



Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 6.00 pm

This will be an online virtual meeting. The link to view the meeting can be accessed [HERE](#).

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Ketan Sheth (Chair)
Colwill (Vice-Chair)

Aden

Daly

Ethapemi

Hector

Lloyd

Sangani

Shahzad

Thakkar

Substitute Members

Councillors:

S Choudhary, Hassan, Johnson, Kabir, Long,
Mahmood, Miller, Perrin and Shah

Councillors:

Kansagra and Maurice

Co-opted Members

Helen Askwith, Church of England Schools

Simon Goulden, Jewish Faith Schools

Dinah Walker, Parent Governor Representative

Alloysius Frederick, Roman Catholic Diocese Schools

Sayed Jaffar Milani, Muslim Faith Schools

Observers

Brent Youth Parliament, Jenny Cooper (NEU Special School Observer), John Roche (NEU Secondary School Observer), Vacancy (NEU Primary School Observer)

For further information contact: Hannah O'Brien, Governance Officer
hannah.o'brien@brent.gov.uk

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**The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting.
The link to view the meeting can be accessed [HERE](#).**

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

- (a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:
 - To which you are appointed by the council;
 - which exercises functions of a public nature;
 - which is directed is to charitable purposes;
 - whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).

- (b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who is the subject of a registrable personal interest

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members	
2 Declarations of interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.	
3 Deputations (if any)	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
4 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 10
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.	
5 Matters arising (if any)	
6 Brent Council's Management of the Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Services	11 - 28
To provide the Committee with an update on Brent Council's management of the impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services. <i>*This was published as a supplementary item on 17 November 2020.</i>	
7 Update on Schools and Education, including the Action Plan for Raising Achievement of Boys of Black Caribbean Heritage	29 - 42
To update the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on schools and education in Brent, and the actions taken to raise the achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage.	
8 Brent Youth Offending Service Post Inspection Action Plan Implementation	43 - 66
To provide detail of the progress made in implementing the actions arising	

from the four recommendations from the Youth Offending Service Inspection that took place in August 2019, with additional focus given to the impact of COVID-19 on local youth justice provision and how Brent YOS has responded operationally to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

9 Contextual Safeguarding Update

67 - 74

To further update the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on progress of the implementation of contextual safeguarding in Brent and the partnership response.

10 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 19 January 2021



MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Tuesday 15 September 2020 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Ketan Sheth (Chair), Councillor Colwill (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Aden, Daly, Ethampemi, Hector, Lloyd, Long (Substitute), Shahzad, and Thakkar, and co-opted members Alloysius Frederick, Mr Simon Goulden and Rev. Helen Askwith (from 6:20pm). **All members were present in a remote capacity.**

Also Present: Councillor McLennan and Councillor M Butt

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

Apologies for absence were received as follows:

- Councillor Sangani, substituted by Councillor Long

2. **Declarations of interests**

Personal Interests were declared as follows:

- Councillor Ketan Sheth – Lead Governor, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
- Councillor Ethampemi – Spouse employed by the NHS
- Councillor Shahzad – Spouse employed by the NHS
- Mr Simon Goulden – Spouse Chair of governors of a Brent School

3. **Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations received.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

AGREED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 July 2020 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

There were no matters arising.

6. **Order of Business**

RESOLVED: that the Chair would take item 7, **BAME communities and the impact of Covid-19 in Brent** first, item 6, **Brent NHS and Covid-19 response and recovery** second, and item 8, **Single CCG for North West London and the development of the Integrated Care System (ICS)** last.

7. **BAME communities and the impact of Covid-19 in Brent**

Councillor Neil Nerva (Cabinet Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure, Brent Council) introduced the report which provided an overview of the underlying causes of the patterns of

infection and mortality from Covid-19 among Brent's Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Councillor Nerva pointed to report paragraphs 6.8.1 onwards regarding community health meetings that had taken place the previous week with community leaders in Church End and Alperton. There was a proposal to create Community Champions roles for outreach in those communities.

Dr Melanie Smith (Director of Public Health, Brent Council) noted when thinking about the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities it was important to think about the potential causes, such as occupational exposure, increased susceptibility to severe infection from underlying health conditions and access to appropriate healthcare, and Brent's possible response to those regarding exposure to the virus. Dr Melanie Smith acknowledged the entrenched structural inequalities within society and expressed that there was a need to act in the immediate and longer term, with immediate actions aimed at reducing exposure to the virus, increasing resilience and ensuring access to healthcare.

The Chair thanked both for their introduction and invited questions from the Committee, with the following issues raised:

The Committee queried what actions would be taken forward as a result of the findings that BAME communities were disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. Dr Melanie Smith advised they would be acting to reduce the exposure of BAME communities to the virus. For example, Public Health England research had shown that national messaging was not culturally competent therefore Brent had developed local messaging and were part of the 'keep London safe' campaign which had produced materials more appropriate for a diverse London population. The Council wanted to work with the community and engage Community Champions to ensure messaging was reaching all communities effectively. Dr Melanie Smith expressed it was important the Council worked with the community to develop the action plan rather than presenting an action plan produced for them, as Public Health England qualitative research showed many BAME communities felt disempowered.

Further discussing the action plan, the Committee heard that the Council and health colleagues were reducing exposure by getting people tested and self-isolated. There was a hyper-local walk-in testing site in Harlesden which had adapted the national model to ensure it was accessible to local people, and increasingly those getting tested at that site were reflective of the ethnic diversity of the communities who lived there. It was also highlighted that BAME communities were more susceptible to severe levels of infection, some of which was associated with higher levels of diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease in those communities. Dr Melanie Smith explained that there was evidence those conditions, if poorly controlled, contributed to worse outcomes. The Public Health department were working hard with Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to ensure people with those long term conditions were contacted and helped to maximise the control of their condition in preparation for a second wave. Work on the flu vaccination programme had also begun to increase resilience, and NHS colleagues were working with the Local Authority to look at new models of primary care, and would be piloting those models in Church End and Alperton. Dr MC Patel (Chair, Brent CCG) added that primary care clinical directors and operational managers were looking at the government provided shielded list in Brent and had made the decision to include more people on that list to ensure appropriate advice was going to more people. The list would be extended to include BAME communities and people with associated co-morbidities, who were not necessarily on the government list. Dr Melanie Smith acknowledged that some factors associated with increased exposure to the virus in BAME communities would not be possible to action in the short term and required long term focus, such as overcrowding and housing issues which were very important issues to address.

In relation to the meetings with Church End and Alperton, Councillor Nerva expressed they had been very important to look Brent wide at standards of social distancing and review the

methods employed to keep residents safe. The meetings highlighted structural issues for BAME communities, such as housing, jobs and health co-morbidities resulting in people being more at risk and in his new role Councillor Nerva expected to pick these up in the next Health and Wellbeing strategy. Dr MC Patel agreed that the community meetings were an opportunity for health colleagues and the local authority to tackle issues they had known about for years. There was a joint commitment to make things happen in Brent and do things differently.

In response to comments regarding the abolition of Public Health England and the refusal to allow local authorities autonomy over testing, Councillor Neil Nerva stated that it was disappointing but important not to stand back and pass blame. He highlighted there was a need to restore confidence in the NHS so that people were receiving treatment and support.

The Committee asked why BAME communities in Brent were so severely hit by the pandemic. Professor Mala Rao OBE (Imperial College London) explained to the Committee that there had been 2 or 3 fairly rapid investigations into the potential risk factors for the excess and disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities, including the 'Open Safely Collaborative' which was done by academics in Leicester who specialised in underlying conditions such as diabetes. She expressed that there had not been a large amount of time to understand the novel virus and how it worked, therefore there was not complete understanding, but the work done so far had been impressive. Data sets had looked at thousands of hospital admissions to see what could explain the disproportionate impact, with findings pointing to similar conclusions - that it was likely to be a combination of all the risk factors already discussed. Professor Rao highlighted that those impacted were likely to live in overcrowded circumstances, may be nutritionally deprived, their health physiology was likely to be impacted by micro-aggressions and racism they had encountered through life, and air pollution was worse in urban areas. Those factors reinforced each other and made the impact worse. Professor Rao informed the Committee of research funding opportunities in the UK for researchers with some of that allocated to research groups at UCL and Leicester, and she queried whether any of that research was being conducted in Brent or whether there was an opportunity for the Council to offer to those groups that the research be undertaken in the Brent community. Dr Melanie Smith replied that in Brent they had participated in academic research particularly on the management of diabetes in black communities and would be interested in making links going forward.

Further querying research conducted, a member of the Committee asked whether researchers had looked at countries of origin and whether Western diseases experienced in BAME communities with higher co-morbidity were also experienced by those in their countries of origin. Dr MC Patel agreed that it was useful to look at other countries and there was learning that could be taken but felt that was a longer term approach and enough was already known to protect people quickly and effectively, as there was a present and clear danger and a need to ensure practical solutions were in place. This would be done through effectively communicating with all communities in the Borough.

The Committee heard from Veronica Awuzudike (Healthwatch Brent Manager) that some residents of BAME communities felt the communications being received were not as clear as they could be. Queries were raised as to the level of engagement with different communities and whether it was sufficient to mitigate mass deaths. Dr MC Patel agreed that going forward the most important thing would be ensuring engagement with communities and community leaders that would help deliver messages to all the diverse communities in Brent. He hoped through the work with the 10 practices in Church End and Alperton they would gain a better understanding more rapidly of the needs affecting those communities. Robyn Doran (Chief Operating Officer, Central and North West London NHS Trust) explained that she had taken learning from working with the Grenfell community and applied it to her work in Brent as part of the Working Group on health inequalities. She noted the importance of directly involving the community affected by the issue. She had personally met community

leaders in the Somalian community in Church End with Dr MC Patel and in partnership with the Local Authority and heard that people felt they did not have the right information on Covid-19. Community leaders wanted to co-design training with infection control nurses delivered to the community, and they had commissioned local tailors working with nurses to make masks community leaders could distribute. The Working Group was also working with faith leaders and the third sector.

The Committee highlighted that the BAME communities that had been hit hard across Brent may also experience other difficulties which could be contributing factors to the impact of Covid-19 such as language barriers and poor access to GP services. Councillors shared their experience of speaking with BAME residents who were scared to go into hospital and had no access to GPs who were not answering phone calls and had queues outside of practices. Dr MC Patel agreed that many people were scared to go to hospital for fear of contracting the virus and there was a general view access could be improved. He offered to join Councillors to talk to communities in small groups of 5, adhering to the Covid-19 guidelines, to gain feedback and take actions to improve access. Councillor Nerva hoped that the Committee would seek a further report on communications with the next report demonstrating measurable differences.

The Chair thanked the Lead Member and Officers from Public Health and the NHS for their contributions and drew the item to close.

8. Brent NHS and Covid-19 response and recovery

Sheik Auladin (Managing Director, Brent CCG) introduced the report which provided an overview of the operational response by Brent's local NHS to the Covid-19 pandemic and the recovery plans and operational recovery, including planning for a possible second wave. He drew the Committee's attention to key aspects of the report including mortality rate and data analysis, the immediate response, the Covid-19 recovery phase, lessons learnt, and financial implications, noting that many factors were complex and intersectional. He highlighted that at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 during the immediate response, NHS England had issued guidance for acute trusts to prepare to manage capacity and ensure facilities were there, therefore non-elective and non-urgent patients were discharged to create capacity in the system. At the same time in the CCG GPs were informed to start seeing patients by e-consultation, which he advised was easy to do as GPs had begun e-consultations pre-Covid. The recovery phase for GPs required them to offer face to face appointments and operate 100% capacity while following the guidelines. Work was being done to ensure the flu vaccination campaign was underway and well-established, with faith establishments supporting the message to get vaccinated. A Covid escalated care planning hot-hub was launched on 27 March 2020 to manage and see Covid-symptomatic patients and care and monitor them in the community instead of putting pressure on hospitals. The hub continued to operate at a low level and remained in place to escalate if needed. Sheik Auladin advised that learning had shown more efficient use of NHS resources when all partners and providers worked together, including the local authority, acute hospitals and all CCGs and providers. He added that there was now work underway at both a national and local level addressing health inequalities. A substream of work involved the CCG working with primary care networks and 10 GPs to tackle health inequality issues in Church End and Alperton, looking at a new model of work for a multi-disciplinary approach in relation to managing long-term conditions, including mental health, specialist nurses and GPs. The model was in its very early stages but there had been good response from all major providers.

The Chair thanked Sheik Auladin for the introduction to the report and invited comments and questions from the Committee, with the following issues raised:

The Committee heard that Northwick Park was at the forefront during the early stages of the pandemic and was the second busiest A & E in London, so there were challenges regarding the number of places in critical care facilities. Northwick Park had been supported by the system, particularly Royal Brompton Hospital, with the transfer of patients to receive critical care. There was positive news coverage about the response to Covid, with community testing noted and innovative treatments and drug regimes used for Covid patients, such as CPAP oxygen use. Simon Crawford (Deputy Chief Executive, London and North West Hospitals Trust) advised the Committee that Central Middlesex Hospital, GPs and UTC were now running and had been for some time. There were safe segregated pathways for patients to access and testing was done immediately if there was a suspected Covid case, with isolation if needed, and anyone attending hospital had their temperature taken and were required to wear a mask, sanitise and social distance. The focus of the past 3 months had been on the recovery of diagnostics, outpatients and surgical procedures. Those attending for surgical procedures were tested for Covid-19 3 days prior to the procedure, with surgery only going ahead if the result was negative. At the time of the meeting there were 12 Covid patients in Northwick Park. In Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust there were similar precautions in place and a large amount of work had been done with Lay partners about how to communicate the actions taken and pathways in place.

The Committee queried whether the antigen testing centre in Brent was linked to national laboratories, as nationally there was limited testing capacity. Sheik Auladin confirmed that the antigen testing site was linked to the national laboratories and the local provider for diagnostics, GDL, had not reported any issues. Regarding testing, Committee members requested the number of testing centres in Brent and whether it was sufficient to meet the demand in Brent and wanted to know how often testing was carried out, particularly in care homes. Dr MC Patel (Chair, Brent CCG) advised that testing had been an issue, such as people being offered tests away from where they lived and there was a need to ensure all essential workers had access to rapid testing, therefore this had been raised as a concern at North West London Chairs meeting. Practices were being encouraged to do regular testing, which they were responsible for, and in care homes the government had set a minimum of 28 days for residents and weekly for staff. Dr Melanie Smith (Director of Public Health, Brent Council) advised that in the last few weeks testing had fallen short of demand but the re-introduction of testing in care homes was now being seen. With regard to Brent residents on the whole getting tested, there was evidence that around a quarter of those being tested should not have been getting tested, therefore there was an important role for the Council to play regarding messaging on who should get tested. It was anticipated that the situation would be resolved two or three weeks from the Committee meeting. The Public Health Department in Brent was working with the Department of Health to increase access to testing and on new models including home testing kits to increase capacity.

The Committee asked about pathways of care and how Covid-19 was impacting, and had impacted, certain pathways. Specifically the Committee asked for the numbers of the non-urgent waiting list in July 2019 and then July 2020, how many 2 week cancer referrals had been done in July 2019 and then July 2020 and what the current care pathways were for those seeking medical attention for changed bowel habits, breast lumps, and a new continuous cough that had lasted for 3 or more months. NHS colleagues agreed to provide written responses on the data requested, but advised that they were monitoring what these were pre-Covid and now. Waiting lists had gone up but were now being focused on. There was a target to get back to 90% of elective care by October and in London and North West Hospitals Trust that was at around 68% at the time of the meeting. Dr MC Patel advised that there were established care pathways that had not changed, and now that hospitals were re-opening 2 week cancer referrals and non-urgent referrals ought to be seen as they were pre-Covid. For changed bowel habits, an urgent patient should be seen within the national targets (2 weeks, or 48 hours for very urgent patients), and hospitals appreciated GPs doing some tests before referral as this was a good screening tool. Simon Crawford advised that they had contracts

with the independent sector including Clementine Churchill Hospital and London Clinic who had clean Covid pathways and some cancer patients had been taken there. Those critical pathways had been facilitated as much as possible throughout the pandemic even if they were not delivered on site and consultants had reviewed all prioritisations on waiting lists. Claire Hook (Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust) advised that they had been able to prioritise and treat all urgent patients (those who fell into categories 1 or 2 of the Royal College guidelines) throughout the pandemic through cancelling routine surgery. The Royal Marsden was in the process of reinstating services and treating more patients. Due to the number of people being referred onto waiting lists the list sizes had decreased by around 50% for cancer referrals. Those numbers were now restoring and services were set up to accommodate those referrals as they entered the pathway, although there may be delays in the pathway getting to diagnosis. The focus was on ensuring diagnostic services and surgical services were running as soon as possible.

The Committee noted that, in comparison to nationally, Brent had done well to keep Covid in care homes under control, and queried what Brent had done differently. Simon Crawford advised that when patients stabilised and no longer needed to be in an acute hospital arrangements were made for an appropriate discharge through the discharge hub set up in early April 2020, with all patients who were discharged supported with appropriate packages of care. It was ensured that care home staff knew the status of a discharged patient so that they could support appropriately.

A query was raised regarding oxygen line connections at Northwick Park Hospital, to which Simon Crawford highlighted that Northwick Park had never run out of oxygen and the referral to using CPAPs in the report was regarding an alternative pathway to support specific patients with presentations and who did extremely well on oxygen rather than mechanical ventilation. When the critical care bed capacity was increased there was a requirement to pipe more oxygen into those areas and capital works were undertaken to do that in a co-ordinated process. He expressed there had been a co-ordinated process across ICS with readiness to respond to winter and Covid.

The Committee queried whether planned digital access to GPs would be by choice and not default. During the pandemic GPs had been told to move to e-consultation, and Dr MC Patel explained that now the message was clear from NHS England that GPs should offer digital consultation if appropriate, however GPs should make a clinical judgement on the best course of action. He expressed that if a patient wanted a face to face appointment they should be offered one. Simon Crawford clarified that the vast majority of 'digital' or 'virtual' clinics were done by telephone consultations.

Regarding the new pilot project looking at a new model of care for the areas of Church End and Alperton, Sheik Auladin confirmed that while it had been spoken about by several colleagues during the meeting it referred to 1 model of care where all partners came together for the benefit of the health of local residents and to manage health inequalities in the Borough. Regarding access moving forward, there were 10 Primary Care Networks in Brent therefore the plan was to have 10 GP access centres.

The Committee noted how many services had closed during the early stages of the pandemic, such as the memory clinic, with some services such as IAPT moving online, and noted there were no online services for Asian languages. The Committee queried what plans were in place for the future with regard to social care and how community organisations could be involved in that plan. Robyn Doran (Chief Operating Officer, Central and North West London NHS Trust) informed the Committee that she was part of the 3rd sector Working Group for Mental Health where colleagues had come together regarding Covid. Community Mental Health Teams had carried on delivering services with 2/3 of work face to face and 1/3 online and had supported care home staff and the homelessness team with clients in hotels. The decisions to

close services were unprecedented as staff were severely affected by Covid, with around 1000 out of 7000 staff off sick, shielding, or caring for others at any one time, therefore quick decisions were made prioritising what services would stay open. The dementia care service was stepped down along with other services and IAPT already operated online. There was agreement that things needed to be moved back to face to face as that was patient preference, and Robyn Doran offered to pick up specific issues with Committee members. Dr MC Patel noted that work was being done with Healthwatch on a community project, with a baseline analysis of various organisations and a list of community organisations being brought together. Community engagement meetings had notified colleagues of groups they did not know about so they would be making contact with those groups. The pilot project spoken about aimed to send health teams into the community to work with those people who did not typically engage with health services to deliver essential health screenings where required.

Regarding resident engagement, Rory Hegarty (Director of Communications and Engagement, North West London CCGs) felt that it was very important to engage with local residents. Each provider was responsible for the changes to their service and it was important for residents to be informed of changes and be clear of information when they attended a service. Where that was not happening Rory Hegarty asked to be informed so that they could work on messaging. There was now a very clear protocol for getting the message out for providers. Rory Hegarty advised that routes for hearing the patient voice included the weekly Healthwatch meeting and the Community Voices programme that had focused on BAME communities during the pandemic. Members of the Committee hoped to see further partnership with the voluntary sector and local organisations, bringing together clinical aspects and social care. This was a priority for the NHS Communications department.

Access to healthcare was a concern for Committee members and health colleagues alike. Committee members noted that councillors were picking up many of the issues surrounding access, and felt that frontline staff were creating barriers, particularly for those with language barriers. Dr MC Patel agreed that there was a problem with access that needed to be addressed and moved forward.

The Committee queried reference in the report to a 'talk before you walk' pilot. Lesley Watts (Senior Responsible Officer, North West London Health and Care Partnership) advised that this meant talking to a health professional to get advice before going to A & E. Discussions on the pilot had only just begun therefore Lesley Watts offered the Committee a written answer.

As there were no further questions, the Chair thanked Committee members and health colleagues for their contributions and drew the item to a close.

9. **Single CCG for North West London and the development of the Integrated Care System (ICS)**

Lesley Watts (Senior Responsible Officer, North West London Health and Care Partnership) introduced the report which set out the background and context of how the NHS were operating and seeking to operate as an Integrated Care System (ICS) and the rationale for merging the 8 North West London CCGs into one. The belief behind the merge was that the provider / commissioner split needed to come to an end. Lesley Watts expressed that the essence of the ICS meant that together they would use all the resources available to drive up the quality of care, drive out duplication and variation, address inequalities and learn from each other to get the best outcomes for patients and provide the vast bulk of care together. Direction had been increased in Boroughs with senior directors from community care, mental health and primary care who would work with the Local Authority as a result of discussions with Local Authority Chief Executives at joint meetings with Local Authority providers and Chief Executives.

Dr MC Patel (Chair, Brent CCG) added that as a member of the CCG and Board he had supported the principle of a single North West London CCG as it offered significant opportunities such as improved efficiency and the ability to address the severe problems of deprivation and inequality of access to healthcare. The merge meant they could start to address the shifting of resources with emphasis on particular areas to ensure everyone across North West London had an equitable offer and break down barriers that had traditionally existed. There was a desire to build on the good history of working with the Local Authority, local acute trusts and community services. Dr MC Patel advised that they should be looking at the population of North West London and its diversity particularly in terms of inequalities.

Sheik Auladin (Managing Director, Brent CCG) echoed this, stating that over the previous year health and the Local Authority had started working together more closely and collaboratively due to the pandemic, which had helped to galvanise all the work going forward from an ICS and system perspective. He informed the Committee that Brent CCG members had now voted in favour of the merge to a single North West London CCG.

The Chair thanked health colleagues for their introduction and invited members to ask questions, with the following issues raised:

In response to queries about the consultation process with the community and service users, Rory Hegarty (Director of Communications and Engagement, North West London CCGs) explained that the recent consultation had shared the Case for Change with each Borough's Scrutiny Committees, Local Authority Chief Executives and Leaders, Cabinet leads for health, and was presented at Joint Health Scrutiny Committees, to the local Healthwatch organisations, community groups, all patient participation groups and campaigning organisations such as Brent Patient Voice and Save Our NHS. The case for change had also been published online for public comment, with a press release and social media activity. The legal consultation with the Local Authority had lasted 6 weeks and the results of that were now being analysed.

Members were concerned that resident engagement would be lacking once the merge happened, noting that at the moment there were 8 CCGs that residents could engage with whereas at a single CCG level there may not be any representation from a particular Borough. Rory Hegarty acknowledged the risk of losing resident voice at Borough level and advised they were working on a project called the EPIC Programme to get the patient voice heard. This programme involved working with local Healthwatch organisations, voluntary sectors and Local Authorities to shape how they worked together with the public. The desire was to co-produce the programme with local residents, Councillors, Healthwatch and the voluntary sector, and an invitation to Committee members to attend the next networking meeting for the programme was extended. In response to queries on how the success of the programme would be measured, Lesley Watts advised that it would be measured with Public Health in Brent as to whether the outcomes for patients and inequality measures had improved. Health colleagues expressed that the reason they wanted to make the proposed changes was to tackle inequalities in deprived areas such as Brent as they wanted services to be equitable across all areas of North West London.

Further relating to communications with residents, Julie Pal (Chief Executive, Healthwatch) advised that, having spoken to around 500 different types of residents about the changes, a lot of residents did not understand what the impact of the merge would be for them as individuals and sought assurance that the local response would recognise local needs. There was a concern amongst residents on what difference the change would make to their lives. Rory Hegarty advised that this was a change to how the NHS was organised and not to patient care or services and that there had been no requirement to consult the general public. There was a desire to enhance patient engagement through this change to the single CCG through the EPIC Programme. Dr MC Patel added that he would not agree with a change that he did

not feel was for the benefit of his patients and the intention was to see better services and access to services through a combination of targeted interventions and breaking down barriers such as easier referral pathways. He highlighted that they already had begun to improve referral pathways such as the new self-referral mechanism for physiotherapy. Julie Pal noted the response and advised that it was a matter of perception and suggested that the message of reassurance to residents that services would not change was not coming through. Julie Pal and Rory Hegarty agreed to meet to share the findings of the resident engagement Healthwatch had undertaken.

Regarding funding, members wanted reassurance that Brent would receive adequate funding for services. Concern was raised that Brent was one of the most deprived areas of North West London and members queried how funding between the 8 Boroughs would be divided. Lesley Watts advised that centrally funding would come down to the ICS and the intention was to work towards fair shares, with movement of money over time between the more over-capitated Boroughs to more deprived Boroughs such as Brent. It was not yet clear what the allocations over 6 months or a year's time would be but a commitment had been made to move at a quick time scale to deliver fair shares. Sheik Auladin added that Brent CCG was one of the worst allocated Borough's in London and that it would have taken ten years to level up with other Borough's across North West London, whereas the merge to the single CCG would give Brent the opportunity to level up within four years.

Reassurance was sought that the new single CCG would be able to provide the sort of procurement services needed for each particular Borough and in Brent. Lesley Watts informed the Committee that her teams would work more locally with Local Authority teams regarding the procurement of services, and in response to requests from Brent Officers during the consultation a structure for integrated delivery of care had been established. Deciding how to spend budget and allocations would be done in an integrated way, and health, social care and the Local Authority would prioritise together and attempt to direct that money to deal with inequalities. An example given was the commitment of health monies to the placement of patients to bridge the funding gap where patients came out of hospital and into Local Authority care. It was noted that there was a large majority of patients who went out of Borough for health services and Lesley Watts felt that it would be easier to standardise care received in those acute units, but the intention was where work could be done in-Borough, particularly integrated work and the lettings of contracts to local people, those would be done through Borough partnerships

The Committee asked about decision making and governance, including who would award contracts and how they could be answerable to the public, as the ICS meetings were closed to the public unlike Borough Committees and CCG meetings. Lesley Watts agreed that there was a need to refine the way the ICS was grown and how it received the public voice. She highlighted that the vision for the ICS was built together with Local Authority Officers and patients at multiple engagement events where the strategy for the ICS was agreed and she offered to share those documents from individual care partnerships on their priorities with the Committee. At an ICS level the Committee was Chaired by an ICS Chair which had all leaders of Council's and Chief Executives on, which fed into the ICS Board. When the STP was in place there was patient representation on the overarching body and they would look to do that again with the new partnership board.

Members of the Committee addressed the equality impact assessment submitted with the Case for Change in August as they felt it had not addressed the separate issues relating to each equality consideration including age and disability. Members also addressed what they felt was a lack of consideration for children's health within the paper with regards to population health. Lesley Watts advised that there were multiple work streams which Local Authority Officers were helping to deliver including a work stream for the elderly, Mental Health and

children. She offered to systematically bring those work streams back to Committee to discuss what was being done in each of those areas. Sheik Auladin added that the proposals would give the opportunity to conduct referral pathways at an ICS level together for a pathway for children.

Concerns regarding reference in the reports to demand management within a sustainable budget were raised, with members feeling that would mean no referrals. Dr MC Patel informed the Committee that referral to demand management within the papers did not mean no referrals would take place but rather was about referring the right people to the right places at the right time, and about what primary care colleagues could do before sending a patient to hospital so that the initial investigation made sure the referral was the most appropriate. Dr MC Patel gave the example of pathology services which over the years had changed dramatically by stopping some tests that were previously done as a matter of routine that were not useful and using that money for more informative tests. He expressed from a GP perspective he did not want to be told not to refer a patient and that Brent GPs would fight for what was right.

In relation to the involvement of Brent Council in the proposals and consultation period, Phil Porter (Strategic Director Community Wellbeing, Brent Council) advised that the Council had a range of inputs the Committee may not have been aware of. There had been meetings with the Chief Executive and Leader and those of other Local Authorities also. He met on a weekly basis with a regional group from ADASS. He expressed that the proposals were a significant change with a lot to be worked out and that it was being worked on together, with the sense from Officers that it was happening therefore they needed to work with it.

Reassurance was given to Committee members that the proposals were not related to privatisation and Sheik Auladin expressed that it was about breaking down barriers between providers and commissioners. He highlighted that the systems were coming together to improve services for patients and this was the direction of travel for the NHS.

As no questions were raised, the Chair invited the committee to make recommendations. The committee subsequently **RESOLVED**:


- i) For Brent Senior Officers involved in the engagement process to host a briefing session for Community and Wellbeing Committee members regarding the input they had on the proposals and answer further questions about the impact of the move to a single CCG for North West London.
- ii) That Committee members withheld support for the proposals pending further information at the members briefing session.

8. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting closed at 21.30pm

Councillor Ketan Sheth, Chair

 Brent	<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</p> <p align="center">24 November 2020</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Strategic Director, Children and Young People</p>
<p>Brent Council's Management of the Impact of Covid 19 on Education Settings and Children's Services</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	n/a
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	none
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Brian Grady Operational Director, Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy Brian.Grady@brent.gov.uk Nigel Chapman Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes Nigel.Chapman@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report updates members on the management by the Children and Young People (CYP) department of the impact of the pandemic on Children's Services, the support for vulnerable children and young people during the response, lockdown and recovery phases, as well as planning for the winter and the second wave of Covid 19. This report adds to the information provided to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 21st July that gave an overview of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic emergency on a number of key Council services, including Children's Services.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the content of this report.

3.0 Detail – Response to the Pandemic

- 3.1 As reported to this Scrutiny Committee in July, Brent CYP took swift and targeted action to support children and families from the beginning of the pandemic and throughout the initial

national lockdown period, ensuring that children's safeguarding needs continued to be met. Further to the report to this Scrutiny Committee in July, the CYP Department has implemented a comprehensive plan, focused on key actions to continue to develop the response to the needs of vulnerable children and families.

- 3.2 As reported to Scrutiny Committee in July, revised practice guidance was issued on 16th March to support practitioners in risk assessment, prioritisation of contact with children and families and to support home visits where appropriate. This guidance has been regularly updated, most recently on 4th November 2020 in response to the current lockdown period.
- 3.3 Every child known to CYP (including Children in Need, Children subject to a Child Protection Plan, children with an Education, Health and Care Plan, young people known to the Youth Offending Service and Looked After Children and Care Leavers) has been risk assessed, with contact arrangements by telephone or home visits in place based on identified levels of risk, with a focus on maintaining relationships throughout the period of the pandemic.
- 3.4 Relationships with partner agencies have remained effective, managing the challenge of the impact of Covid-19 on the capacity within the health economy with many CCG staff being redeployed to support the NHS response to the pandemic. Multi-agency governance boards have continued to provide oversight of delivery for children and families, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Children's Trust and the Community Safety Partnership, Safer Brent.
- 3.5 This report sets out more detail further to the July Scrutiny report as to the impact of Covid-19, how Brent Council services have responded to this impact and the support provided for children and families.

4.0 Early Years Settings and Schools

- 4.1 The vast majority of schools and a number of early years settings remained open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children throughout between March and June. As reported to Scrutiny Committee in July, the Strategic Director Children and Young People advised and supported schools to form geographic clusters from the start of the pandemic, an arrangement which has continued to support resilience in the sector and facilitated the sharing of good practice. The Strategic Director has continued to convene regular meetings with headteachers and regular webinars for early years providers and Chairs of Governors with the Strategic Director which have allowed timely, two way communication and the provision of tailored advice. Regular written briefings have also been provided to settings and schools. The Director of Public Health (DPH) has been a regular attendee at the webinars, to provide public health advice. The feedback from early years settings and schools has been very positive regarding both the webinars and published briefings provided by the Council.
- 4.2 Brent CYP has been active promoting attendance of vulnerable pupils throughout the pandemic period. The Strategic Director has chaired fortnightly meetings of the Children's Services Leadership Team to oversee coordination work to support vulnerable children during the lockdown and recovery periods.
- 4.3 In preparation for the government's requested wider opening from 1 June, schools updated their risk assessments and plans. Public Health and CYP supported early years settings and schools with infection prevention training which was accessed by over 900 members of staff. Supplementary PPE was also provided to early years settings and schools in line with government guidelines. CYP also coordinated the procurement of signage on behalf of

schools for wider opening. The Operational Director, Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy, working with Brent Health and Safety team advisors, reviewed risk assessments from all community schools and on request from some voluntary aided and academy schools.

- 4.4 Brent Council have built upon this support to ensure that early years settings and schools successfully and fully opened from the beginning of the Autumn term. Further advice has been provided by Brent Council on early years settings and schools risk assessment reviews, coordinating the provision of further supplementary PPE and personal protective measures training, advice and practical assistance on traffic management and access for schools as well as information regarding local testing sites. Positive feedback has been received from settings, schools and Trade Union representatives on this support.
- 4.5 The impact of Covid-19 on the early years sector, in particular the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector, has been significant and could affect overall sufficiency in the months to come as many settings are concerned about their financial viability. The Brent CYP Early Years Service has been proactive in supporting PVI providers, including helping PVI providers access financial support through the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant for businesses. Over the summer, 50 providers were supported to access this grant. However, the early years provider survey conducted over the summer continues to indicate that more than half of providers in the PVI sector are worried about future sustainability. Work continues to be undertaken to support ongoing early years sufficiency and to improve take up of early years entitlements by Brent parents and carers, given the sustainability challenges being faced by early years providers.
- 4.6 From the outset of the pandemic in March, Brent schools have been assessing their pupils to identify the gaps in their learning which has informed on-going modifications to the delivery of the curriculum. To support schools to close the gaps the DfE announced the Covid-19 Catch-up Premium in July. This is additional funding to support pupils who fell behind in their learning during the first lockdown period. Schools are using the funding to accelerate progress through tailored teaching activities which include small group or one-to-one tuition and extra teaching capacity including after school lessons.
- 4.7 During their partial closure, Brent schools quickly developed their on-line teaching platforms and resources to teach pupils remotely. They also provided teaching and learning packs for children who did not have the required access for on-line learning. The development of remote learning has been on-going to ensure that when pupils or teachers have to isolate because of Covid-19 outbreaks, their learning and teaching can continue as seamlessly as possible. The DfE is continuing to distribute digital devices to schools to support pupils who have to isolate because of Covid-19.
- 4.8 Schools have also planned and implemented support for pupils' mental health and wellbeing, recognising that some pupils will have been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks.
- 4.9 Senior leaders in CYP have been monitoring and promoting full school attendance from the start of the Autumn term in September to ensure a full return to school. Social workers wrote to parents and carers of children known to Brent to encourage full attendance from the beginning of term. Correspondence has also been sent to foster carers emphasising the importance of school attendance for our Looked After Children.
- 4.10 The Brent Borough Plan 2019-2023 has a priority to raise the attainment of particular groups and narrow the gap with their peers for Boys of Black Caribbean heritage. Work has continued with Brent schools to deliver this priority. The "Update on schools and education,

including action plan for raising achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage” report, presented to this Scrutiny Committee alongside this report, sets out an overview of the effectiveness of education in Brent, and the work that has taken place in the past year to support raising the achievement of boys of Black Caribbean heritage and other priority groups, and plans to maintain this focus in the current academic year.

- 4.11 The Brent COVID 19 Management Plan, reported to Health and Wellbeing Board 29 June 2020, includes details of the arrangements to support early years settings and schools in the case of positive tests for Covid-19 of either children attending a setting, pupils or members of staff. This includes details of the single point of contact for early years settings and schools. Schools have complied fully with the plan, informing the local authority in a timely manner when a positive test has been identified and updating risk assessments as necessary throughout the autumn term. Since the beginning of term, as of the 6th November a total of 36 of Brent’s 87 schools have seen a total of 61 incidents of a positive case of Covid-19, for either a pupil or member of staff. On average between 10 and 15 schools have been impacted by periods of self isolation at any one time during the autumn term. In line with each school’s risk assessment and advice from the DfE Coronavirus helpline, relevant groups of pupils and staff have been told to remain at home and self isolate for 14 days.
- 4.12 The number of families choosing to electively home educate (EHE) has grown since the beginning of the autumn term. The total EHE cohort is 328 having risen from 229 at the beginning of the academic year, an increase of 43%. The relevant processes are being followed once CYP are notified of these arrangements by the school where the child was most recently educated. Some of the reasons provided by parents as to why they have decided to pursue EHE are that they wanted to continue providing their child’s education which they had undertaken in spring/summer 2020 and for others that there is continued anxiety about sending their child to school. For the small number of children known to CYP whose parents have decided to EHE, close monitoring arrangements are in place.

5.0 Early Help

- 5.1 Agencies have continued to work together to support vulnerable young people, specifically in managing immediate risk for individual children and young people. Early Help Assessment e-learning was made available for all partners to access along with bespoke training via Microsoft Teams and Zoom. The majority of children and families have received virtual support, either online or by phone.
- 5.2 Throughout the first period of lockdown, between March and early July, the Early Help offer ensured support was in place for vulnerable children and families. COVID-19 risk assessments were introduced for all families, to determine priority families for whom face to face visits from the Family Solutions Team through “doorstep” visits were deemed essential.
- 5.3 There has been an increase in demand for early help support through the duration of the pandemic. An average of 40 new cases a week were being received into the Early Help service in April. Since September, the average number of new cases a week to the Early Help service has increased to 200.
- 5.4 CYP maintained close links with schools and supported vulnerable children and young people to encourage onsite attendance and/ or engage with the online learning provision through the Education Welfare Service, who worked closely with social work teams and other professionals to support vulnerable children and young people, prioritising children and young people for whom there were safeguarding concerns. Education Welfare Officers

delivered support in line with CYP home visiting guidance and kept in regular contact with families by phone or internet video calling. EWOs sought to obtain the voice of the child during each contact.

- 5.5 Out of hours telephone support for young people has continued to be provided through the Accelerated Support Team which was well received and meant that young people had enhanced contact at times which suited them. The feedback from this engagement has informed the ongoing service offer, with more telephone appointments and contact being offered where appropriate in the early evening and weekends.
- 5.6 There are 730 identified young carers in Brent. Young carer referrals to the Carers Gateway Partnership, the locally commissioned support provider has continued as usual throughout this period. The Gateway Partnership has two dedicated Young Carer Support Officers and during lockdown they made regular phone/video contact with young carers to offer information, advice and guidance, share online resources and activities that could be completed at home. Young carers were also signposted to:
- A Young Carer online forum for peer support.
 - The Children's Society Support Care Team who provide live online chat support 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday.
 - The Mix, which provides information and advice to young carers on issues such as mental health, relationships and money and a free crisis messenger service from 4pm-11pm, seven days a week.
- 5.7 Officers from Early Help were in regular contact with the Gateway Partnership to ensure continuity of service and support for young carers and to identify any emerging issues or concerns, for example 5 young carers were identified who did not have access to a laptop/ tablet and/ or data and they were provided with resources to enable digital access. Young carers and their families, with an Early Help Assessment or Child and Family Assessment, were able to access support from the Early Help Resource panel. Services such as counselling, mentoring and family befriending were available and accessible by remote contact.
- 5.8 A series of face-to-face activities took place for young carers over the Autumn half-term break including a Halloween themed art competition, games and a nature trail activity. Many young carers felt isolated during the first lockdown and there were added pressures because of their caring responsibilities. Since schooling resumed for all pupils from September, young carers have been able to get respite from caring, socialise with their friends and speak to trusted adults about their concerns. Pathways are in place for schools to refer young carers to universal and targeted support where necessary
- 5.9 Roundwood Youth Centre activities reopened in May 2020 following social distancing guidelines. The centre's current activities are in the process of transition to the Roundwood Alternative Provision school with wrap around youth offer which will open in January 2021. A new and exciting offer for young people will be publicised in December to coincide with the opening of the new school as planned.
- 5.10 Current arrangements with Barnardo's have been reviewed in preparation for the opening of Family Wellbeing Centres (FWCs). The proposed FWCs will open from December 2020 across a number of locations across the borough, with the majority of services being operational from January 2021.
- 6.0 Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)**

- 6.1 The Inclusion Strategic Partnership responded immediately to the first lockdown in March by making a commitment to keep in touch and stay connected to parents/carers, children and young people with SEND. There was rapid collaboration and coordination between the Council, CCG and health providers to ensure children with specific health needs continued to receive the necessary support.
- 6.2 The Inclusion Service worked alongside education settings to ensure that all children and young people were supported to access their education and health provision. For the most vulnerable children attending special schools this alliance was strengthened by weekly meetings with headteachers and specialist health services, and, when relevant, transport services, to ensure children and young people could remain in school where possible. Brent's outreach services worked with parents to support children to access the curriculum at home. The Early Years Inclusion Service worked alongside private, voluntary and independent nurseries to support as many early years' providers to be Covid compliant and remain open. The Educational Psychology team held on line 'drop-ins' for parents and carers to support parental wellbeing as well as child wellbeing. They also provided a bespoke wellbeing service for care leavers. All children with an EHCP were risk assessed. Play areas were made available at one special school for parents to book and access to respite care was provided through the Ade Adepitan Centre.
- 6.3 Throughout the pandemic period the Inclusion Service has continued to work closely with the Brent Parent Carer Forum to provide assurance to parents and carers. Online workshops have been delivered and the "The Big conversation" for return to school in September was held where 40 parents and carers could ask professionals about supporting their children to return to school safely. Additional workshops have taken place and have enabled parents to access information on, for example, transitions and understanding how to turn aspirations into actions and outcomes all supported by multiagency professionals from education, health and care. Parents reported that meeting professionals on line strengthened relationships and removed any barriers they might have felt.
- 6.4 Early years, school, health and transport planning meetings have continued into the Autumn term as have the online workshops for parents and carers. Transition sessions were held virtually so that children and young people were well prepared to go to their new school or college provision. Meetings with headteachers were held to confirm readiness for the new term regarding Covid compliance, recovery curriculum and transportation. To support children with very specialist health needs, Brent Council supplied special schools with essential specialist personal protective equipment. Attendance rates during the first half-term settled at 90% for children with an EHCP with the national average at 82%. Going into November the Inclusion Service is rolling out the national Wellbeing Return to School programme across all schools in Brent.
- 6.5 For children with more complex needs requiring social care input, the type and amount of support offered to families was increased, driven by a higher demand for support. When the March lockdown began many families said that they no longer wanted to have outside carers coming into their homes. A flexible approach was adopted to the provision of direct payments, allowing parents and carers to engage their own family members as carers for the duration of the lockdown. The short break centre (the Ade Adepitan centre) was unable to offer overnight respite for a 2-month period and was used instead to provide carefully protected day care services for the most vulnerable children. As the lockdown progressed a small number of families found it very difficult to cope without their usual support network. In order to avoid family breakdowns a number of immediate, high intensity support packages were set up to ensure that parents were able to keep their children within the home setting. One result of these interventions is that no disabled child entered the care system throughout the outbreak, between March and November.

- 6.6 In terms of maintaining effective communication with families an advisory line was established to provide advice and support. There was an increase in meetings with the Brent Parent Carer Forum so that concerns could be shared. Increased play scheme places were offered during the summer holiday period so that an additional 80 families were able to receive this extra support. Covid guidance links have been posted onto the website advertising the Local Offer for families with a disabled child on a regular basis between March and November.
- 6.7 Brent CCG reported to Brent Children's Trust on 22 September 2020 on the health economy and on service restoration for children in Brent, after the restrictions of the initial Covid emergency. The report highlighted that many services had been restored fully or partially but there remained a number of children's health services not yet delivering at pre-Covid levels. Assurances were sought and received that the amber ratings associated with community therapy support and support to the EHCP process from health providers were being prioritised.
- 6.8 The report provided assurance that
- NHS key workers in Brent were able to continue to send their children to school to enable them to offer essential health services.
 - NHS Brent CCG, Brent GPs, and London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust paediatric services collaborated to establish video and telephone consultation systems to ensure Brent children had access to timely medical advice.
 - In Brent, children's health services pooled staffing resources to ensure children with clinical care packages continued to receive necessary care. The needs of children with
 - Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) were reviewed on a multi-agency basis to ensure health needs were met.
 - On 1 September 2020, NWL ICS has presented assurance to NHS England and NHS Improvement that the Phase 3 expectations will be met, and any areas where the required standards cannot be met will have plans in place to do so as soon as possible

7.0 Children in Need and Children subject of a Child Protection Plan

- 7.1 The multi-agency Brent Family Front Door has continued to operate effectively, with good working relationships with partners which was sustained while using a remote working model when necessary due to COVID-19.
- 7.2 Child protection conferences moved to virtual conferences starting from the first lockdown in March. Guidance was promptly issued to parents and multi-agency partners that was updated as learning developed and new technological solutions were found. As national restrictions regarding the pandemic eased a hybrid child protection conference model, enabling a combination of physical attendance at meetings and online or telephone attendance, was developed based on risk and need assessments.
- 7.3 During the period April to October, positive feedback from parents was received on the new ways of working and parental feedback has helped inform how blended virtual and in person conference meetings are held. Feedback was obtained from child protection conferences regarding 55 children between April and October 2020. Of the 43 parents who scored the conference on a scale of 0 to 10, the average score was 8. Feedback ranged from "It was difficult by phone I would prefer face to face contact" to "I found the conference helpful and felt that I was listened to" and "I found the conference helpful and felt that I was listened to from professionals. The interpreting was good and I understood". Multi agency professional feedback has been very positive and comments received including "really easy

to follow despite being in remote mode“ and “well constructed and managed, parents were allowed to express their views and opinions were taken into account.“ Overall there has been enhanced multi-agency engagement in child protection conferences and longer term the benefits of continuing a hybrid model of virtual and physical attendance are being considered.

- 7.4 The level of contacts through the Brent Family Front Door declined significantly through April and May, with contacts at approximately 50% of the rate at the same time last year. Contact rates then increased, returning to comparatively similar levels to previous years through June, July and August. The average number of contacts in April and May were just under 2000 a month. Since September and the return of children to school the number has increased significantly. In October there were 3010 contacts in the month, an increase of 50% on the number in April and a higher number of referrals than in previous years.
- 7.5 Aligned to the increase in contacts, the number of child referrals has increased. In April there were 275 referrals across the month, whereas in October the number had risen to 453. This represents an increase of 64%. An increase in referrals was anticipated when children returned to school. In the early phase of lockdown, the majority of referrals were from the police but in October there were 50% more referrals from schools and education settings than from the police. Many of the referrals received since September are highly complex cases as children talk to trusted adults in schools and settings about their experiences.
- 7.6 The number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) mirrors this increase in demand for services. The number of ICPCs was at its lowest in April, increasing over the summer and reaching a peak of 61 in the month of October.
- 7.7 The increased demand for services is also seen in the pressure on statutory social work services with a significant increase in the total number of allocated cases across both Localities and LAC and Permanency since September. There were 2273 allocated cases at the end of April and this number reduced to 2222 in the first week of September. At the end of October the number of allocated cases had risen to 2439, which is an increase of 9.7% since September.
- 7.8 There have also been increased challenges in keeping vulnerable adolescents at home and safe, particularly during the first lockdown. Case learning from the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group over the past six months during the Covid-19 pandemic period has identified the following themes, which are expanded upon in the “Contextual Safeguarding Update” report being considered by the Committee, alongside this report:
- Significant reduction in missing episodes and first time missing young people.
 - Increase in Substance Misuse and Criminal Behaviour amongst the missing cohort.
 - Mental health concerns for young people continued and were in many cases exacerbated through the period of lockdown, where protective relationships and social contacts were not possible.
 - The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted county lines activity and the young people being supported.
- 7.9 Effective planning was put in place to deal with the expected increase in referrals when schools and settings fully returned in September. As described above, the anticipated significant pressure on frontline social work services did occur during September and October. It is anticipated that this will reduce during late November but it will be closely monitored to ensure caseloads remain at safe levels so that social workers can continue to practice safeguarding work effectively. CYP are only resourced to meet the current levels of

demand. Any further significant increase in levels of demand for services may impede services' ability to manage effectively without additional resources.

- 7.10 Restoring increased face to face work with children subject of Child Protection plans, LAC and Care Leavers has been a key priority, with particular attention paid to impact for children and families from the first lockdown period and risks regarding post trauma and bereavement. Technology which has been utilised through the first lockdown period continues to be used to enhance the support for children, both through statutory meetings and regular contact and support.

8.0 Looked After Children and Care Leavers

- 8.1 Updates on support for Brent Looked After Children and Care Leavers during this period were reported to the Corporate Parenting Committee in July and October 2020.
- 8.2 The number of new looked after children since the start of the Autumn term mirrors the increase in demand for services seen across CYP. There were 26 and 23 new looked after children in September and October respectively compared to 7 in April and May and 16 in July/August.
- 8.3 Covid-19 and the lockdowns have impacted on children in care and care leavers in various ways. A number of children, foster carers and young people had to self-isolate in their placements or accommodation when they or someone in the household displayed symptoms. Following risk assessments, face to face contact between children and their birth families was restricted to video and telephone calls. Although most young people were content with the new way of contact, there were some, particularly younger children, who understandably struggled not seeing their parents face to face.
- 8.4 The impact of loneliness, being unable to attend educational settings, visit friends or family face to face during lockdown has been evident. Young people, particularly care leavers who reside in their own accommodation, have struggled with boredom and anxiety caused in part by inaccurate information on social media on how to keep themselves safe. Most of their leisure activities and hobbies were put on hold as well as the routine structure of their day to day routine such as going to school, college, university or workplace.
- 8.5 Covid-19 has also had a financial impact on care leavers. Young people found they needed to spend more on food shopping as they were initially trying to buy from independent stores. They have had higher utility costs due to being inside for prolonged periods and using higher internet data costs. Some care leavers have lost jobs they previously held so are having to work to a tighter budget.
- 8.6 Children who are looked after continued to be supported by their allocated social workers during the first Covid-19 lockdown, with the majority of statutory visits being conducted online. Although some children and young people were reluctant to engage via video chat, it was evident that for most they were comfortable with this new way of working. For those who were more reluctant or where there were complex issues of risk, face to face visits took place, following a risk assessment. Since the end of the first lockdown and during the current lockdown period, most children are being seen face to face.
- 8.7 Contact between children and their birth families was carefully risk-assessed taking into account national guidance and delivered primarily at the Council's contact centre (Freeman Family Centre).
- 8.8 Social workers demonstrated creativity in engaging children and young people virtually during the first lockdown period and took a flexible approach to ensure that children and

young people were as comfortable and relaxed as possible. Some examples from social workers' visits to children demonstrate this engagement during the first lockdown period:

'E' looked smiley and happy, sat in her room, eating a packet of crisps. I asked her to put the blinds up in her room, to let some of the light in. She did so as I was speaking, and asking her why she is avoiding my calls, and not really responding to my text messages. E said, 'because you're old'. I laughed and said I haven't always been this old! I am likely to be one of the youngest social workers she has had, and we have such a great bond! E laughed and agreed. I joked that I can ask for another social worker who will be even OLDER than I am. She said she knows, doesn't want this. I empathised with her situation, and asked if she is just avoiding me because she doesn't like phone conversations? This has always been something that she has said. E said yes. I then asked if she would prefer speaking face to face, and she nodded. We agreed to have our next meeting soon, and I would text her of the day and time I plan to come down and see her.

The children appeared to be managing with the lockdown rules. During my video call the children showed me round the garden and how they have moved things around because they are planning on getting a garden pool soon. All three children appeared very happy. They were showing me what they were doing and telling about how hard they are working to ensure that they keep their school work up to date. The children are very cheerful and enjoy talking to me on the phone.

C was in the front room with the foster carer when I called and seemed excited to have the call. He took the phone and went up to his room. C was wearing a blue t-shirt and navy tracksuit bottoms. C showed me a balloon in his room and started doing kick-ups with it while we spoke. We started chatting about basketball and NBA teams and played a game where C had to name as many as he could in 5 minutes, I set a timer and wrote down the teams he named and he managed to name 25 out of 30! He was pleased with this and at the end of the call I said we could play the game again next time, he suggested he could also name Formula 1 teams and then listed all of them and the drivers while we spoke! When he gave the phone back to the foster carer he told her about how well he did naming the NBA teams.

- 8.9 The LAC and Permanency Service has maintained a log of all children, foster carers and young people who have self-isolated either because they had symptoms or where household members had symptoms/shielding. Maintaining this log has helped ensure that children, foster carers and care leavers are receiving the necessary support and intervention.

- 8.10 Upon governmental guidance in March that a lockdown on movement was to be put into place, a risk assessment of Brent foster carers was undertaken, noting those who were particularly vulnerable due to underlying health conditions or their age. Additional information was gathered regarding which carers would be affected by school closures or put at a disadvantage financially due to their employment status. Regular communication detailing the support available and clarity around government guidance in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on contact, education and social interaction has been shared weekly (or more often where necessary) via a newsletter. Feedback from foster carers has been that they have felt well supported during this pandemic by the team and senior managers.
- 8.11 In addition to emotional support, an offer was circulated that foster carers could approach their supervising social worker if they began to experience hardship directly linked to being furloughed, losing employment or purchasing additional equipment. No carers have taken this offer forward to date and the majority report they are managing well on the resources they have. Fostering allowances were paid slightly earlier to allow for any delay in processing, which the carers have positively appreciated.
- 8.12 CYP teams worked effectively with LAC Health partners to ensure that the health of looked after children and young people was prioritised. Initial Health Assessments continued to be undertaken face to face with Brent paediatricians. It is understood that Brent is the only local authority in the country where this continued. Brent CCG in its report to Brent Children's Trust on 22 September 2020 recognised that further work needed be undertaken regarding the full resumption of service for looked after children and looked after children's health assessments. Brent Children's Trust continues to monitor delivery with LAC Health partners during the current second period of lockdown.
- 8.13 LAC health professionals have provided a telephone follow-up service to children in care and care leavers who have been identified by the LAC and Permanency service as in a household that is self-isolating due to Covid-19 symptoms.
- 8.14 Brent Virtual School (BVS) for Looked after Children provided online learning opportunities to children in care as well as virtual workshops to foster carers to support them during the pandemic. The BVS encouraged school attendance of LAC as a vulnerable group prior to July 2020. Approximately 20% of children in care attended school in that period with the remainder working from home with the support of their placement.
- 8.15 In August 2020, Brent increased the weekly subsistence allowance for older children in care in semi-independent placements and eligible care leavers by £20 per week in line with the increase in Universal Credit. This change has been made until 31st March 2021 when it will be reviewed by the Council. This has been welcomed by young people, who fed back to the Corporate Parenting Committee about the positive impact this additional financial support has had on their lives during this pandemic.
- 8.16 The regular enrichment programme to combat social isolation continues for care leavers throughout the pandemic. This includes a regular youth club arrangement and involved events such as a socially distanced visit to Crazy Golf. Brent financially supported one young person to travel down from Manchester to be part of this.
- 8.17 The Care Leavers in Action (CLIA) group continued with face to face meetings when permitted. In September 2020, a face-to-face CLIA session was held in the Civic Centre which was also attended by the Strategic Director, CYP. The group worked on a health guide for care leavers, prepared by colleagues from the Clinical Commissioning Group and LAC Health Team. The group also worked on revising the Brent Care Leavers' Charter before going for a meal together. Another face-to-face session took place in October.

- 8.18 As part of Brent's strategic alliance with Barnardo's to increase positive destinations for care leavers, Barnardo's have been running relevant activities since July 2020. For example, a group of care leavers attended a camping trip in September 2020 for a long weekend in Herefordshire, involving outside activities such as paintballing and quad biking. Four young people attended this activity which focused on team building skills, patience, resilience, motivation and confidence building among young people. Barnardo's also held a workshop with young people called Pizza and Privilege including a discussion about race and the Black Lives Matter movement.
- 8.19 During National Care Leavers' Week (26th October-1st November 2020) Brent was jointly awarded first place in the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum's Best Project Award for the enrichment activity that takes place.
- 8.20 A new programme to support young people into employment has started including a 'Seeking employment' WhatsApp group. The group focuses on inspiring care leavers seeking employment to come forward and be supported to take the next step. There are 40 young people in the group. Recently, 4 care leavers have been interviewed for Level 3 IT and HR apprenticeship opportunities. Another young person was interviewed in the second week of October 2020 for a year-long paid placement as a production runner in a top London advertising agency. Jobs are being posted every day and the Prospects advisors (Brent's commissioned provider supporting young people who are NEET) are part of the group, supporting young people with their CV and interview skills.
- 8.21 Brent currently has 43 care leavers in higher education. They were all provided with the necessary support at the beginning of the academic year such as access to therapeutic support, regular contact with their Personal Advisors and IT equipment where necessary.

9.0 Provision of Youth Justice Services

- 9.1 As set out in the "Brent Youth Offending Service Post-Inspection Action Plan Implementation Brent report" being considered by Scrutiny Committee alongside this report, the YOS commenced the implementation of contingency planning on the same day the first government lockdown came into effect. The service worked closely with partners to ensure that changes to provision met local needs. Staff were initially home based and all young people received daily virtual contact from their case managers. Clarification of YOS staff keyworker status was provided within a week of lockdown. From the beginning of April, Brent YOS resumed face to face home visits and provided court based services in person. The 21 highest risk young people supported by the YOS were identified. A home visit screening tool was created to determine which of these young people required regular face to face contact. Safe visiting guidance was issued. Low risk young people were supervised through telephone or other digital media. Feedback from young people has largely been positive about this form of supervision.
- 9.2 Virtual Referral Order Panels were established and continue to operate. The YOS Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Risk Forum and the Resettlement and Aftercare Forum continue to take place virtually every month. Weekly Out of Court Disposal Decision Making Panels operate remotely.
- 9.3 Brent YOS based a team at court one day per week and additionally attended court as and when required. Brent received positive feedback from District Judges for its commitment to supporting young people at court in person throughout the lockdown. Coordinating Crown Court provision was more challenging. Two cases were escalated to the YJB. Both of these involved young people who were at risk of not appearing in court prior to their eighteenth birthday. HM Courts and Tribunal Service responded by prioritising both cases and they were subsequently both seen before they turned 18.

- 9.4 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Youth Justice Board has suspended the publication of national statistics that show how local authorities have performed in relation to both reoffending and the number of first-time-entrants to the youth justice system – restrictions on the movement of analysts have limited access to Police National Computer data. Local performance measures must be viewed with caution as the courts have adjourned the majority of cases appearing before youth courts. This has had the effect of significantly delaying youth justice proceedings. By late summer, the number of cases appearing before the courts had begun to increase and a significant spike in court work is anticipated.
- 9.5 The extent to which changing court practice has affected Brent YOS is apparent when comparing the volume of court disposals and recorded youth crime occurring in the first quarter of 2019 to the same period in 2020:
- The number of Brent young people receiving court ordered sentences reduced from 62 to 13 (a 79% reduction)
 - The number of offences reduced from 139 to 26 (an 81% reduction)
- 9.6 Analysis of the custodial population shows that in September 2020, there were eleven young people from Brent residing in custody: seven were serving custodial sentences and a further four were remanded in custody awaiting sentencing. Brent's custody rate (0.49 per 1,000 Young People aged 10-17) is beginning to plateau after several years of significant decline.
- 9.7 From June, a limited number of office based activities took place in line with the loosening of some restrictions. However, plans that would have enabled a much wider phased return of YOS staff are likely to be delayed due to recent increases in the rate of Covid-19 infection.
- 9.8 Maintaining the provision of good youth justice services during the current public health pandemic has required flexible planning. Brent YOS continues to work in accordance with service, departmental and corporate plans. Additional strategic direction is contained in the Annual Brent Youth Justice and Recovery Plan. Emerging guidance and sector led planning is provided and co-ordinated during fortnightly meetings of the YJB London Region Heads of Service group.
- 9.9 Management Board oversight of response planning undertaken by the YOS has been consistent throughout the pandemic. This has included fortnightly written updates to Board members from the Chair (Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes).
- 9.10 The annual YOS survey of young people and their families was completed in June 2020. This year the aim was to gain feedback on how the YOS had performed during lockdown, ascertain participant understanding of their youth justice disposal and to understand how satisfied young people were with staff and the services they receive. The survey was completed by 76 participants: 47 young people and 29 parent and carers. The majority of young people (96%) surveyed felt that the YOS had supported them to prevent further offending / re-offending. Ninety four percent did not feel as though they had missed out on any part of their YOS intervention whilst in lockdown.
- 9.11 The department successfully bid in October 2020 for a 3-year grant from the Youth Justice Board to deliver services to deal with the impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities. This funding will provide greater resource to intervene early with young people who are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system and services are due to commence in early 2021.

10.0 Mental health and wellbeing

- 10.1 Brent Council identified the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people as a council wide priority in Covid-19 recovery planning. A Council-wide task group convened in July and developed options to build resilience for children and young people and parents post the first Covid-19 lockdown by expanding mental health and wellbeing support. Work has included engaging children, young people and parents with emerging issues of isolation/loneliness, anxiety, bereavement and trauma due to Covid-19 lockdown. For example, children and young people who have developed anxiety resulting from self-isolating with parents/adults with multiple complexities such as severe mental health problems during lockdown; those who have lost their relatives; domestic conflict (eg teenage to parent; siblings to siblings); and anxiety amongst parents of children with SEND. This work has focused on emerging need for mental health support rather than on children and young people or parents with existing acute mental health problems pre-Covid-19.
- 10.2 Funding is being provided in the Autumn term through small grants to local charities and community groups to scale up support available for young people in Brent.
- 10.3 Counselling for LAC and care leavers has been expanded with more hours of support being made available and practitioners being supported to utilise clinical consultation provided by Brent Emotional Wellbeing Service, to help support them meet the needs of LAC and care leavers.
- 10.4 Young people, who have particularly struggled emotionally, have been referred to the Safe Base Brent Programme for online therapy. This programme has been expanded with increased hours of online counselling available for care leavers and is funded through Brent's Virtual School for Looked After Children. Additionally, details of online mental health and well-being support services such as 'Kooth' have been shared with young people.
- 10.5 Brent Council was informed in July that the local area had been successful in its bid to participate in the next wave of the NHS Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) Trailblazer programme. The project is being led by Brent CCG and the local CAMHS provider Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL), supported by the local authority. MHSTs are a new service designed to help meet the mental health needs of children and young people in education settings. They are made up of senior clinicians and therapists, and Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs). MHSTs are intended to add capacity to existing mental health support and add capacity. Each MHST will be responsible for a defined cluster or group of education settings, building a relationship with each, including school senior mental health leads. The aim is to ensure that the support offer reflects the needs of children and young people and education settings using clearly established expectations and ways of working that fit with the setting and the local system. The project will be fully operational from Autumn 2021, however, training for the EMHPs commences in November 2020
- 10.6 Brent is also participating in the Wellbeing for Education Return programme. This is a fully funded national initiative from the Department for Education, Department for Health and Social Care, Health Education England and Public Health England. The programme's aim is to support schools in meeting the emotional needs of pupils and staff during the pandemic. The programme runs to Easter 2021, and will provide training for key school staff to disseminate to colleagues, and provide a chance for schools to connect with local experts and each other to share knowledge and experience.
- 10.7 A recently published study shows that the mental health of children has improved after they returned to school in September. In Brent, several schools set aside their planned 'recovery' curriculum as children were eager to experience the full curriculum again.

11.0 Financial implications

11.1 As at the end of October, the forecast pressures on the CYP General Fund budget as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic is £3.5m. This consists of £1.6m estimated cost pressures, £1.0m potential loss of income and £0.9m slippage in savings delivery. Figures are reviewed and revised on a two weekly basis.

11.2 These forecast costs as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic include:

- £1m pressure arising from additional placement costs for care leavers, where the lockdown has caused a delay in bidding for and moving into their own tenancies and increases in police protection cases in Localities;
- £0.3m additional payments for short break activities for Children with Disabilities. For families with children in need (s17 Children Act 1989) who needed emergency payments for food, utilities or other hardship issues; increased subsistence allowance to care leavers by £20 per week and providing care leavers with emergency payments at points of crisis;
- £0.2m additional staffing cost pressures;
- £0.1m the cost of keeping children's centres open for an additional three months thereby extending existing contracts with the current providers and as a result of the delay in the introduction of the FWC;
- £50k Parental Mental health training.

11.3 The impact of the potential loss of income in 2020/21 totals £1.0m from traded services with schools with the largest losses being Brent Music Service (£0.3m) and the Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre (£0.4m); the loss of £0.1m income from a Council owned Nursery for fee paying families for whom a childcare place has been discontinued and £0.2m which relates to the loss of revenue in issuing Education Penalty notices, training income and reduced income from other local authorities utilising the Ade Adepitan Short Break Centre in the borough.

11.4 If demand pressures increase in the system, it is anticipated there will be further budget pressures in particular due staffing costs to manage higher caseloads and the high cost of placements for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

11.5 In 2020/21, it is estimated that there may be pressures of up to £0.2m against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded budgets. These pressures include potential Post 16 providers requesting for an additional year attendance due to COVID-19, the need for additional tutoring costs whilst Looked After Children (LAC) are out of school an estimate of agency supply staff to cover absences and ensuring children with additional needs e.g. visual and hearing impairment have the necessary equipment and infrastructure in their home to enable them to continue to follow a home teaching and learning schedule.

12.0 Legal implications

12.1 The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 were published on Thursday 23 April and came into force on Friday 24 April. The regulations temporarily amend ten sets of regulations relating to children's social care in England, including those

related to statutory visits and statutory reviews for children subject of Child in Need or Child Protection plans and Looked After Children; fostering and adoption panels; complaints and representations. The Government in the associated Explanatory Memorandum said the changes are intended to help local authorities to "prioritise the needs of children, whilst relaxing some administrative and procedural obligations...but maintaining appropriate safeguards" during the coronavirus outbreak. The Regulations expired on 25 September.

12.2 Brent Council have not used the majority of the flexibilities in the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and described in the Children's Social Care Covid 19 guidance. We have followed the principles in the guidance and have risk assessed all cases open to a social worker to ensure decisions made about contact and visiting are child-centred, risk and evidence based and collaborative. The key flexibilities used have been as follows:

- In relation to visits to looked after children in placements (Reg28) we have visited most children virtually, based on individual risk assessments. We have gradually increased the proportion of face to face visits as social distancing guidance has changed.
- Conducting virtual Child Protection Conferences and LAC Reviews using conference calling facilities rather than face to face in order to promote social distancing.
- Strategy meetings have been held virtually in the majority of cases to ensure social distancing is followed.
- Statutory home visiting for children subject of Child in Need and Child Protection plans have been risk-assessed and virtual visiting is taking place where appropriate.
- Flexibility around the 15-day timescale for Rapid Review meetings following referral to the National Safeguarding Review Panel have been used. This is to ensure agencies are able to respond effectively when balancing competing priorities

13.0 Equality implications

13.1 The council's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Local Authority when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic. Protected characteristics include ethnic or national origins and colour or nationality. The Council has paid due regard to children and families' protected characteristics in providing targeted and risk assessed support based on child and family need throughout the pandemic period.

14.0 Consultation with ward members and stakeholders

14.1 During the pandemic period, the Strategic Director CYP has participated in the regular Member web cast briefings to provide answers to any questions members have had regarding children, families and schools. The Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care, and Cabinet Member for Schools, Employment and Skills have been regularly briefed on service changes and impacts for children and families throughout the period.

14.2 Early years settings and schools in Brent have been actively supported and engaged throughout the period of the pandemic. The Strategic Director has met regularly with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors as described in Section 4 of the report.

14.3 The Children's Trust, chaired by the Strategic Director CYP, has been the formal governance structure for engagement with health partners to ensure that services for vulnerable children have been maintained throughout the period of the pandemic.

14.4 Union representatives have been regularly engaged, both through the Council's Health and Safety committee and Union representatives for school based staff with particular regards to the arrangements developed by schools to ensure children could attend school, through thorough risk assessment and protective measures being in place.

15.0 Human Resources / Property Implications

15.1 HR and property implications are set out in the body of the report.

Related Documents:


Brent Council and Covid-19: Service Response and Recovery report, Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 21st July 2020

Report sign off:

GAIL TOLLEY

Strategic Director Children and Young People

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	<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</p> <p align="center">Tuesday 24 November 2020</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Strategic Director Children and Young People</p>
<p>Update on schools and education, including action plan for raising achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	n/a
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Annual School Standards and Achievement Report 2018-2019 (published as a separate paper)
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Brian Grady Operational Director Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy brian.grady@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>John Galligan Head of Setting and School Effectiveness john.galligan@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on schools and education in Brent, and the actions taken to raise the achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage.
- 1.2 The Borough Plan 2019-23 sets out five strategic priorities, including: Every opportunity to succeed – working in partnership to support children and young people’s educational attainment and training. Within this strategic priority there is a commitment to support the continued improvement of provision for early years settings and schools – particularly helping the very small number which are not yet rated good by Ofsted. The Borough Plan also commits to collaboration with local school-led partnerships to improve the quality of education in Brent’s primary and secondary schools.
- 1.3 The Annual School Standards and Achievement Report 2017/18 was reviewed by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in March 2019. As part of the committee’s work programme it was resolved that school standards and achievement

would be reviewed again in 2020 because school standards and achievement are of concern to a large number of the borough's residents, and address a corporate priority as set out above. However, the committee meeting of 22 April 2020 which was scheduled to discuss the Annual School Standards and Achievement Report 2018/19 was cancelled because of the pandemic. The report has been circulated as a background paper and to provide a public record of Brent's school standards and achievement in the academic year 2018/19.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members of the scrutiny committee are recommended to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Detail

Context

- 3.1 The governance arrangements of Brent schools have continued to change in response to national policy and to meet the needs of the borough and school communities. As at September 2020, Brent's schools are organised as follows:

Type of school	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	All-through	Special	Pupil Referral Unit	Total
Maintained Community	4	30	0	0	1	2	37
Maintained Voluntary-aided	0	15	2	0	0	0	17
Maintained Foundation	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Multi Academy Trust	0	12	8	1	4	0	25
Single Academy Trust	0	1	4	1	0	0	6
Total	4	60	14	2	5	2	87

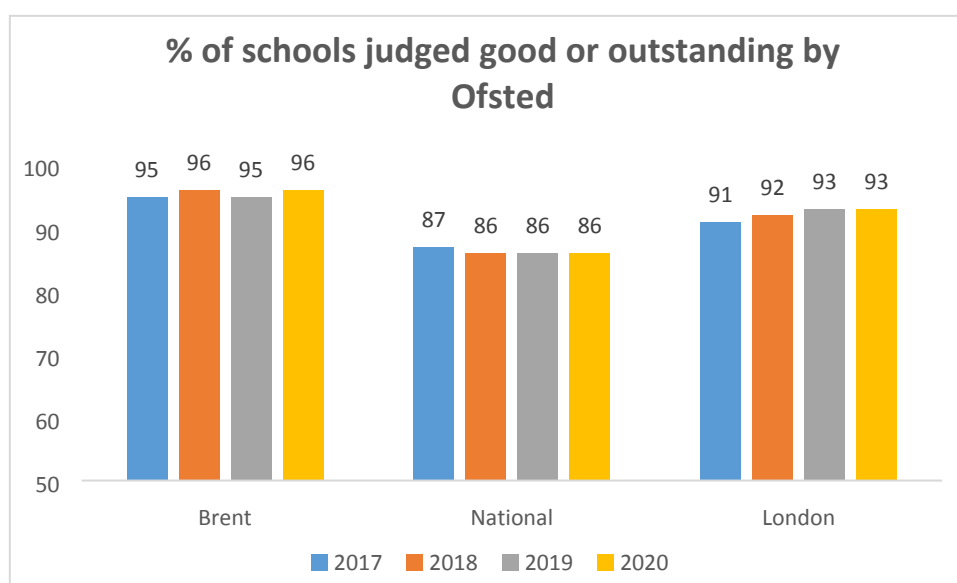
- 3.2 There are 87 state funded schools in Brent. At the start of the academic year 2019/20, three voluntary aided primary schools joined a locally led multi-academy trust and from September 2020 a new secondary school opened as part of another locally led multi-academy trust to meet the increased demand for secondary places.
- 3.3 Two primary maintained community schools that had been working in partnership for three years formed a hard federation from September 2020. There are four other hard federations with one governing board and an executive headteacher each leading two schools: two community nursery schools; a community infant and community junior school; a community infant and foundation junior school; a voluntary aided infant school and a voluntary aided junior school. In addition, there is one partnership between two community primary schools with an interim executive headteacher and separate governing boards.
- 3.4 The total school population has stayed stable over the last three years. The number of children and young people of statutory school age is 48,512¹. There has though been a change in demographics affecting the primary and secondary phases differently. Over the last three years the number of primary age pupils has fallen by 2.6 per cent, whereas at secondary there has been an increase of 5.2 per cent. The

¹ Most recent data on school characteristics is taken from the School Census, January 2020

largest ethnic groups of statutory school age are: Asian Indian (16 per cent), White British (eight per cent), White Eastern European (eight per cent), Black Somali (seven per cent), Black Caribbean (six per cent), Asian Pakistani (four per cent) and Afghan (three per cent).

- 3.5 The diverse nature of Brent’s population poses a range of challenges for schools, the most significant of which include the integration of pupils arriving late to the UK education system, high general mobility, language development needs and deprivation. This diversity is not a fixed picture but rather there are rapid changes to the population. A very high proportion of pupils have English as an Additional Language (65 per cent) and a large proportion of under 16s were born outside the United Kingdom, many starting formal education in England much later than their peers, often with little or no English, and sometimes with no experience of any formal education. The largest spoken first languages other than English are: Gujarati (nine per cent), Arabic (eight per cent), Somali (six per cent), Romanian (five per cent), Urdu (three per cent), Tamil (three per cent), Portuguese (three per cent) and Polish (two per cent).
- 3.6 In addition to new arrivals, socio-economic pressures placed on many of Brent’s families combined with a housing stock which relies heavily on privately rented accommodation, contribute to relatively high levels of pupil turnover in many of our schools. The proportion of Brent pupils who are disadvantaged² is 24 per cent. There is a higher proportion of pupils identified as disadvantaged in the secondary phase (28 per cent).

Overall school effectiveness



- 3.7 The Education Inspection Framework was significantly revised with effect from September 2019. This more challenging framework gives most of its weighting in determining a school’s overall effectiveness to ‘The quality of education’ which is a new judgement on the substance of education delivered by a school. Good schools and outstanding special and nursery schools are inspected within a five-year cycle, normally in the fourth year. The majority of schools in Brent fall into this cycle. From January 2021, the government, subject to parliamentary approval, intends to re-

² Measured by the percentage of pupils allocated Pupil Premium funding

introduce regular inspection of the outstanding schools which have been exempt from routine inspection.

- 3.8 During the academic year 2019/20, the overall effectiveness of Brent schools increased by one percentage point to 96 per cent of Brent schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted. Brent continued to be well above the national average of 86 per cent and above the London average of 93 per cent.
- 3.9 14 schools were inspected in the last academic year (2019/20). All were judged good or outstanding. One nursery school retained its judgement of good, nine primary schools remained good, one primary school inspected for the first time was judged outstanding, one secondary school remained good, a secondary school previously requires improvement was judged good and a special school was judged outstanding.
- 3.10 All nursery schools, secondary schools, pupil referral units and special schools are now good or outstanding. Of the 59 primary schools inspected, 57 are good or outstanding and two are judged as requires improvement. Both are due re-inspection in the current academic year 2020/21.
- 3.11 In preparation for the introduction of the new Education Inspection Framework there was a high level of partnership work. An Ofsted Senior HMI presented the framework to the 2019 spring term meeting of Senior Officers with Headteachers and the spring meeting of Senior Officers with Chairs and Vice Chairs of Governors.
- 3.12 Brent was also fortunate that four schools, a primary, a secondary and two special schools volunteered to be part of the Ofsted pilot inspections in the spring term of 2019. The headteachers of these schools shared their learning at the summer term Senior Officers Meeting with Headteachers and at Brent Annual Governors' Conference in July 2019. In addition, Brent Schools Partnership held briefings for headteachers on the framework. To further support schools, the headteachers of a primary and a secondary school shared their experiences of being inspected under the new framework at the Meeting with Headteachers in January 2020.
- 3.13 In March 2020, Ofsted paused its inspection schedule because of the pandemic and the closure of schools to all pupils except vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Ofsted is intending to restart school inspections in the spring term 2021. Schools reopened for all pupils from September 2020, and as an interim measure prior to recommencing the inspection schedule, Ofsted has introduced assurance visits. The purpose of these interim visits is to reassure and inform parents, government and the public about how schools are managing the return to full education for all pupils.
- 3.14 The visits are not inspections and do not result in graded judgements, although Ofsted can convert a visit to an inspection if inspectors identify concerns. During the visits, inspectors work collaboratively with leaders to understand:
- The barriers that the school has faced, and may still be facing, in managing the return to full education for all pupils
 - How leaders are ensuring that all pupils are taught the school's curriculum, including contingency planning for the use of remote education and the use of catch-up funding to close gaps in pupils' learning

- How pupils are settling back into expected routines and behaviour, including regular attendance
 - How any identified and specific issues related to special educational needs, disabilities, health, care, well-being issues for particular groups of pupils are being addressed
 - The school's safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.15 Brent has also been fortunate that a primary school and a secondary school volunteered to take part in Ofsted's pilot interim visits at the start of the 2020/21 autumn term. The headteachers then shared their experiences with other headteachers at a webinar organised by Brent Schools Partnership. Ofsted has so far published letters following its visits to two Brent schools (a primary and a secondary), which both highlighted the positive work that the schools have done to ensure a smooth return to full time education for their pupils.

Standards and achievement 2019-20

- 3.16 After schools closed for all pupils except vulnerable children and the children of key workers in March 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that the summer 2020 primary key stage statutory assessments and GCSE, A Level and Level 3 vocational examinations would be cancelled. In May 2020, the DfE announced that it would not be publishing any performance tables, and stated that it would not hold schools to account on the basis of assessment data from summer 2020, and that the data should not be used by others, such as Ofsted, local authorities, academy trusts, and so on to hold schools or teachers to account. There will therefore be no validated achievement and standards data for 2019/20 to measure the continuing improvement in the outcomes of Brent pupils and groups of pupils available to report to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

Vulnerable children

- 3.17 Brent's definition of vulnerable children is:
- Children who are assessed as being in need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
 - Children who have an education, health and care plan
 - Children who have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or at the local authority's discretion (including children's social care services). This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers.
- 3.18 When schools were partially closed in March 2020, the Department for Education highlighted the importance of schools remaining open for vulnerable children. To support school leaders to maintain provision for this group, the local authority expected schools to work in locality clusters. The Brent school clusters (Harlesden, Kilburn, Kingsbury, Wembley and Willesden) have since played a key role in providing mutual support in addressing the extraordinary issues that have impacted on the leadership and operation of schools. The clusters have in a short space of time re-established themselves as a key component of the borough's school-to-school support.

- 3.19 Nearly all schools stayed open during the period of partial closure which ended in July 2020, and most schools remained open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers during the spring holiday in April and the half term in May, with many also staying open on public holidays. Social workers, education welfare officers and Brent Virtual School teachers worked with schools and the families of vulnerable children over this period to support their children's full attendance. To support vulnerable pupils with their learning from April 2020, the DfE began to issue digital devices (laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers) to local authorities to distribute to schools.
- 3.20 In May 2020 the Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership Board, chaired by the Strategic Director Children and Young People, agreed that the Strategic Framework for School Effectiveness 2017-20 which directs the work of the Setting and School Effectiveness service should be extended for one year until 2021 with relevant updates because:
- Several national policy developments affecting the support and monitoring of school effectiveness including the reorganisation of Teaching School Alliances to support schools on a regional basis are currently underway or have been delayed
 - The impact of the pandemic on schools and the continuity of education when schools closed on 20 March 2020 for all pupils except vulnerable children and the children of key workers
 - Ofsted has paused its cycle of school inspections because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.21 It was agreed that the Strategic Framework should add vulnerable children to the borough's priority groups. This is because the Timpson Review of School Exclusion in May 2019 highlighted the low attainment of this group nationally, and the work of local schools and the local authority over the period of partial closure to support vulnerable children's continued attendance at schools during the pandemic also highlighted the need to continue to improve the outcomes of vulnerable children in Brent. The revised framework was approved by the Board in September and circulated to all schools by the Strategic Director in October 2020. Monitoring the attendance, attainment and progress of vulnerable children is now an agenda item at all school effectiveness meetings with schools.

Full reopening of schools

- 3.22 Schools reopened for all pupils in September 2020. The DfE set the following expectations for their reopening, to:
- Teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content
 - Aim to return to the school's normal curriculum in all subjects by summer term 2021
 - Plan on the basis of the educational needs of pupils
 - Develop remote education so that it is integrated into school curriculum planning.
- 3.23 Schools also planned their support for pupils' mental health and wellbeing, recognising that some pupils will have been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks.
- 3.24 From the outset, Brent schools have been assessing their pupils to identify the gaps in their learning which has informed on-going modifications to the delivery of the

curriculum. To support schools to close the gaps the DfE announced the Covid-19 Catch-up Premium in July. This is additional funding to support pupils who fell behind in their learning during the first lockdown period. Schools are using the funding to accelerate progress through tailored teaching activities which include:

- Small group or one-to-one tuition
- Extra teaching capacity including after school lessons.

- 3.25 During their partial closure, Brent schools quickly developed their on-line teaching platforms and resources to teach pupils remotely. They also provided teaching and learning packs for children who did not have the required access for online learning. The development of remote learning has been on-going to ensure that when pupils or teachers have to isolate because of Covid-19 outbreaks, their learning and teaching can continue as seamlessly as possible. The DfE is continuing to distribute digital devices to schools to support pupils that have to isolate because of Covid-19.
- 3.26 Following recent government announcements, it is expected that all Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and primary National Curriculum assessments and tests will go ahead in summer 2021. GCSE, A Level and vocational qualification examinations are also scheduled to take place with a later start time to give schools more teaching time. The examinations are being modified to give schools and the pupils optional questions to assess the parts of the subject syllabus that were taught. The cancelled summer 2020 Year 1 phonics screening check has been rescheduled for Year 2 pupils in the second half of the autumn term 2020/21, and the local authority is collecting the results from all primary schools to submit to the DfE.

Actions for raising the achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage

- 3.27 The most recent School Census data shows that there are 1,810 British boys of Black Caribbean heritage attending Brent schools. This is four per cent of the school population. Of all Brent's significant ethnic groups, boys of Black Caribbean heritage is the only group which has continued to significantly underperform over the last three years.
- 3.28 In June 2018, the Schools Forum approved funding for 'Raising the Achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage in Brent schools' programme led by the Brent Schools Partnership to address the concerns raised at a previous Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.29 Brent Schools Forum agreed the funding for Brent Schools Partnership to deliver the following actions:
- The designation of a Black Caribbean Achievement (BCA) Champion in every school in Brent for a period of two years
 - A supported rigorous and robust audit framework to analyse the performance of pupils of Black Caribbean heritage, and the effectiveness of key aspects of schools' practice to ensure British pupils of Black Caribbean heritage achieve well
 - A programme of half termly training for BCA champions to ensure high levels of skills and competencies to deliver the role effectively leading to real impact on outcomes in schools
 - A programme of training for school staff and governors
 - The development of online resources for parents on strengthening their role and contribution to improving their children's learning and progress, and reducing the likelihood of their children being excluded from schools.

- 3.30 There is much to be celebrated about the way that schools in Brent have engaged in the programme aimed at raising the achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage. This has had a very positive impact on the attainment for this group of pupils in Brent. The most recent validated data (2018/19) shows a significant reduction in gaps in the attainment of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage against all pupils at Key Stage 2 and at Key Stage 4. For the end of EYFS there has also been a significant improvement. For Key Stage 1, concerns remain.
- 3.31 A review of this initiative's progress, shows that across Brent there is a much greater focus and determination in schools to tackle the legacy of underachievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage. The leadership provided by the Black Caribbean (BCA) Champions, supported by their headteachers has been strong in the majority of schools engaged in the programme.

Black Caribbean Achievement Champions

- 3.32 There are 78 BCA champions in 73 Brent schools. In some schools more than one leader has been designated as a BCA Champion. The majority of the champions have a strong profile in their schools and are either part of the senior leadership team (SLT) or are able to work with the SLT to drive forward improvement strategies in their school.
- 3.33 Some schools have created BCA teams which have led to staff across the school working together to address the barriers to raising the attainment of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage. Where schools have appointed a BCA Governor Champion, it demonstrates there is strong strategic leadership from the governing board to raise the attainment of this group.
- 3.34 The work of the champions in ensuring greater engagement of parents of children of Black Caribbean heritage has led to a real transformation in the way that many parents are engaging to support their children's learning, and working with their child's school to develop provision to improve outcomes.
- 3.35 The leadership capacity created through the designation of a BCA Champion has made a significant contribution to ensuring that raising achievement is a strategic priority in schools leading to a range of actions aimed at tackling the legacy of underachievement of this group of pupils.

Black Caribbean Achievement audit

- 3.36 68 schools have had a BCA audit supported by a Brent Schools Partnership (BSP) School Improvement Specialist. An analysis of the issues identified through the audit across Brent has been carried out, and has informed the content of the training and support available for schools.
- 3.37 The need for a stronger emphasis on whole school training on 'unconscious bias' has been identified as a key priority in order to ensure that raising the attainment of pupils of Black Caribbean heritage is recognised as a whole school issue, and not just the responsibility of school leaders and governors. An increasing number of schools are seeking such training from the BSP, which they are funding from their individual school CPD (continuing professional development) budgets.
- 3.38 During 2020, schools have been able to draw in a half-day BSP external review to assess the progress they have made against the recommendations made in their BCA audit. Assessments of how schools have been progressing suggests that the

majority of schools will have made good progress against the recommendations for improvement.

BCA Champion training and development

3.39 The BSP’s BCA Champion training programme has been very well received. Attendance at the training sessions has been good overall. All BCA champions have been allocated a personal coach for a two-year period. Coaching sessions commenced in 2019 and have been very well received.

School staff and governor training

3.40 Twelve sessions have been made available by the BSP. Schools have been able to take up as many places as they wish at each of the sessions. Overall, 360 places have been taken up. Take up at each session has ranged from 13 to 48. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

3.41 The active engagement of school governors continues to be critical to the sustainability of the progress that has been made to date, and to embed and further strengthen the strategies which close the gaps between the attainment of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage and all pupils nationally, and in Brent schools.

Online resources for parents

3.42 The development of the Parent Resource Portal by the BSP has progressed well. The development of the content has been led by parents of Black Caribbean heritage and community members, and by professionals with expertise in specific areas of education, SEND and the law. There is a strong sense of commitment and pride amongst the parents and community members who have led on the development of the portal.

3.43 The Resource Portal went live in the autumn term 2020, and is being promoted to parents by schools and their BCA champions. Parents and community members have recognised that the resources are of great value. One parent stated:

“I wish I had had access to such a Resource Portal when my children were younger, I would have understood schools more, I could have helped my children properly, and may be have been a better parent”.

Another parent said:

“I have already told lots of parents to look out for the portal, and I will be making sure they use it, particularly the section on black history. I have learnt so much about my history from the portal, stuff I never knew about my people, it makes me proud”.

The attainment of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage

3.44 In 2018/19 schools in Brent closed the gaps between the headline measures of attainment of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage and all pupils at the end of EYFS, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. The most impact has been at Key Stage 2 which will provide a very important foundation for the boys’ success at secondary Key Stage 4. The previous years of underperformance means that there is still the need for significant acceleration of progress at all key stages.

Key Stage 4 - Attainment 8									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP

BBBCH	37.3	44.0	-6.7	33.7	35.5	-1.8	38.9	36.7	2.2
All pupils	64.7	61.2	3.5	49.8	46.4	3.4	50.2	46.7	3.5

Key Stage 4 - % attaining GCSE grade 4+ in English and mathematics									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	37.3	44.0	-6.7	37.1	36.2	0.9	48.9	39.4	9.5
All pupils	64.7	61.2	3.5	65.0	60.1	4.9	64.4	60.3	4.1

3.45 The data for Key Stage 4 shows a significant improvement. The gap in Attainment 8 was reduced by five points between British boys of Black Caribbean heritage and all pupils, down from 13 points to 8 points. There was also a significant increase of 12 percentage points (pcp) in the percentage of boys attaining a pass in GCSE English and mathematics, reducing the gap with the national average for all pupils from 23pcp in 2018 to 11pcp in 2019; in effect the gap was halved.

3.46 To ensure accelerated improvement, the Brent Schools Partnership programme has continued to support the role of BCA Champions by holding follow-up sessions at schools to evaluate progress against their improvement plans written following the audit of provision carried out as part of the programme in 2019. The evaluation process includes the analysis of 2019 outcomes, and setting new school specific actions to close gaps. The programme is also focusing its support for secondary schools on improving the progress of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage by attainment group, with a particular emphasis on improving the rate of progress for higher attaining boys who should be attaining the highest grades at GCSE.

Key Stage 2 - % attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	38	47	-9	41	49	-8	58	51	7
All pupils	61	61	0	63	64	-1	68	65	3

Key Stage 2 - % attaining the expected standard in reading									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	52	61	-9	58	64	-6	66	62	4
All pupils	69	72	-3	73	76	-3	75	74	1

Key Stage 2 - % attaining the expected standard in writing									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	56	64	-8	58	64	-6	71	65	6
All pupils	75	76	-1	76	79	-3	80	79	1

Key Stage 2 - % attaining the expected standard in mathematics									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	60	64	-4	60	63	-3	74	69	5
All pupils	78	75	3	78	76	2	84	79	5

3.47 At Key Stage 2 the gap significantly narrowed in reading, writing and mathematics (RWM) combined. There has been an improvement of 17pcp representing a 70 per cent fall in the size of the gap. The gap fell from 23pcp to 7pcp. The largest improvements were in writing which increased by 13pcp and mathematics which increased by 14pcp. Reading increased by 8pcp. Based on this level of improvement there is a real possibility that the attainment gap for RWM combined at

the end of Key Stage 2 will soon be closed in Brent. Schools are therefore continuing with the actions that have led to these improvements in the current academic year with the expectation that the gap will be closed.

Early Years Foundation Stage - % attaining a good level of development									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	55	68	-13	64	62	2	70	62	8
All pupils	70	71	-1	70	72	-2	72	72	0

- 3.48 Significant improvement can also be seen in the data for the end of EYFS. There was an improvement of 6pcp, bringing the gap down to 2pcp. This is a 75 per cent reduction in the gap. Based on this rate of improvement this gap should also be closed soon.

Key Stage 1 - % attaining the expected standard in reading									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	58	67	-9	73	69	4	68	66	2
All pupils	74	76	-2	75	75	0	74	75	-1

Key Stage 1 - % attaining the expected standard in writing									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	51	57	-6	55	58	-3	50	57	-7
All pupils	68	68	0	68	70	-2	68	69	-1

Key Stage 1 - % attaining the expected standard in mathematics									
	2017			2018			2019		
	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP	LA	National	GAP
BBBCH	58	67	-9	66	66	0	66	68	-2
All pupils	75	75	0	75	76	-1	76	76	0

- 3.49 Whilst there were these improvements at the end of both the primary and secondary phases, and at the Early Years Foundation Stage, at Key Stage 1 there appears to have been a widening of gaps. Although, the data shows that the gap for mathematics (10pcp) has remained the same, there has been a widening of gaps in reading (by 5pcp) and in writing (by 4pcp). Identifying and addressing the reasons for these gaps at Key Stage 1 has been a key priority for the second year of the programme.
- 3.50 For EYFS, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, it has been important to build on the success of the first year (2018/19) of the 'Raising the Achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage' programme, maintaining the leadership focus in Brent schools on improving the outcomes, and strengthening further their provision and practice for this group of boys.

Exclusions

2016-17				2017/18				2018-19			
Brent Permanent Exclusions (PEX)	Black Caribbean boys PEX	% of total PEX	% of Black Caribbean cohort PEX	Brent PEX	Black Caribbean boys PEX	% of total PEX	% of Black Caribbean cohort PEX	Brent PEX	Black Caribbean boys PEX	% of total PEX	% of Black Caribbean cohort PEX
59	10 (4)	17%	0.67%	47	7 (1)	14.90%	0.47%	28	3	11%	0.16%
Brent Fixed Term Exclusions (FTEEx)	Black Caribbean boys FTEEx	% of total FTEEx	% of Black Caribbean cohort FTEEx	Brent FTEEx	Black Caribbean boys FTEEx	% of total FTEEx	% of Black Caribbean cohort FTEEx	Brent FTEEx	Black Caribbean boys FTEEx	% of total FTEEx	% of Black Caribbean cohort FTEEx
1611	200	12%	13.55%	1634	175	10.70%	11.86%	1771	287	16%	15.58%

3.51 The data on the exclusions of Brent residents shows that permanent exclusions (PEX) of British boys of Black Caribbean have declined over the last three years and as a percentage of the cohort. However, the number and percentage of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage receiving a fixed term exclusion (FTEEx) rose in 2018/19. Reducing fixed term exclusions continues to be a priority for schools.

Brent Black Community Action Plan

3.52 In July 2020, Brent Cabinet agreed the Brent Black Community Action Plan. The work of the Brent School Partnership led programme and the actions listed above support schools to meet the first theme of the plan, 'Early intervention: children, young people and families'. Specifically, the programme has helped schools to develop their curricula to better meet the needs of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage, and to enable them with the support of their families to fulfil their ambitions and aspirations.

Conclusion

3.53 The effectiveness of Brent schools and the quality of education they provide continues to be strong when compared to national and regional averages. Schools benefit from strong partnership working with Brent Council, Brent Schools Partnership, Brent Teaching School Alliance and local school clusters which have also ensured that their leaders have been effectively supported to continue to improve their provision, and since the start of the pandemic to continue to meet the needs of their pupils and communities.

3.54 The Schools Forum funded programme 2018-20 to raise the achievement of British boys of Black Caribbean heritage led to significant closure of gaps in summer 2019 at nearly all key stages after a long period, as shown in the data for 2017 and 2018 of little change. Work though continues in schools with the support of Brent Schools Partnership to fully close the gaps and to reduce fixed term exclusions, with the expectation that the next published data for 2021 will show further improvement.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 The local authority has a statutory duty (Children Act 2004, 2006) to act as the champion for all children and young people in the borough and is responsible for maintaining an overview of the effectiveness of all schools including sponsored academies, converter academies, free schools, the local college, and registered early years settings and registered training providers. The local authority also has a statutory duty “to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential in schools so that all children and young people benefit from at least a good education.” (The Education Act 2011). Brent Council is therefore responsible for maintaining a full overview of the effectiveness of all schools and local education provision.

6.0 Equality implications

6.1 This report includes an analysis of gaps for British boys of Black Caribbean heritage and identifies improving the outcomes of vulnerable children as a priority for the borough. The analysis of outcomes is used to monitor the priority groups for the Strategic Framework for School Effectiveness, and to guide the work of Setting and School Effectiveness Service and its local school improvement partners.


7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 Stakeholders were consulted on the update of the Strategic Framework for School Effectiveness and its strategic priorities.

Report sign off:

GAIL TOLLEY
Strategic Director Children and Young People

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	<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 24 November 2020</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Head of Early Help, Children and Young People</p>
<p align="center">Brent Youth Offending Service Post-Inspection Action Plan Implementation</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	n/a
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	Appendix 1 – YOS Performance Information
Background Papers:	n/a
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Sue Gates, Head of Early Help Sue.gates@brent.gov.uk Nigel Chapman, Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes Nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Summary

1.1 Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) carried out an inspection of Brent Youth Offending Service (YOS) in August 2019 that was published on 18th December 2019:
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/brentyos/>

1.2 Brent YOS was judged to be ‘good’ overall. The Chief Inspector of Probation in his foreword to the main report commented,

“...managers have produced a risk profile that highlights the work needed to manage and reduce the significant proportion of children who pose a high risk of serious harm – just over 50 per cent of the YOS caseload, one of the highest proportions of any YOS we have inspected.”

“Brent YOS is a good, well-led service with a stable, committed workforce, intent on improving outcomes for a vulnerable and high-risk group of children and young people”.

“We have concluded the YOS is doing a good job in a tough environment.”

- 1.3 This report will provide detail of the progress made in implementing actions arising from the four recommendations within the inspection. The report also provides information on the performance of Brent YOS in general.
- 1.4 Additional focus is given to the impact of Covid 19 on local youth justice provision and how Brent YOS has responded operationally to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members of the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the content of this report.

3.0 Detail

3. Youth Offending Service

3.1 Background

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority in England and Wales to deliver youth justice services in line with a statutory framework that outlines YOS responsibilities.

Brent YOS is a multidisciplinary, multi-agency service that works with children and young people aged 10-18 years and their families to deliver statutory responsibilities in relation to a wide range of provision. This includes out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, group work and interventions, as well as work with young people who are in custody.

Comprised of representatives from the local authority, Police, National Probation Service, CAMHS, health, education and local service providers, the YOS supervises 10–17 year-olds who have either received a court sentence, or an out of court disposal (O OCD) issued by the police.

The YOS focuses on achieving three Youth Justice Outcomes:

- Reduction in youth re-offending.
- Reduction in the numbers of first time entrants to the justice system.
- Reduction in the use of youth custody.

3.2 Local context

Brent YOS is part of the Children and Young People (CYP) department and is managed by the Head of Early Help. The focus is on early intervention, reflecting the widespread recognition that it is better to identify and deal with problems early rather than respond when difficulties have become acute and demand action by statutory or more intensive services.

Governance is the responsibility of the YOS Management Board which meets every quarter and is chaired by the Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes, CYP. Support given to children, young people and their families is guided in Brent by *National Standards Governing Youth Justice* and Brent’s Children and Young People’s Practice Framework.

The YOS supports effective multi-agency partnership working to support the development of contextual safeguarding approaches in Brent. For example, the YOS is leading CYP departmental approaches in relation to safety mapping with young people.

The work of Brent YOS is delivered in accordance with the Brent Borough Plan (2019-23) strategic theme: A Borough Where We Can All Feel Safe, Secure, Happy and Healthy. Progress in relation to the two outcomes below is reported quarterly:

Strategic Theme: A Borough Where We Can All Feel Safe, Secure, Happy and Healthy

Outcome	YOS Key Performance Indicator
Reduction in anti-social behaviour, the risk of harm and re-offending	Rate of youth reoffending in Brent
Reduction in violent crime, including gang and knife crime	Number of young people in Brent who are first-time entrants to the youth justice system.

3.3 What HMIP does

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. They provide assurance on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. They inspect these services and publish inspection reports. They highlight good and poor practice, and use data and information to encourage good-quality services. There have been eight published inspections in London during the current inspection cycle. One local authority has been judged ‘Outstanding’, three (including Brent) have been judged “Good”, and a further four “Requires Improvement”.

3.4 Inspection Methodology

HMIP use four classifications to rate effectiveness: *outstanding*, *good*, *requires improvement*, and *inadequate*. Performance was scrutinised in three areas:

Domain 1 (Organisational Delivery) was determined through an examination of policies, procedures and partnership working. Findings were further examined in a series of focus group meetings involving operational and strategic staff and partners.

For Domains 2 and 3, HMIP conducted a detailed examination of 29 court disposal cases and 20 OOCs. Inspectors considered a number of key questions about different aspects of quality. They were particularly interested in the sufficiency of offending analysis, the assessment and management of risk, and the extent to which young people were involved in planning.

3.5 Summary of HMIP findings

Overall rating for the Brent Youth Offending Service	Good
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Domain 1: Organisational delivery	
Governance and leadership	Good
Staff	Good
Partnerships and services	Requires Improvement
Information and facilities	Requires Improvement

Domain 2: Court disposals	
Assessment	Good
Planning	Good
Implementation and delivery	Good
Reviewing	Good

Domain 3: Out-of-court-disposals	
Assessment	Good
Planning	Good
Implementation and delivery	Requires Improvement
Joint working	Good

- 3.6 Overall, the inspection identified evidence of good governance and effective casework. HMIP favourably noted the approach taken to support the whole family, including siblings who were recognised as having a higher chance of becoming involved in offending. This includes the routine referral of siblings to Early Help in order to ensure that support is provided at the earliest possible opportunity. This is a key learning point for all partners as the journey to whole family working and early intervention, led by the Troubled Families' initiative has taken time to be embedded. The inspection outcome provides additional evidence of the benefits of taking an early intervention approach with families.

4.0 Progress towards recommended actions

- 4.1 HMIP made four recommendations to further improve the quality of youth offending services in Brent. Actions have been taken to implement each recommendation and progress is monitored every quarter by the multiagency YOS Management Board comprising representatives from the local authority, voluntary sector, Police, National Probation Service, Brent CCG, educational

settings, Youth Justice Board and Willesden Magistrates Court.

- 4.2 *Recommendation 1: Review and monitor decision-making in out-of-court disposals to ensure that there is no unnecessary criminalisation of children with high levels of welfare needs.*

Formed in January 2019, the Brent Out of Court Disposal Panel (OOCDP) is comprised of local services including the Police, Pupil Referral Unit, Community Protection, Children's Social Care and the YOS. The Panel uses YOS assessment information to inform decision making - risks, vulnerabilities, family support and any identified needs are considered. Assessment information is also used to identify aggravating and mitigating factors that may increase or decrease an offence's gravity score (gravity scores determine which disposals are available). The OOCDP meets weekly and is jointly chaired by the Police and the YOS.

Brent YOS and the Police reviewed and revised the OOCDP Terms of Reference and operational procedures in November 2019 following the inspection. As a result vulnerabilities are routinely explored as potential mitigating factors to be considered when determining the appropriateness and severity of disposals. Additional social care, early help, educational or mental health practitioners with specialist knowledge of a young person or their family are routinely invited to share their knowledge and views at panel meetings. The provision of wide ranging professional opinion helps to ensure that disposals are proportionate to both the offence type and the capabilities of young people who admit to committing OOCDC crime.

Since the inspection, OOCDCs have been monitored more closely to ensure that children are not unnecessarily criminalised. The internal, Police-led North West London Scrutiny Panel meets every six months to consider a sample of Borough Command Unit OOCDCs. Brent was commended for its consistent practice and clearly evidenced decision making at the first meeting of the group. The next meeting of this panel is due to take place in November 2020.

An overview of post inspection performance was presented to the YOS Management Board in July 2020 and feedback was provided on the appropriateness of decision making in 51 cases. None of these cases were found to unnecessarily criminalise young people and decisions were being made in a collaborative manner. Police disposal recommendations were explored and challenged and there were a number of instances of a recommendation for a Youth Conditional Caution (YCC) being altered to a Youth Caution (YC) or Triage. In such cases agreement was reached to issue a less serious disposal than initially recommended by the Police.

- 4.3 *Recommendation 2: Review the resources available to assess, plan and then meet the needs of children and young people who receive a community resolution.*

A restructure of YOS management in January 2020 has led to increased management oversight of all aspects of OOCDC assessment, planning and

delivery. Additional resources (see Finance section below) for community resolution provision have been obtained to create the capacity needed to improve assessments, allow better planning, develop a more varied interventions offer and increase family work. The YOS Management Board is seeking continued commitment from partners to maintain this level of support given the high levels of risk being managed by the YOS - as identified within the inspection.

Improvements have been made possible by investing in the OOCd staffing resource. An additional YOS Case Manager was recruited to lead on the assessment and planning of community resolutions. The YOS Triage Officer role was revised in February 2020, with a focus on early intervention so as to reflect the increased need to support young people receiving community resolutions. Facilitating access to services and encouraging adherence to exit plans are two of the priority responsibilities of the new post. Additionally, a YOS Case Manager with a lead on statutory cautions is deployed to provide community resolution assessment and planning support when the volume of work is high.

Family Support Worker provision for families with children in receipt of community resolutions has also increased – from 0.4 FTE to 0.8 FTE. Importantly, the need to better serve the interests of victims of crime has been afforded greater recognition. Since January 2020, a YOS Case Manager with restorative justice and victim support lead responsibilities explores restorative justice options with all victims of community resolution crime.

As part of improvement planning, disposal options considered by the OOCdP are now shaped by one of three types of rigorous assessment - prior to inspection there was an over-reliance on short screening assessments. In the majority of cases, the Brent YOS developed Rapid Assessment Tool is used. It is suited to the needs of young people who are new to the youth justice system and available information from the Police suggests they are likely to score low in terms of both risk to the public and their own safety and well-being. The Asset Plus Assessment framework is employed when Rapid Assessment identifies additional risks that require more detailed attention. This is a YJB approved assessment tool that is widely used across the youth justice sector to assess young people who appear before a court. Early Help Assessments are used when risks and interventions are closely linked to wider family issues. Brent aims to complete all assessments within ten days of referral allocation. This is an intentionally ambitious target which reflects the view that OOCd cases must be dealt with swiftly so that interventions can be put in place at the earliest opportunity. A YOS review of progress in OOCd between December 2019 and May 2020 found that the new three tiered assessment process allows better analysis from wider sources of partnership information, enabling wider consideration of a range and variety of different provision to meet the personalised needs of young people.

The same review identified improvements to the OOCd and community resolution intervention offer. Pre-inspection, interventions were considered effective but there was an over reliance on what was described as a “one size

fits all” approach. The YOS now offer a wider range of interventions including mentoring (Air Network), individual sessions with case officers, Family Solutions, the commissioned provider of targeted support for children at risk of becoming NEET, ETE providers and individual sessions with the YOS Case Manager with Restorative Justice lead responsibilities. Mental health screening sessions with the NHS Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) worker are offered to all young people. Mental health assessments are either completed at the point of arrest at the Wembley Police Station custody suite, or at the Brent Civic Centre. In many cases the YJLD worker co-ordinates onward referral to CAMHS and other support services. Whole family support is maintained until cases are accepted and handover has taken place.

4.4 Recommendation 3: *Provide services to children and young people who are not in education, training and employment (NEET).*

Close oversight from the YOS Management Board has resulted in significantly improved outcomes for NEET young people. This has been achieved operationally through intensive joint working between YOS, the education and training commissioned provider (Prospects) and the Virtual School for looked after children.

Improvements have coincided with Prospects deploying an additional 0.5 FTE Employment and Training Advisor within the YOS – the number of Prospect advisors dedicated to YOS delivery now totals 1.5 FTE. Additionally, the Prospects Service Manager is actively involved in directing and monitoring provision. This includes:

- Regular two-weekly meetings with Prospects staff to monitor case work.
- Obtaining employment and training information from the YOS on a fortnightly basis so that interventions are put in place at the earliest opportunity.
- Working closely with Custodial Units to ensure young people have a transition destination at the point of resettlement.
- Ensuring that Prospects Advisors are working closely with parents and YOS Case Managers, other professionals and families.
- Deploying additional staffing when young people are already receiving support from a generic Prospects Advisor.

Operational oversight of NEET young people in the youth justice system is the responsibility of the YOS NEET Working Group. Membership of the Group consists of the Prospects Service Manager, Deputy YOS Service Manager, a Virtual School officer, and YOS Team Manager. All NEET cases are RAG rated, actions are set where required, and deadlines are issued at every monthly meeting.

In terms of impact, the size of the YOS NEET cohort has gradually decreased since the group was established in December 2019. In January 2020, 37% of children and young people supported by the YOS who were over statutory school age were NEET compared to 2.4% of the general Brent population. By September 2020, the percentage who are NEET had decreased to 20.3% (12

young people).

One of the more recent success stories involves 'A', a young woman who obtained a Level 1 hairdressing qualification whilst serving an eight month custodial sentence. Prior to the YOS referring 'A' to Prospects, she had unsuccessfully applied for two apprenticeships. One rejection was due to the standard of her CV and the other was due to job interview inexperience. Among other things, her Prospects Advisor assisted her to improve her CV, encouraged her to continue her job search, and increased her preparedness for interviews. Her Prospects Advisor commented,

"...I set up an interview with two salons. Both companies were made aware of A's convictions and were prepared to give her an opportunity. One of these was really impressed and offered her a nine month traineeship with a guaranteed apprenticeship at a hair salon in the West End. A accepted the offer and is currently making good progress."

The number of NEET young people known to Brent YOS is a relatively small but challenging cohort. Many have had negative educational experiences and a proportion are entrenched in lifestyles that are not conducive to EET - often as a result of exploitation. However, the strategic approach adopted by Brent since HMIP inspected local youth justice provision, has shown that the number of good NEET outcomes will increase when services work in partnership. Quarterly monitoring and support from the YOS Management Board will ensure providers improve results further.

4.5 Recommendation 4: *Provide suitable and sufficient places for children and young people to be seen and supervised.*

The imminent establishment of Family Wellbeing Centres from existing Children's Centres will significantly increase the ability to offer youth justice services in child friendly settings. Supporting more young people in the communities where they reside will contribute to better risk management planning and reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring as a result of lengthy commutes.

Young people are regularly met at Brent River College Pupil Referral Unit. Supervising young people attending alternative education provision at the soon to open Roundwood Alternative Provision school will also occur in circumstances where this benefits the student.

The Young Brent Foundation (YBF) and Brent YOS have formed a close partnership, which has been strategically strengthened through membership of the YOS Management Board. YBF are seeking alternative, suitable venue space through their network for the YOS to meet young people.

Brent Strategic Property services and the Police were asked by the YOS Management Board Chair to explore alternative, safe locations at the beginning of this year. The intention was to secure a venue in the south of the

borough where young people could be supervised. It was hoped that this would be available from spring 2020. The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic has delayed progress significantly. It has also impeded the ability to make firm arrangements with several community partners who expressed willingness to explore options for accommodating YOS provision.

Despite the many challenges caused by the pandemic, this recommendation will be implemented when Government restrictions on social interaction are lifted and community providers are able to offer venues conducive to face to face partnership work.

4.6 Improvement work is monitored through the Brent YOS Improvement Plan that contains time-bound actions attached to HMIP recommendations and other Board identified priorities. Progress updates are provided at quarterly meetings of the YOS Management Board.

4.7 It is likely to be a minimum of three years before HMIP undertake their next inspection of Brent YOS.

5.0 Prevention and Early Help Initiatives

5.1 In 2016, following an internal restructure of the CYP department, Brent YOS was positioned within the Early Help service. This has enabled greater collaborative working with initiatives such as the Troubled Families' Programme, Family Solutions and the Accelerated Support Team (to prevent children from entering the care system). This has led to a substantial increase in the level of services and access to other resources that YOS young people and their families receive.

5.2 HMIP inspectors praised Brent for ensuring that wider early help provision is accessible to YOS service users. It was highlighted that this was very important in Brent as YOS staff are managing higher levels of risk of harm than other local authorities inspected to date. There are however continuing challenges to provide the resources necessary to deliver the level of individual support recommended by HMIP in relation to out of court disposal, victims, and NEET work. Partnership contributions are vital if these areas are to improve further.

5.3 The Early Help service has been proactive in identifying and obtaining additional external funding. This includes securing three-year funding from the Mayor's Young Londoners Fund, to work with young people between 10 and 18 years, who are at risk of becoming involved in crime, not achieving their educational potential and at risk of poor health outcomes. The project adopts a whole family, trauma informed approach to address the underlying issues and build family resilience to improve the likelihood of young people fulfilling their potential or improving their life chances.

- 5.4 Young people supported by the YOS and their families will receive access to all three strands of the project:

Family coaches

Family Coaches will build strong relationships with families, to understand the underlying issues through an Early Help Assessment. They will guide families through the trauma recovery model to help them accept and understand how their past experiences impact upon family life. By proactively using the Signs of Safety approach, families will be supported to improve their understanding of their strengths.

Street Mentors for young people

Male and female Street Mentors, work with at-risk young people (between 10 to 18 years). This includes work outside of traditional service hours in order to engage young people in areas and places they go. By establishing trusting relationships, mentors are able to assist young people to make good decisions that improve outcomes and keep them safe.

Emotional well-being support

A young person's mental health practitioner undertakes mental health assessments and direct interventions with vulnerable young people in families experiencing crisis. This complements YOS based mental health provision from CAMHS and the College of North West London, which is only available to young people arrested by the police or in receipt of a police or court youth justice disposal.

- 5.5 The department also successfully bid in October 2020 for a 3-year grant from the Youth Justice Board to deliver services to deal with the impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities. This funding will provide greater resource to intervene early with young people who are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system and services are due to commence in early 2021.
- 5.6 The introduction of Family Wellbeing Centres, resulting from the agreed repurposing of some children's centres, will be operational from December 2020. They will offer a range of universal services and targeted support for families with 0-18 year olds, in partnership with Council, health and voluntary sector partners. It is likely that the YOS will maintain a group work and supervisory presence in line with contextual safeguarding and other needs.
- 5.7 Voluntary sector substance misuse services from Each Brent and the Westminster Drug Project are located within the YOS. A wide range of provision is delivered to tackle the many problems associated with young people involved in drug related crime and / or suffering from the harmful consequences of drug and alcohol usage. This includes counselling, key working, group work and family support.
- 5.8 Two Early Help Family Support workers offer assistance to families affected by crime or criminality within their family. Support has a particular focus on the

younger siblings of young people who are criminally exploited or entrenched in criminal gangs and other criminal networks.

6.0 Joint working arrangements and partnerships

- 6.1 Close alignment of work undertaken within the Children and Young People department has been instrumental in achieving positive outcomes. For example, a multi-disciplinary group of staff meet regularly to ensure that the accommodation and wider needs of young people due to be released from custody are identified early and planned for in a timely fashion. Managers also meet regularly to consider complex cases that require senior manager oversight and additional support.
- 6.2 A comprehensive joint working protocol between the YOS and children's social care services supports effective interventions relating to young people in police custody, the use of Appropriate Adults, remands to local authority accommodation and arrangements to support bail in the community.
- 6.3 All YOS staff have been trained to be Working with Families lead professionals (under the government funded Troubled Families Programme). Staff have also received Signs of Safety training and the approach has been adopted to support risk management in cases, and for staff supervision.
- 6.4 The YOS works closely with the police. There are three police officers based in the YOS. Procedures for jointly deciding and delivering all out of court disposal work are clearly outlined in an Out Of Court Disposal Joint Protocol. Key information sharing such as overnight arrests and police custody details is provided on a daily basis.
- 6.5 The YOS has developed close strategic and operational links with CAMHS. A Liaison and Diversion Officer offers mental health screening to all young people in police custody. A seconded CAMHS practitioner assesses and supports young people subject to court orders who have mental health needs.
- 6.6 The YOS works closely with Council's Community Protection services. Information and intelligence sharing, including safety mapping, gangs information and other contextual safeguarding work is a key element in managing safety and the public protection risks.
- 6.7 The Violence and Vulnerability Programme (VVP) focuses on reducing re-offending and serious youth violence through a coordinated, multi-agency and intelligence led approach. This includes a specific focus on a cohort not yet known to statutory services, increasing earlier intervention and identification of an unknown potentially younger cohort. The programme consists of prolific offenders, weapon carriers, domestic abuse perpetrators and those affiliated, or at risk of affiliation, with gangs. The Child Exploitation and Missing Panel (CEMP) and the VVP were aligned in October 2020 with a single referral route, leading to better coordination, prompter referrals and timelier interventions. An operating protocol is in place. Brent YOS attends these

meetings and supports in identifying, monitoring, diverting, disrupting and taking enforcement action for those on the cohort by sharing information and ensuring that the most appropriate interventions are in place.

6.8 The YOS Safety and Wellbeing Risk Management Forum is a partnership meeting that provides oversight of YOS children and young people assessed as high and very high risk of serious harm or safety and well-being. The overarching aim of all work of the group is to prevent children and young people from committing serious harm or further offences. The group shares relevant information and reviews risk management plans. There are clear referral pathways to other partnership risk forums including VVP, Integrated Offender Management and MAPPA Level 2 and 3.

6.9 The YOS attends daily Integrated Risk Management meetings. This is a police led panel that provides immediate risk management in response to incidents involving young people that have recently occurred – usually within the last 24 hours.

7.0 The Provision of Youth Justice Services in Brent during the Covid-19 Pandemic

7.1 Brent YOS commenced the implementation of contingency planning on the same day the government lockdown came into effect. The service worked closely with partners to ensure that changes to provision met local needs. Staff were initially home based and all young people received daily virtual contact from their Case Managers. Clarification of YOS staff keyworker status was provided within a week of lockdown. From the beginning of April, Brent YOS resumed face to face home visits and provided court based services in person. The 21 highest risk young people supported by the YOS were identified. A home visit screening tool was created to determine which of these young people required regular face to face contact. Safe visiting guidance was issued. Low risk young people were supervised through telephone or other digital media. Feedback from young people has largely been positive about this form of supervision.

7.2 Virtual Referral Order Panels were established and continue to operate. The YOS Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Risk Forum and the Resettlement and Aftercare Forum continue to take place virtually every month. Weekly Out of Court Disposal Decision Making Panels operate remotely.

7.3 Brent YOS based a team at court one day per week and additionally attended court as and when required. Brent received positive feedback from District Judges for its commitment to supporting young people at court in person throughout the lockdown. Coordinating Crown Court provision was more challenging. Two cases were escalated to the YJB. Both of these involved young people who were at risk of not appearing in court prior to their eighteenth birthday. HM Courts and Tribunal Service responded by prioritising both cases and they were subsequently both seen before they turned 18.

- 7.4 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Youth Justice Board has suspended the publication of national statistics that show how local authorities have performed in relation to both reoffending and the number of first-time-entrants to the youth justice system – restrictions on the movement of analysts have limited access to Police National Computer data. Local performance measures must be viewed with caution as the courts have adjourned the majority of cases appearing before youth courts. This has had the effect of significantly delaying youth justice proceedings. By late summer, the number of cases appearing before the courts had begun to increase and a significant spike in court work is anticipated.

The extent to which changing court practice has affected Brent YOS is apparent when comparing the volume of court disposals and recorded youth crime occurring in the first quarter of 2019 to the same period in 2020:

- The number of Brent young people receiving court ordered sentences reduced from 62 to 13 (a 79% reduction)
- The number of offences reduced from 139 to 26 (an 81% reduction)

Analysis of the custodial population shows that in September 2020, there were eleven young people from Brent residing in custody: seven were serving custodial sentences and a further four were remanded in custody awaiting sentencing. Brent's custody rate (0.49 per 1,000 Young People aged 10-17) is beginning to plateau after several years of significant decline.

- 7.5 From June, a limited number of office based activities took place in line with the loosening of some restrictions. However, plans that would have enabled a much wider phased return of YOS staff are likely to be delayed due to recent increases in the rate of Covid-19 infection.
- 7.6 Maintaining the provision of good youth justice services during the current public health pandemic has required flexible planning. Brent YOS continues to work in accordance with service, departmental and corporate plans. Additional strategic direction is contained in the Annual Brent Youth Justice and Recovery Plan. Emerging guidance and sector led planning is provided and co-ordinated during fortnightly meetings of the YJB London Region Heads of Service group.
- 7.7 Management Board oversight of response planning undertaken by the YOS has been consistent throughout the pandemic. This has included fortnightly written updates to Board members from the Chair.
- 7.8 The annual YOS survey of young people and their families was completed in June 2020. This year the aim was to gain feedback on how the YOS had performed during lockdown, ascertain participant understanding of their youth justice disposal and to understand how satisfied young people were with staff and the services they receive. The survey was completed by 76 participants: 47 young people and 29 parent and carers. The majority of young people (96%) surveyed felt that the YOS had supported them to prevent further

offending / re-offending. Ninety four percent did not feel as though they had missed out on any part of their YOS intervention whilst in lockdown.

7.9 Due to Council wide strategic recovery planning, Civic Centre workplace adaptations, lessons learned during the pandemic and the creation of remote methods for supporting young and their families Brent YOS is able to recover as quickly as conditions permit. It also has the experience to supervise young people and deliver interventions remotely in the event of further local or national lockdown.

8.0 Financial implications

8.1 To support the progress of the recommendations arising out of the HMIP inspection, costs were largely contained within existing resources. However, additional resources were provided by Community Protection to address the acute pressure affecting OOC work. This was possible due to an increase in MOPAC funding and the decommissioning of a council programme. It is expected that this funding will continue for this year and 2021/22.

8.2 Partners, via the Management Board, must continue to commit resources in the form of diversionary activities. This provision is needed to broaden the offer as required by HMIP.

8.3 Resource levels must be maintained if the improvements identified in this report are to be sustained. As with many services, the financial cost of Covid-19 and economic downturn are the greatest threats to continued success. Brent YOS reliance on Youth Justice Board funding makes it particularly vulnerable to financial pressures that may affect the allocation of central government funding.

8.4 Details regarding the budget and income for the Youth Offending Service over the last three years are set out in the table below:

Youth Offending Service	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000
Gross Budget	1,333	1,164	1,353	1,326
Income	(713)	(678)	(678)	(637)
Net Budget	620	486	674	689

9.0 Legal implications

9.1 Formation of Local Youth Offending Teams: The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority in England and Wales to deliver youth justice services in line with a statutory framework that outlines YOS responsibilities in relation to out of Court disposals, Court work, bail and remand, the

assessment of young people who offend, the provision of Court reports, the delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement.

9.2 National Standards Governing Youth Justice define the minimum required level of service provision. They are set by the Secretary of State for Justice on advice from the YJB. They cover a range of different areas of practice and are designed to assist public protection, safeguard children and young people, and ensure the delivery of effective services.

10.0 Equality implications

10.1 There are patterns of over representation within the YOS cohort. In particular, 55% of the 176 young people known to Brent's YOS between April 2019 and March 2020 were from Black Caribbean and Black African heritage groups – see below table. Young people from these backgrounds form 28% of the wider local youth population.

	White	Mixed Ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese or Other Ethnicity	Not Yet Obtained	Total
Offending population Apr 19 - Mar 20	29 (16.5%)	12 (6.8%)	19 (10.8%)	97 (55.1%)	18 (10.2%)	1 (0.6%)	176
Proportion of 10-17 mid 2011 population	6,516 (22%)	2,501 (9%)	9,524 (33%)	8,237 (28%)	2,492 (9%)	N/A	

10.2 YOS Management Board oversight of equality considerations includes quarterly scrutiny of disproportionality data.

10.3 Board members shape practice and direct the YOS to establish initiatives that seek to ensure young people from all heritage groups are treated fairly within the youth justice system. Current initiatives include:

- As described earlier in this report, Brent has been identified by the YJB as one of two *disproportionality pathfinder* areas which will deliver work to better understand and tackle over representation in the youth justice system. The other area is Newham.
- Regular use of the YJB disproportionality *live tracker* tool allows the YOS to compare local levels of disproportionality to all other local authorities in England and Wales. The toolkit is also used by Brent YOS to improve professional understanding of disproportionality and inform practice and

discussions with other stakeholders, including the police, courts, National Probation Service and the NHS.

- The adoption of a Trauma Informed approach to practice.
- Supporting the police to implement the *Turning Point* deferred prosecutions scheme in Brent. This is a pilot programme that mirrors one of the 35 Lammy Review recommendations by offering more young people the opportunity to deal with criminal matters out of court. David Lammy MP noted that a disproportionately high proportion of BAME young people were being fast tracked through the youth justice system because they did not have the confidence in the police to admit guilt to minor offences.
- Developing a guide for parents that will help them to better understand what happens within custodial settings. It will also provide a list of useful services and contact details. Translated versions of the guide will be made available in order to ensure information is accessible to all parents.
- Working in collaboration with the Young Brent Foundation to improve services. This will include exploring training options for ensuring that case management and youth justice reports are unbiased and free from stereotypical assumptions.

11.0 Consultation with ward members and stakeholders

11.1 The Lead Member for Children’s Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care took part in the inspection process, meeting with the inspection team and providing details of how borough priorities placed high importance in supporting the work of the YOS. The Lead Member continues to be updated on a monthly basis with key safeguarding information as it relates to the work of the YOS.

12.0 Human resources / property implications (if appropriate)

12.1 Discussed within the main body of the report as related to property implications.

Related Documents:

Inspection of Youth Offending Services in Brent, Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, 16th March 2020

Report sign off:

GAIL TOLLEY

Strategic Director, Children and Young People

APPENDIX 1 – YOS PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

1. Local and national overview

Since the introduction of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) the youth justice system has seen significant reductions in the number of children entering the system and a reduction in the numbers sentenced to custody.

2. Compared to a decade ago, the youth justice system is now supporting a smaller cohort of children who are more vulnerable and more likely to have committed serious offences. This requires a greater degree of specialist support by the council and partner agencies.

3. Statistical Neighbours / YOS Family

When using Youth Justice Board (YJB) terminology, statistical neighbours are referred to as YOT families. This method for grouping local authorities is based on the Department for Education, Children's Services, *Statistical Neighbour Benchmarking Model*.

4. Brent YOS focuses on achieving good performance in relation to the three national Youth Justice outcomes - each of which is reported quarterly to the Youth Justice Board.

(a) Reduction in youth re-offending.

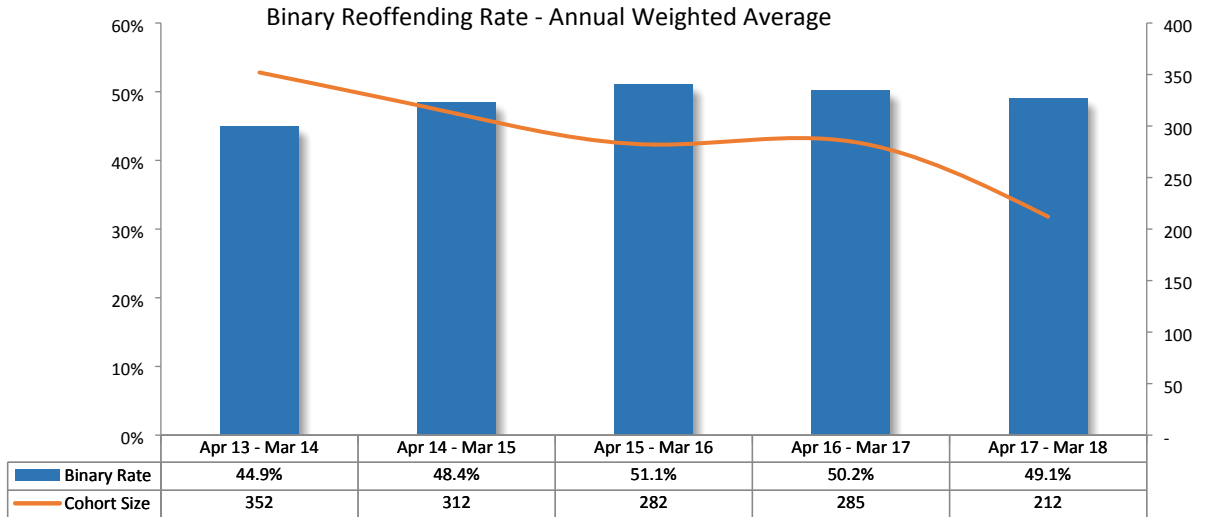
Latest Available Data and Statistical Neighbours Comparison

	Reoffending – Baseline			Reoffending – Current		
	Jan 17 - Mar 17			Jan 18 - Mar 18		
	No. in the cohort	No. of reoffenders	% Reoffending	No. in the cohort	No. of reoffenders	% Reoffending
Brent	70	35	50.0%	45	28	62.2%
YOS Family						
Ealing	48	22	45.8%	34	8	23.5%
Waltham Forest	44	17	38.6%	39	20	51.3%
Croydon	110	57	51.8%	100	46	46.0%
Haringey	59	27	45.8%	60	26	43.3%

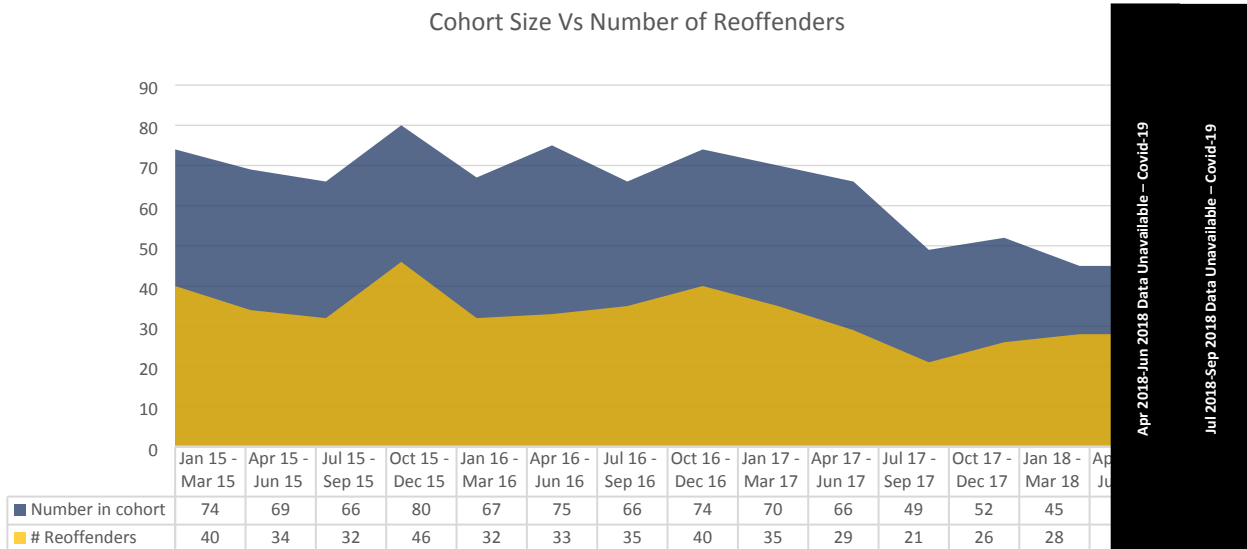
Enfield	79	37	46.8%	39	21	53.8%
Newham	69	31	44.9%	75	25	33.3%
Hounslow	49	21	42.9%	33	11	33.3%
Greenwich	60	26	43.3%	50	19	38.0%
Lewisham	68	27	39.7%	70	35	50.0%
Hackney	48	17	35.4%	34	16	47.1%
Family Average	63	28	43.5%	53	23	42.0%

The period January to March 2018 is the most recent date range from which reoffending can be measured. The reasons for this are as follows:

- Measuring reoffending requires the collection and uploading of Police National Computer (PNC) offence data. This is a large dataset and there is inevitably a time delay between processing and publishing all national crime data.
- The cohort consists of all young people who received a pre-court or court disposal in the most recent date range – currently January to March 2018. The cohort is monitored for 12-months in order to determine how many proven re-offences occurring within this period lead to a court conviction or caution.
- There is then a further six-month waiting period to allow time for offences to be proven in court.
- Additionally, due to Covid-19 the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has changed its data gathering, access and release practices to focus its efforts on priority analysis and statistics. In addition the MoJ have paused access to the PNC to minimise non-essential travel by their analysts. Because of this the MoJ have not released any re-offending data for the past two quarterly reporting periods.
- Whilst there has been a significant long-term reduction in FTEs and the number of children in custody, the rate of youth reoffending in Brent continues to fluctuate. This is because as the cohort has shrunk, young people with most prolific offending behaviours have remained in the system.
- Brent's rate remains volatile, ranging significantly from a low of 42.9% and a high of 62.2%.
- For the second available reporting period in a row, the rate has increased, currently standing at 62.2%.
- The rate is currently above both the London and YOT family rates for the latest reporting period.
- Brent's overall trend, using annual weighted averages, suggest that, despite the smaller cohort, reoffending rates appear to be stabilising. Due to the volatility of the indicator, future increases in Brent's reoffending rate may occur (see below).



Reoffending – Cohort Size



- The above chart shows the proportion of reoffenders for each three-month cohort. The volatile nature of the reoffending rate can be partly attributed to the smaller cohort size. As the cohort is small, slight changes in the numbers of reoffenders have a large effect on the reoffending rate.
- The chart demonstrates that the number of reoffenders mostly correlates with the overall cohort size.
- As young people in this cohort are those who are at greatest risk of offending, a high proportion of case and risk management resources are used supporting

this group. Live tracking of offending behaviour, trauma informed practice and multi-agency risk oversight are three of the methods that have the greatest impact on improving outcomes for this group. HMIP recognised the effectiveness of this work by rating the work of the YOS good in all four Domain 2 (Court Orders) sections: assessment, planning, implementation and delivery, and reviewing.

(b) Reduction in the numbers of first time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system.

Local Trends

- As with re-offending rates, the MoJ has not been able to release FTEs data for the past two reporting periods.
- Mirroring the national picture, the number of FTEs in Brent has dropped significantly.
- In the period October 2008-September 2009 there were 413 FTEs. Ten years on the figure was 108 (October 2018-September 2019), a 73.8% decrease.
- Until recently Brent has performed stronger in comparison with its statistical neighbours with its rate lower than statistical neighbours in 9 out of 10 reporting periods. However, data for the past 2 reporting periods has seen Brent's rate rise above that of its statistical neighbours.

Latest Available Data and Statistical Neighbours Comparison

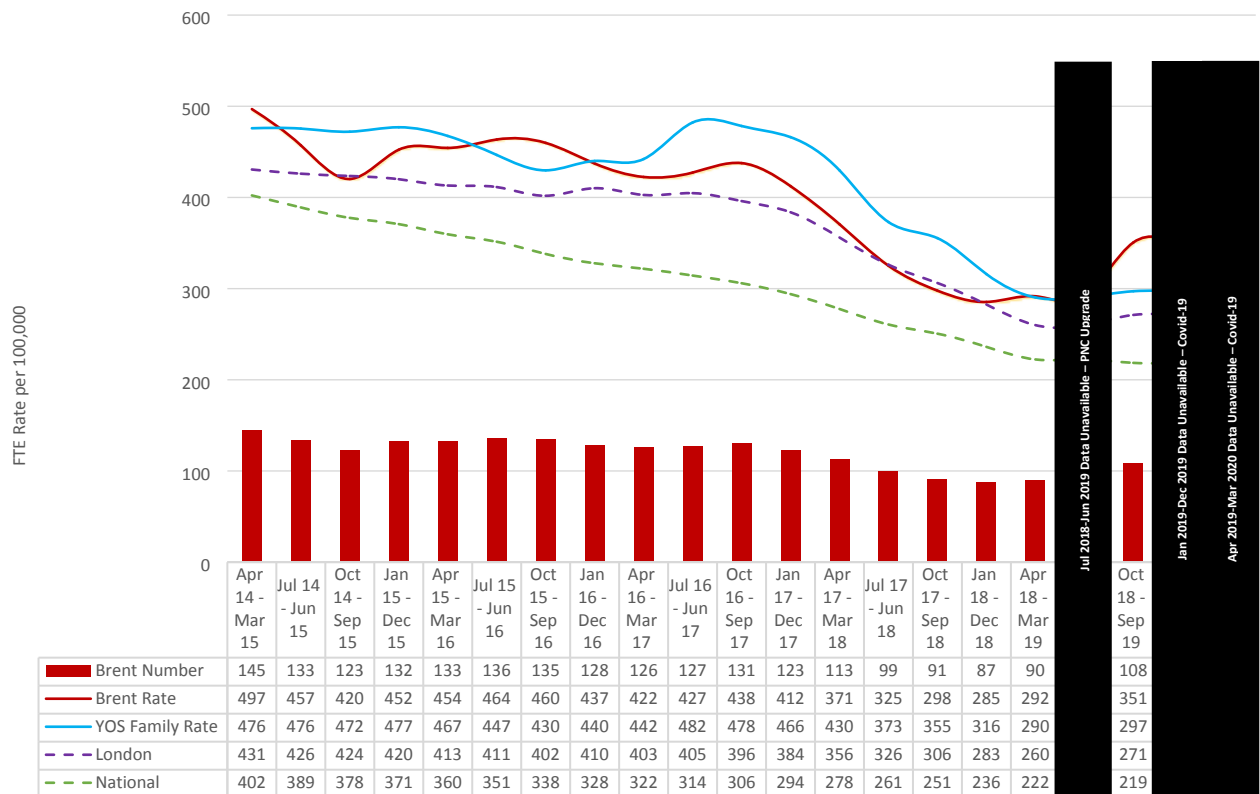
	First Time Entrants - Baseline			First Time Entrants Current		
	Oct 17 – Sep 18			Oct 18 – Sep 19		
	Number	2017 Population	Rate per 100,000	Number	2018 Population	Rate per 100,000
Brent	91	30,488	298	108	30,864	351
YOS Family						
Ealing	81	31,947	255	83	32,662	253
Waltham Forest	104	25,012	416	108	25,505	423
Croydon	162	38,596	420	117	39,334	296
Haringey	93	24,784	377	73	24,826	295
Enfield	113	34,476	329	98	35,229	278
Newham	108	32,685	331	105	33,347	315
Hounslow	73	23,820	306	49	24,664	198

Greenwich	80	25,594	313	88	26,380	333
Lewisham	124	25,570	483	77	26,269	293
Hackney	79	24,244	324	71	24,818	287
Family Average	102	28,673	355*	87	29,303	297*

* Average of the statistical neighbour rate

First Time Entrants: October 2018 to September 2019

The data for this indicator comes from the Police National Computer. The data is shown in rolling full-years. The latest published data is for **October 2018 to September 2019**. The bars represent Brent's absolute number whilst the lines represent the rates (Brent, Statistical Family, London and National).




(c) Reduction in the use of youth custody

Latest Available Data and Statistical Neighbours Comparison

	Custody – Baseline			Custody – Current		
	Jul 18 - Jun 19			Jul 19 - Jun 20		
	Number	2016 Population	Rate per 1,000	Number	2017 Population	Rate per 1,000
Brent	14	30,864	0.45	15	30,900	0.49
YOS Family						
Ealing	14	32,662	0.43	3	33,132	0.09
Waltham Forest	10	25,505	0.39	6	25,674	0.23
Croydon	23	39,334	0.58	16	39,979	0.40
Haringey	10	24,826	0.40	17	24,779	0.69
Enfield	26	35,229	0.74	14	35,771	0.39
Newham	15	33,347	0.45	5	33,356	0.15
Hounslow	12	24,664	0.49	7	25,415	0.28
Greenwich	11	26,380	0.42	13	27,055	0.48
Lewisham	15	26,269	0.57	13	26,587	0.49
Hackney	16	24,818	0.64	11	25,155	0.44
Family Average	15	29,303	0.51	11	29,690	0.36

- Nationally, the youth custodial population has dropped by 70%. This is reflected in Brent's custody rate. In the period July 2012 to June 2013 there were 46 custodial sentences for Brent children and young people. For the same period in 2019/20 there were 15, a 67.4% reduction.
- Using MoJ data available at the time of writing this report, Brent's youth custody rate peaked at 1.98 for the period January 2009-December 2009. The current rate represents a reduction of 75.3%. The statistical neighbour's rate has reduced by 80.6% in the same period and the London rate by 81.7%.
- After a long period during which Brent's rate remained below that of its statistical neighbours, Brent's custody rate has been higher than its statistical neighbours for the past 4 consecutive reporting periods.

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	<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 24 November 2020</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Strategic Director Children and Young People</p>
<p>Contextual Safeguarding Update</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	n/a
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Brian Grady Operational Director Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy brian.grady@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Sonya Kalyniak Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Sonya.kalyniak@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 18 March 2019 considered a Task Group Report on the development of contextual safeguarding in Brent. In March 2020, a report was provided to Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to update on progress on the recommendations made by the task group.
- 1.2 This report further updates Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on progress with the implementation of contextual safeguarding in the borough and the partnership response.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members of the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee are recommended to consider this update on contextual safeguarding in Brent.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Overview of contextual safeguarding in Brent

3.2 Safeguarding incidents including child sexual exploitation, county lines and knife crime have become established components of the risks that can be experienced by young people nationally. Young people who go missing from home or care are particularly vulnerable to risks of harm from their environment and associations outside of their family. A contextual safeguarding approach recognises that in these cases, parents and carers may be limited in their ability to protect against these external influences. This requires us to look beyond the family to the young person's peer group, associations, neighbourhood, schools and colleges and public spaces where young people develop relationships and spend their leisure time.

3.3 Due to Covid-19, there have been increased challenges in keeping vulnerable adolescents at home and safe as outlined in the report considered by Scrutiny Committee earlier on the agenda regarding the Management of the Impact of Covid 19 on Education and Children's Services.

3.4 As previously reported to Committee, the development of contextual safeguarding is led at a senior level in the Council. The Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group, chaired by the Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes, is driving forward the contextual safeguarding approach in Brent. A six-monthly update on developing contextual safeguarding in Brent is presented to the Corporate Management Team by the Strategic Director, Children and Young People. This update sets out trends in the needs, vulnerabilities and risks young people in Brent experience and the developing Council-wide contextual safeguarding response to these needs, vulnerabilities and risks.

3.5 Impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding vulnerable adolescents

3.6 The main extra-familial risks to children and young people include youth violence, gang involvement, and child exploitation, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation such as county lines.

3.7 Lockdown restrictions announced on the 23 March 2020 meant that young people needed to stay at home. This has led to a complex range of impacts for individual young people. For some vulnerable young people lockdown meant that they were away from extra-familial contexts where they were at risk of harm, in their peer groups, and in their neighbourhoods. However lockdown also separated young people from protective friends, schools and other spaces, leading to isolation. Case learning from the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group over the past six months during the Covid-19 pandemic period has identified the following themes:

- *A significant reduction in missing episodes and first time missing episodes* – During the period of lockdown beginning in March, numbers of missing and absent episodes began to significantly fall in April and have remained consistently low apart from a spike in May, which correlated with the easing of lockdown restrictions and increased social activity by young people. The proportion of young people who are reported missing for the first time in any given month is generally around 30-35% of the total missing/absent cohort for that month. In the months during the first lockdown, however, this proportion fell to an average of around 20% of the total missing/absent cohort. This suggests that the lockdown saw a higher proportion of children regularly missing. Figures from September 2020 showed the proportion of first time young people going missing was 32% - consistent with pre-lockdown figures.

- *Increase in substance misuse and criminal behaviour concerns amongst those missing from home or care* – the significant decrease in the number of young people reported missing/absent during lockdown also saw an increase in the proportion of young people going missing regularly. Amongst key factors identified within Return Home Interviews during the period, there was also a significant increase in concerns regarding substance misuse, gang involvement and involvement in crime. This supports the hypothesis that those who were continuing to go missing during lockdown were more vulnerable and that the lockdown did not seem to lead to a reduction in vulnerability or exploitation amongst these young people.
- *Mental health and isolation* – Mental health concerns for young people continued and were in many cases exacerbated through the period of lockdown, where protective relationships and social contacts were not possible. Mental health support was identified as a recovery plan priority for Brent Council and a Council wide approach has been taken to ensure support can be available, including from the September term through a voluntary sector grant programme. Online and digital support has been offered throughout the reporting period for young people and partnership work with Brent CCG was undertaken to support young people as they returned to school for the Autumn term. Brent is also engaging in the DfE Wellbeing for Return to Education programme, which is providing training support for schools.
- *County Lines* - The committee was advised last year of the successful Brent Council-led bid to the Mayors' Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) for a pan-London service to respond to the increasing levels of county lines exploitation. In October 2020 a review of the second year of the Rescue and Response County Lines Project was released. The assessment provides an early understanding of county lines exploitation and of the reach and type of county lines activity that London individuals are experiencing. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted county lines activity and the young people being supported through the project. County lines continued to operate during lockdown, and the main observations during this time were the various ways in which exploiters were adapting in order to continue operating their lines; the heightened risks posed to young people as a result of this; and the challenges faced in safeguarding them during lockdown. The impact of COVID-19 on the environment included:
 - Public spaces became empty, including streets, roads and trains. This made criminal activity easier to spot and the grooming of young people more difficult.
 - Drug supply chains were interrupted, leading to some county lines closing; opening up gaps in the market.
 - The demand for drugs during the lockdown period was reportedly very high.

How practitioners are being supported to develop their contextual safeguarding practice

- 3.8 Management oversight of practice has been developed in response to a deeper understanding of risks and vulnerabilities. In September 2019 a merger of different professional decision-making panels identifying and reviewing support for children missing and child exploitation took place in recognition that there is often a correlation between children who regularly go missing from home and care and the

risks associated with child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. This joined up management oversight is supporting the coordination of practitioner actions.

3.9 Further to the previous report to Scrutiny in March 2020, key developments in developing contextual safeguarding practice when there are known extra-familial risk factors include the following:

- Five Contextual Safeguarding Champions have been identified to drive contextual safeguarding in Brent. These champions are linked to the national Contextual Safeguarding Network where they can receive peer support from champions working in local authorities across the country. The champions are based in services across CYP including YOS, Localities, LAC and Permanency, the Accelerated Support Team and Safeguarding and QA.
- A representative from the Safeguarding and Reviewing Team attends daily Integrated Risk Management meetings and proactively offers consultation and guidance regarding extra-familial harm. Practitioners are using the Vulnerable Adolescent Risk Assessment more routinely when they are concerned about extra-familial risk, including with care leavers, to support transitional safeguarding.
- Practitioners continue to be provided with additional support to understand Brent's contextual safeguarding approach. This includes online training sessions, short briefings, case consultations to support practitioners undertaking their Vulnerable Adolescent Risk Assessments and promoting tools and resources available through the Contextual Safeguarding Network.

Contextual safeguarding put into practice case study

Freya is a seventeen year old young woman in care. She is friends with Zorha who is an eighteen year old care leaver who lives in semi-independent accommodation close by. Both young women have a history of going missing separately and together. They have been reported to be sending and receiving messages from men they have met online and making arrangements to meet them. Both are considered to be at significant risk of child sexual and criminal exploitation. They have gone missing together and been found in various locations around the United Kingdom.

The CYP teams working with Freya and Zorha have been collaborating since it became clear that they were going missing together. As Zorha is over 18, the Adult Safeguarding Team is involved given the extent of the CSE worries.

Concerns have recently escalated and been reported through the Integrated Risk Management Meeting, leading to a Complex Strategy Meeting to ensure that all the professionals involved, including the Adult Safeguarding Team and Police representatives, share information and any intelligence from their partner police services in the various locations Freya and Zorha are known to have visited.

This case demonstrates the complexity in transitional safeguarding for young people at risk of exploitation that includes a change in lead professional, placement changes around

age 18, working across multiple local authorities (adult social care and mental health input) and changes in police oversight.

Update on recommendations of the committee

- 3.10 The Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group action plan has incorporated the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee Task Group in March 2019. An update on progress against these recommendations was provided in March 2020. In addition to the report in March, further progress on recommendations is set out below.
- 3.11 **Recommendation 1:** To support bringing together representatives from Transport for London (TfL), 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.
- 3.12 The council's Highways Service and strategic transport planners continue to meet on a quarterly cycle with representatives from TfL as a formal liaison to discuss a range of issues including the wellbeing of passengers on the bus and rail network. This includes addressing any arising concerns regarding adolescents and their safety on the transportation and bus network.
- 3.13 Although delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, safe school travel planning informed by a contextual safeguarding approach and a formal audit of travel planning is being planned to enhance current work in spring 2021.
- 3.14 **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.
- 3.15 Good progress has been made following the update to Scrutiny in March 2020 in developing an enhanced youth offer from the Roundwood site from early 2021, as part of the delivery of the Alternative Provision School at the Roundwood site. The Young Brent Foundation is working with a range of local partners on the developing offer.
- 3.16 The Supporting Inclusive Schools Programme previously reported to scrutiny had a delayed start due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Access to additional positive activities for pupils attending Brent's Pupil Referral Units, Brent River College and Ashley College, are planned for later this term.
- 3.17 **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.
- 3.18 Relationships with United Colleges have continued to be strengthened. Representatives from United Colleges sit on the professional decision making panel identifying and reviewing support for children missing and child exploitation. Representatives are also members of the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group and the Children's Safeguarding Forum, through which they are supporting the contextual safeguarding approach in Brent.

- 3.19 **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.
- 3.20 Actions being undertaken by the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group and through Brent Council’s Digital Strategy 2019-2023 to support adolescents in their use of social media include work to increase positive community connectivity and coordination, including for young people, using technology to put people in touch with and make more effective contributions to their local community.
- 3.21 As part of the London Borough of Culture, the local authority has worked in partnership with the VICE media platform to produce Vent, a series of podcasts produced and led by Brent young people – the Brent Blueprint Collective – which has addressed a range of contextual safeguarding issues, including online relationships and safety, sexually explicit content through social media, and addressing online information and disinformation. The series of podcasts has continued throughout Covid-19. The Covid-19 “fact checker” episodes helped explain the pandemic to young people and responded to myths and misinformation that young people had encountered, to help young people stay at home and keep safe.
- 3.22 **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.

The former Knife Crime Action Plan has been reviewed and updated as the Violence Reduction Action Plan. This has been adopted by statutory agencies of the Safer Brent Partnership and updates will be shared at a future Partnership meetings as well as reporting to the Mayor of London’s Violence Reduction Unit. This Action Plan covers actions relating to knife crime awareness and future campaigns.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Costs associated with delivery of the services, have been managed within existing resources. The cost implications for priorities identified going forward, will also need to be managed within existing resources.

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 The Local Authority has statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004 to safeguard the welfare of children in the borough with the involvement of other statutory agencies. The Brent approach to contextual safeguarding is in line with the 2018 statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ that recognises the importance of social contexts outside the family.

6.0 Equality implications

6.1 There continue to be patterns of over representation in risk and vulnerability areas identified in the cohort of young people supported through Vulnerable Adolescents Panel. Interventions in response have been focused on an individual and family level rather than at a community level. Through Brent's contextual safeguarding approach it is intended to consider responses that will achieve positive impact for priority groups at a population level.

7.0 Consultation with ward members and stakeholders

7.1 The Brent contextual safeguarding approach has been informed by members, through the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Contextual Safeguarding Task Group report in March 2019 identifying recommendations which are reflected in Brent's contextual safeguarding approach.

7.2 As Brent has developed its approach, wider community engagement has been undertaken, building on established community engagement routes, including Time To Talk events, Brent Youth Parliament, Brent Safer Neighbourhood Board and the Young Brent Foundation.

Related Documents:

Contextual Safeguarding in Brent - An Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Report March 2019

Contextual Safeguarding in Brent report to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2020

Report sign off:

GAIL TOLLEY

Strategic Director, Children and Young People

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