues to develop and strengthen the existing engagement from early years, schools and the Further Education College in the borough and has a significant membership from this sector.

Attendance at all Safeguarding Forum meetings is monitored and where any concerns arise regarding attendance and engagement of relevant agencies, the Independent Chair raise these with both the agency concerned and the Executive Group.

The Case Review Group is critical to the work of the Safeguarding Partners in Brent. It is the key mechanism for carrying out reviews of serious safeguarding cases that meet the criteria set out in Working Together 2018

The Case Review Group meeting is led by the Independent Chair and is responsible for:

- considering all serious incident cases in Brent and making recommendations to the Safeguarding Partners for determination if the learning review criteria has been met to refer a case to the National Panel.
- identifying recommendations for any lessons to be learnt from serious incidents in Brent
- coordinating the arrangements on behalf of the Safeguarding Partners for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews
- developing the terms of reference, monitoring progress developing improvement plans coming for each local review
- making recommendations for multi-agency learning events based on the findings arising from case reviews and what the process is for undertaking them
- sharing examples of good practice to develop understanding of what works well.

The Case Review Group has a fixed core membership drawn from the statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. It has the flexibility to invite other relevant professionals to discuss certain cases as and when appropriate (including rapid reviews).

The core membership of the Case Review Group includes representation from the following partners, relevant agencies, and organisations;

SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS		AGENCY/ORGANISATION
North West London ICB	Designated Safeguarding Children Professionals for Brent Named GP for Safeguarding, Brent	Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH)
Brent Council	Children and Young People Community Safety Legal Services	Central North West London Mental Health Foundation NHS Trust (CNWL)
Metropolitan Police	North West Basic Command Unit (BCU) Public Protection	London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWUHT)

In recognition of the sensitive and confidential nature of business, all agency representatives/members must sign a confidentiality agreement, which includes the requirement to appropriately share and securely store information.

The Case Review Group also ensures that where possible and appropriate to do so, children, young people and families are involved in Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR).

The Safeguarding Partners agreed that a multi-agency safeguarding children learning and development programme would be offered as part of the partnership arrangements from September 2019.

The safeguarding children partners tasked a Learning and Development Advisory Group to oversee the development and delivery of the multi-agency learning and development programme. This group was supported by the Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Coordinator.

In August 2022, following a review of the function of the existing group, a proposal was developed to create a new joint Learning and Development sub-group for both the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

The proposal identified the need for the joint group to have a reinvigorated focus on:

- Delivering a joint multiagency safeguarding learning and development programme that is effective at responding to identified local and national safeguarding issues and priority areas of focus
- Redesign the current programme to increase the impact on multi-agency practice, processes, and systems in Brent
- Maximising and raising the profile, and uptake, of the programme through the development of a communications plan
- Reviewing the evaluation process and defining impact

In September 2022, the proposal for the joint group was agreed by both the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

The Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Officer supports the progress of this group and leads on identifying the multi-agency membership and development of the work plan.

Multi-agency audit activity evaluates the effectiveness of agencies, individually and together, to improve the wellbeing of children, including ensuring that children and young people get the right help and protection at the right time.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership is committed to strengthening the multi-agency case auditing activity and in February 2022 it was agreed that the partnership would set up a multi-agency audit group.

The Multi-agency Audit Group meeting is chaired by Brent Council Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance and is responsible for;

- Developing a good oversight of multi-agency practice through audit activity.
- reviewing how agencies work together to create the right conditions for effective practice
- evaluating how and where improvements are needed
- developing and implementing a programme of multi-agency audits to establish that appropriate safeguarding activities are being undertaken and that effective procedures and practices are in place
- conducting multi-agency audits, making multi-agency practice recommendations, and disseminating learning
- monitoring implementation of multi-agency recommendations and actions arising from audits and consider what difference these have made
- testing and monitoring multi-agency compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requirements

The Multi-agency Audit Group has a fixed core membership drawn from the statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. It has the flexibility to invite other relevant professionals to participate in certain audits as and when appropriate.

The core membership of the Multi-agency Audit Group includes representation from the following partners, relevant agencies, and organisations;

SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS	
North West London ICB	Designated Safeguarding Children Professionals for Brent Named GP for Safeguarding, Brent
Brent Council	Children and Young People
Metropolitan Police	North West Basic Command Unit (BCU) Public Protection

AGENCY/ORGANISATION
Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH)
Central North West London Mental Health Foundation NHS Trust (CNWL)
London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNUHT)
Education representatives (Designated Safeguarding Lead -Preston Manor School)

The Safeguarding Partners agreed that the Safeguarding Forum is led by an Independent Chair, who also undertakes the role of the Independent Scrutineer.

A new Independent Chair and Scrutineer commenced in post October 2023.

The Independent Chair's role includes:

- appropriately challenging partner agencies and professionals for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Brent
- providing direction to the Safeguarding Forum and ensuring statutory obligations and local priorities are being delivered
- overseeing the progression case reviews to ensure they meet required timescales
- ensuring that key local issues and national developments are considered by the Safeguarding Forum
- challenging and monitoring the performance and participation of partners in the work of the Safeguarding Forum
- chair and agree the record of rapid reviews and oversee the implementation of recommendations and learning

Support staffing arrangements for the Brent safeguarding children partnership arrangements are funded and resourced by Brent Council.

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 Communities and Regeneration Department of the council.

Alongside the safeguarding children partnership arrangements, the Strategic Partnerships Team also 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

This staffing structure enables stronger 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.

The following staffing provision within the Strategic Partnerships Team that coordinate the safeguarding children arrangements include;

- A full time Strategic Partnerships Manager
- A full time Strategic Partnerships Lead
- A part time Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Officer

The Brent Council Governance Team provide some administration support for both the Executive Group and Safeguarding Forum meetings (approximately 1 day a month).

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.

Safeguarding Partnership Contributions

Brent Council

As Brent Council's contribution consists of the officer support staffing/resource arrangements for the partnership, no additional financial contribution is made to the partnership financial arrangements. The staffing/resource arrangements.

Metropolitan Police

Despite numerous repeated challenges made at all levels across London, all London boroughs, regardless of size, continue to receive the same level of financial contribution from the Metropolitan Police, agreed centrally by MOPAC and set at £5,000. In a recent update it is noted that this is likely to change for the financial year 2025/26.

North West London ICB

NWL ICB financially contribute towards the partnership financial arrangements, this is a continuation of the contribution previously made by Brent ICB and is set at £45,900.

Relevant Agency Contributions

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership also received financial contributions from the following relevant agencies:

National Probation Service	£3,719.75
London North West University Healthcare Trust	£11,000

Financial Contribution	Amount £
Metropolitan Police	5,000
NWL ICB	45,900
Probation Service	£3,719.75
London North West University Health Care NHS Trust	£11,000
TOTAL	£65,619.75

Expenditure

Below is a summary of Partnership expenditure covering the financial period since the last annual report:

Expense	Amount £
Independent Chair fees	15,738
Learning Management System (LMS) and website contributions	2,464
External facilitators for training	4,250
Events	5,036
Total	27,488

The partnership recognises that there has been an underspend in this financial year which has been impacted by of a number of factors including:

- The partnership have experienced significant change in personnel for both the Independent Chair and business support arrangements, this, alongside the publication of Working Together 2023, as provided an opportunity to focus on reviewing and refreshing the existing arrangements.
- The partnership has not seen any expenditure against Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- There has been a focus on strengthening the existing multi-agency learning and development programme with a view to developing a richer and broader programme during the next financial year.

As a result, this underspend will be carried over into next year's reserves and it is projected that the partnership spend will significantly increase during the next financial year due to the need to ensure compliance with Working Together 2023 and the activities associated with this. For example Section 11 audits and quality assurance.

04 BRENT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY

Date	Meeting	Key areas of focus
7th November 2022	Executive Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for the sign off on the annual report to the Community Wellbeing and Scrutiny Committee. Focus on lines of enquiry around multiagency training and implementation of learning from Rapid Reviews. • Discussion around Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Briefing September 2022 – Multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse. The Safeguarding Children Forum to have a dedicated a focus on domestic abuse to assure themselves around how partners responded to domestic abuse. • Safeguarding Forum update – consideration of recent Rapid Review
1st December 2022	Safeguarding Forum Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on safeguarding children and young people. • Discussion regarding Safeguarding Children and the Draft Community Safety Strategy.
6th December 2022	Case Review Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case learning discussion regarding multi-agency response to a suspected sexual abuse case of a young child. • Two other borough cases involving Brent discussed. One other borough’s final report to be signed off December 2022 and planned to be published early 2023. • Local safeguarding partnership response to learning from death of a child and links to housing disrepair cases.
2nd March 2023	Safeguarding Forum meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent response to concerns of damp and mould in homes, health highlighted that they have seen families being moved quicker as a result of damp and mould in the home. • Presentation on implications of the Serious Violence Duty for Safeguarding Partners. • The Forum received an update on the full Ofsted inspection of local authority services for children in Brent that took place from 13 February to 24 February 2023. Initial verbal judgement was positive. • The Forum were also updated on a recent Rapid Review for a teenager who had attempted suicide. Over forty practitioners attended. The Convener highlighted that this was one of several cases involving attempted suicide in different London boroughs, and observed it was an increasing issue.
9th March 2023	Case Review Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance presented on case audit learning outcomes. • Update on learning from a recent Rapid Review • Update on changes to the Convener and Business Manager Roles
20th April 2023	Multiagency Audit Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Targeted Area Inspections discussed looking at partner experience feedback from recent neighbouring borough’s JTAI • Exploration of current and upcoming themes. • Review of Multiagency Learning Logs from February 2023 Audit.

04 BRENT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY

Date	Meeting	Key areas of focus
17th May 2023	Executive Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key changes to partnership roles discussed; Independent Chair and Strategic Partnerships Manager. • Discussion around the National Review - Safeguarding Children with complex health needs and disabilities placed in residential settings. • Discussion on the Police response to the Baroness Casey Review.
26th July 2023	Executive Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on key partnership roles - Independent Chair/Scrutineer recruitment. • Outgoing Independent Convener highlighted Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Achievements. • Confirmation of partnership budget contributions 2023-24 • Discussion on DfE Consultation on Statutory Guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. • Discussion on the publication of CHSCP Child Q update report.
8th December 2023	Executive Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion regarding the current partnership arrangements in line with the predicted Working Together 2023 publication. • Discussion on consolidation of learning from recent Brent Rapid Review. • Police shared HMICFRS Child Exploitation which was embargoed. Child exploitation and missing persons are to remain an on-going agenda item while improvements were made.
14th December 2023	Safeguarding Forum Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and Review of partnership arrangements in line with the Working Together 2023 proposals • Presentation from Police on 'Right Care , Right Person' • Presentation on changes to Brent Child Protection Conferences • Updates from partners: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brent CYP - Annual evaluation meeting from Ofsted had been successful 2. Police - Highlighted an uplift across staff bands. However, it was proving slower to recruit to Police Conference Liaison Officers. 3. NWL ICB - are currently going through a consultation but that this would not impact on safeguarding arrangements. 4. Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust - Roll out of 'Its ok to cry' ICON Training. 5. Education - DSLs are seeing an increase in referrals of sexualised behaviour. 6. London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust - asked the Forum to consider how partners were supporting children from Muslim and Jewish communities in response to the on-going conflict in Gaza and Israel.

04 BRENT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY

Date	Meeting	Key areas of focus
1st February 2024	Interim Workshop of the Executive Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Chair/Scrutineer presented a report on initial feedback on Working Together 2023 , current Brent Multiagency Safeguarding Arrangements and ensuring compliance by December 2024. • Areas for development including the voice of children, young people and families and lay membership and the wider voluntary and community sector. • Discussion on Section 11 Audits, and engagement with the Safeguarding Adults Board.
22nd February 2024	Case Review Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on last Rapid Review and outstanding action. • Cases of concern - recent serious incidents raised a possible thematic issue around Abusive Head Trauma in children under the age of one. • Presentation from Health on ICON training • Update from Child Death Overview Meeting • Learning and Development update
14th March 2024	Safeguarding Forum Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together 2023 update. • Presentation from CYP on DSL conference • Presentation from Perinatal Services and engagement with wider partners around mental health of carers • Learning and Development update
21st March 2024	Executive Group meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together 2023 update • Proposals for a possible joint executive group for Safeguarding Children’s Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board • Discussion on quality assurance - Section 11 Audit and Health Check Tool kit • Initial feedback on the draft Annual Report • HMICFRS update

INTEGRATED CARE BOARD



The ICB has during 2023/24 delivered a comprehensive safeguarding training programme meeting the training needs of the Designated Professionals, Named Professionals, and the wider North West London Children's workforce. The safeguarding training offer includes topics and issues pertinent to both safeguarding adult and safeguarding children professionals. A robust evaluation process is in place and this will further inform the ICB training offer 2024/2025.

The ICB has commissioned safeguarding supervision training to ensure Designated Professionals and Named Professionals have the skills and competencies to deliver effective safeguarding supervision across the NHS workforce.

The emergence of Integrated Care Boards (ICB) and the development of Integrated Care Systems (ICS) has led to adjustments in the ICB safeguarding governance arrangements. The ICB has set up a NWL ICS Safeguarding Group which brings together key health safeguarding leaders across North West London to identify, review and plan safeguarding activity from a region wide health perspective.

The ICB has begun rolling out the ICON programme across the eight North West London boroughs. ICON is an effective evidence-based programme designed to provide information to parents and carers about infant crying, including how to cope, where to get support and so preventing abusive head trauma in babies. The training of health professionals in Brent is now complete and a borough launch is being planned.

The ICB has commissioned training from domestic abuse specialist agencies as part of a wider strategy to support primary care in the identification and referral process for domestic abuse. The Designated Professionals will play a key role is cascading training out to GP Practices.

The Named GP Safeguarding Children has continued to provide support and training for GPs and primary care staff, covering topics such as consent and information sharing, as well as discussion of clinical cases. These sessions are always well attended, and often have clinical input from the Designated Nurses for both Children and Adults which allows the ICB Safeguarding team to promote the "think family" approach.



POLICE

HMICFRS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) published their full report into the Metropolitan Police's handling of child sexual and criminal exploitation. During their initial investigation in October 2023, they identified two accelerated causes of concern related to how the force responds to missing children reports, and how the force investigates child sexual and criminal exploitation. The full report makes 11 recommendations in total, including a third cause of concern around the use of victim blaming language by officers and staff at all ranks and grades.

We are saddened by the finding that, in some cases, victim blaming language has been used where vulnerable children are concerned. This responsibility does not fall solely on the shoulders of missing person teams, or those specialising in child criminal and sexual exploitation. Children are among the most vulnerable in our society, and we know that all officers and staff care deeply, and want to do their best to keep children safe.

We all have a responsibility to ensure the language we use reflects the care and compassion vulnerable children deserve. Further training will be provided, but our planned interventions will be more targeted than the recommendations made today by HMICFRS.

Response to the HMICFRS findings

The first two areas of concern highlighted in October were sobering, and since receiving them, we have:

- Trained more than 1,200 child protection officers, so they can spot the signs of exploitation earlier and better support the most vulnerable children across London. Additionally, the 400 officers responsible for grading and investigating missing children have been trained in relation to the application of the national guidance regarding the grading of missing children and links to exploitation.
- Strengthened resource in criminal and sexual exploitation investigation teams, with 36 new officers already in post and another 36 more due to start by April.
- Worked to retain experienced staff in specialist missing people roles, so there is more consistency across decision making and support for training new staff.
- 64 additional posts have been added to BCU MASH/referrals teams to support increased information sharing and decision making.
- Launched Right Care, Right Person to help free up more resource to better investigate missing children and suspected exploitation. Right Care, Right Person is aimed at ensuring the right agencies deal with health-related calls, instead of the police being the default first responder.

POLICE



As a result, we have already started to see improvements against two of our accelerated areas of concern:

- Since the HMI inspection concluded in September, we have almost doubled the amount of missing children being graded as high risk. This ensures more oversight from senior leaders on individual cases, and escalation where there needs to be more urgent action to locate missing children quickly, and protect them from potential harm.
- A 50% increase in the volume of child exploitation concerns being identified by officers and investigated by the child exploitation teams.

Our New Met for London plan committed to developing a Stop and Search Charter setting out how, and when stop and search should be used and provide greater transparency on the tactic. The Charter is being developed in partnership with Londoners as part of our work to rebuild trust and confidence.

Over the last six months we have carried out significant community engagement, asking Londoners for their views on how stop and search should be; carried out, audited, scrutinised and governed and how we should work with communities going forward to ensure their views are heard. We have focused consultation on those groups most likely to be affected by stop and search, including young people and those from a minority background, through a combination of locally run events on each borough and thematic events at New Scotland Yard and online. Key themes from the events have included:

- Focusing on the quality of the encounter
- Improved supervision
- Improved training
- Improved complaints handling
- Better use of technology
- Enhanced independent governance and scrutiny
- Community involvement in where, when and why Stop and Search is being used
- Better public understanding of Stop and Search



BRENT COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In February 2023, Ofsted conducted an inspection of Brent local authority children's services. The judgement areas of the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families; the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection; the experiences and progress of children in care and the experience and progress of care leavers were all graded Good, leading to the overall effectiveness of Brent CYP as Good. During this inspection, Ofsted found that the integrated Brent Family Front Door is effective in delivering the right response for children at the earliest time. They also found that children are quickly referred into children's statutory services for an immediate response when there are child protection concerns.

Ofsted identified four areas of improvement. These included compliance with private fostering regulations and the senior management oversight, performance management information and quality assurance of these arrangements; the attendance of children in care at their reviews and the quality of information provided to children following their reviews; care leavers' understanding of and access to their health histories; the consistency of management supervision and recording. Following the inspection, a robust improvement plan was put in place with evidence of impact seen within six months of the inspection.

Activity to build upon our response to safeguarding children during the period of review includes:

- Increasing the number of permanent social workers working Brent CYP to build consistency for families
- Driving a strong multi-agency response to extra-familial harm by coordinating multi-agency complex strategy meetings, peer mapping meetings and co-chairing the Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel, supporting schools to understand pupil's understanding of safety in and around schools and developing a location based assessment model
- Continuing to embed a robust Quality Assurance Framework with improvement activity proactively monitored through a Practice Improvement Plan
- Developing and launching the Brent CYP Ways of Working entitled "This is Brent CYP. This is how we grow." This document clearly outlines the values and behaviours expected from all staff in CYP, Brent CYP's commitment to anti-racist practice and the practice approaches that are used by those working directly with children and families
- Appointing a permanent Local Authority Designated Officer to oversee allegations against those in a position of trust and deliver information session to multi-agency professional to raise awareness about processes and thresholds.
- Developing an adaptive training offer that identifies learning from serious cases and running reflective sessions to help practitioners learn from these situations and improve their practice
- Launching a CYP Participation Strategy that promotes work with children in young people individual, representative and strategic spaces
- Coordinating and supporting a highly active schools Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Network including multi-agency conference to build strong safeguarding practice with schools and sharing learning from serious cases and multi-agency audits with DSLs

06 PARTNERSHIP LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



A joint multi-agency training offer for Safeguarding Children's Partnership, and Safeguarding Adults Board in Brent.

The Learning and Development Sub-group

The group is led by two co-chairs, and has met eight times. Members represent a range of agencies within the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board and provides a steer on the programme and new multi-agency courses.

It is important to recognise that the multi-agency safeguarding programme is not mandatory and is offered as an enhancement to all partners individual workforce training programmes.

Priorities - Expanding the partnerships multiagency safeguarding learning and development programme offer

The core focus for 2023-2024 has been on strengthening and expanding the programme. This includes new the development of 'packages' of shorter briefing sessions (60 – 90 minutes) with a focus on specific learning from serious cases (thematic, and multi and single cases) and developing practitioners skills and confidence.

The following course topics remain in development with a view to including these in the programme for 2024-2025:

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Private fostering and Kinship Care
- LADO
- Coercive and Controlling Behaviour
- CON, safe sleeping and head trauma
- Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Multiple/complex needs and safeguarding adults at risk
- Information sharing
- The Lead Worker/Professional
- Serious Cases Reviews
- Trauma-informed Practice
- Serious Violence Series - youth violence, serious homicides, etc.
- Learning from Cases Series (as well as learning being woven into other training)

06 PARTNERSHIP LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Increase the reach

The partnerships have recognised the need to strengthen the promotion of the multi-agency programme across the partnership. This includes expanding the mailing list, utilising newsletters and varying communication methods. The 'cascade' model to a broader range of colleagues and teams across the partnership is having an impact:

- Registrations are up 324 since February 2023.
- Bookings are up by 4%.

Reduce no show rates

The data shows a reduction in no shows of 9% when compared to 2022 - 2023. Cancellations are down by 10%. The introduction of additional reminder notifications has proved successful in encouraging delegates to attend.

A strengthened process has also been introduced to ensure that there is follow up with all non-attendees post-course, this aims to both understand the reasons for non-attendance and reduce the numbers of future non-attendance.

Increasing the range of delivery methods

More variation in course length is being introduced, with a focus on increasing shorter briefing sessions. This includes the development of three sets of short course series. We also have an increase in in-person sessions, and the data and impact of these will be monitored, analysed and reported over the next financial year.

Evaluations

The introduction of a four-stage evaluation process which includes a pre and post course learning gain questions, and a 2 month post course delegate and line manager survey to gain an insight into the impact of the training on practice. It has been agreed that the Learning and Development Group will begin annual analysis activity of the evaluation responses and data in 2024-2025.

The multi-agency approach to training

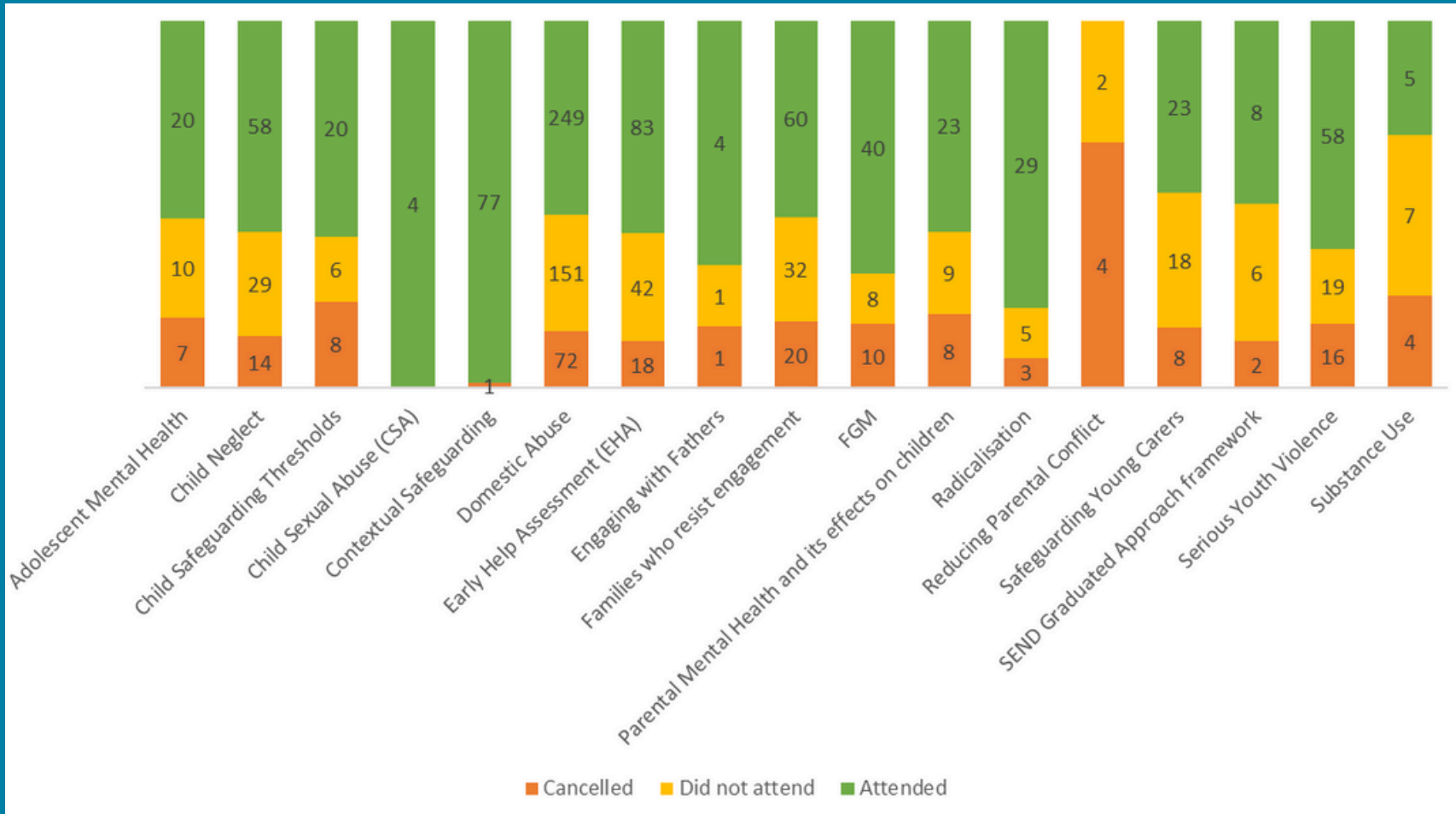
The individual content of the courses has historically had a separate audience focus on either Adults or Children safeguarding practitioners. The partnerships recognised that the programme should include a focus on joint course topics that benefit both Children and Adults practitioners. This reflection aims to benefit of practitioners who work with children and young people, and those who work with adults in learning together. This also aims to support the work being undertaken around transitional safeguarding and encourage increased joint working across both areas.

06 PARTNERSHIP LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership – Learning and Development course attendance covering the period between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2024

The graph below demonstrates the attendance rates for each course topic included in the programme between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2024.



NOTE:

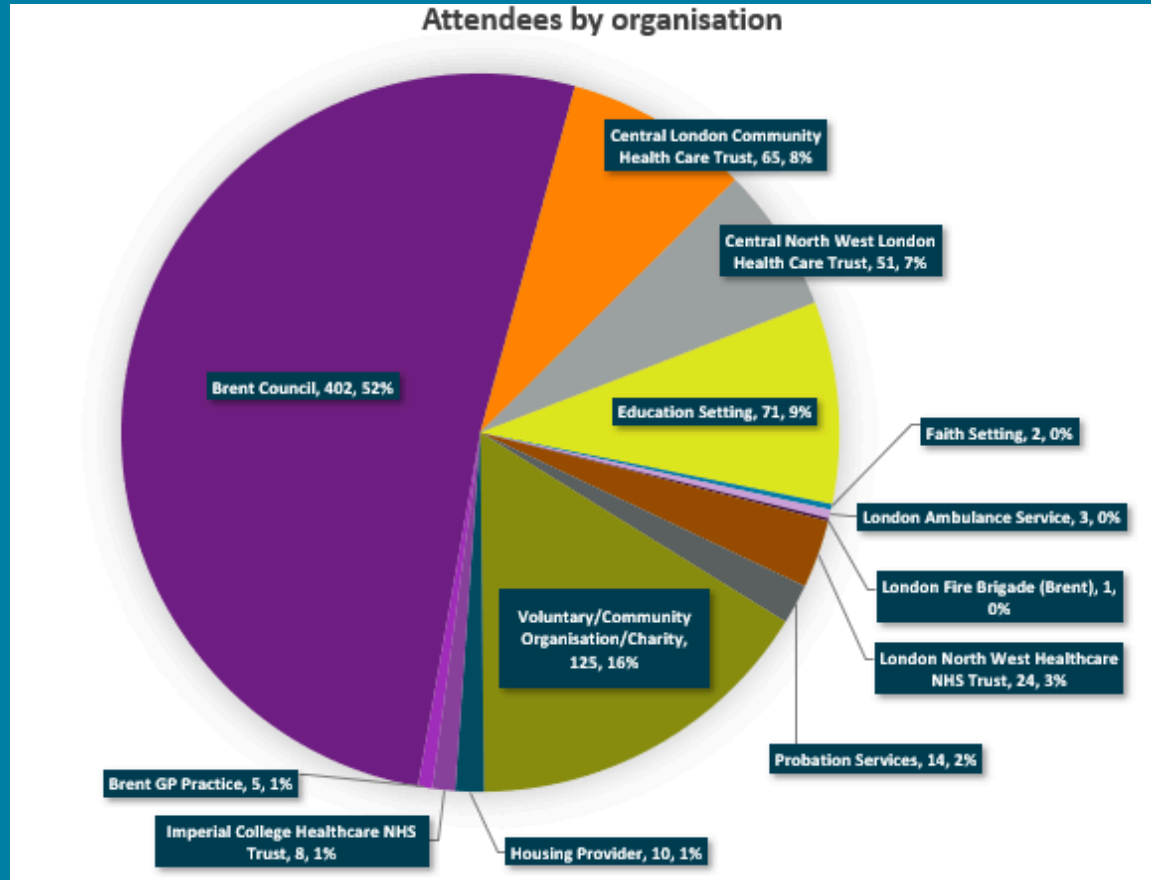
- The Child Sexual Abuse course are as such due to this being introduced as a new course in March 2024.
- The Contextual Safeguarding course was run as a one-off session in partnership with Brent Council CYP department.

06 PARTNERSHIP LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership - Learning and Development course attendance

The graph below demonstrates the attendance rates from partner agencies between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2024.



NOTE:

Both partnerships analyse the attendance rates from partner organisations and recognise that there are varying levels of attendance across partner agencies. Whilst it is recognised that some organisations face a greater challenge in attending than others, we are always looking for ways to extend our reach and engagement from colleagues across the Partnership. The L&D subgroup welcomes input and support from all organisations.

Whilst it appears that police did not attend any multi agency training it is worth noting that all three of the policing boroughs have linked in with the NW BCU training unit and are preparing inputs for all officers on all strands. This totals around 1,500 or 1,600 officers. This provides an opportunity for the three local authorities shared by police to give specific input to officers and disseminate learning from Rapid Reviews or CSPRs, or other multi agency audits and most recently incorporating the voice of the child.

Over the next year Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership will prioritise embedding the new Working Together 2023 guidance and any subsequent Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements; including the ambition to treat the Education Sectors as a 'fourth partner', to ensure that it is compliant in advance of the December 2024 deadline.

Key areas of focus:



Safeguarding Conference - Work has already commenced on a joint safeguarding conference with the SCP and the SAB scheduled for December 2024



Developing data collection, use and analysis. - A review of auditing systems to support quality assurance and establishing a mechanism and software platform to support this. Including the Section 11 audit to include the voice of children and young people.



Community engagement - Identifying and establishing involvement of young people and families in the work of the partnership to include having the voice of the child more apparent in annual reports from 2025 onwards.



Neurodiversity - To focus on Autistic Spectrum Disorder, early identification and the safeguarding impact. In particular females and 'masking' behaviours.

We thank our partners for their continued support in our efforts to improve safeguarding practice and procedures in Brent