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|  | Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 2 July 2025 |
| | Report from the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership |
| | Lead Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools - Councillor Grahl |
| Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (Multiagency safeguarding arrangements) Report April 2024 - March 2025 | |

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| Wards Affected: | All |
| Key or Non-Key Decision: | Non-Key |
| Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small> | Open |
| List of Appendices: | Appendix A - Annual Report April 2024 – March 2025 |
| Background Papers: | None |
| Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small> | Zoe Tattersall Strategic Partnership Lead for Safeguarding Children zoe.tattersall@brent.gov.uk |

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. To enable members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to consider the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) annual report covering the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

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

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Further to recommendations made by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee last year, the BSCP has developed a new data dashboard to monitor and evaluate the Learning and Development Multiagency training

offer which is shared across all sub-groups including the Learning and Development Group.

- 3.2 Additionally, the BSCP has commissioned a PHEW audit platform to support with Section 11 audits (one of the ways in which we assess the effectiveness of multi-agency working). The audit is under construction and due to be launched in autumn 2025.

3.3 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

The Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) work has connections to the following outcomes within the Borough Plan:

- 3.3.1 **Prosperity and Stability in Brent** – The BSCP considers the impact on communities during a cost-of-living crisis and works with agencies such as housing and voluntary community sector members to have insight into the evolving landscape. The learning and development programme is working towards ensuring practitioners are equipped to recognise signs, indicators and provide suitable intervention.

- 3.3.2 **Thriving Communities** – The BSCP has community engagement including a Lay Member and voluntary community sector members. The Lay Member helps to engage with Brent's people and local groups to support community cohesion. Furthermore, the BSCP continues to seek the voice of the child and has commenced work on the recruitment of Young Scrutineers who will be representative at the Delegated Safeguarding Partners group. One of the priorities for the next 12 months is to expand this reach.

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

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

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

The BSCP is represented at the North West London Child Sexual Abuse steering group and the London Safeguarding Children Partnership – Neglect working group. This knowledge base is then disseminated across the BSCP.

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

Work has commenced on a joint BSCP and Safeguarding Adults Board, Transitional sub-group to ensure continuity of support and intervention from services from childhood into adulthood; this includes two workshops, one on reflective practice and the other a 'live audit'. A final report will be shared with statutory safeguarding partners through the Joint Executive Group.

3.4 Background

- 3.4.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 made provision for locally determined arrangements regarding safeguarding to be agreed and delivered by the three statutory safeguarding partners – Local Authorities, ICBs and Police.
- 3.4.2 Statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* is referenced for the purposes of the yearly report, which sets out the framework for local safeguarding oversight arrangements.
- 3.4.3 As set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and *Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2023)*, the three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Full compliance with the requirements of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* was required by December 2024. A few changes to the statutory functions of the Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements were set out. Most notably, there is an additional layer of high-level strategic oversight in the form of Lead Safeguarding Partners and a requirement to embed education representation in strategic decision making and consider them as a 'fourth' partner.

Safeguarding Partners

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

Independent Scrutiny

- 3.4.5 The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Brent, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. Independent scrutiny is part of a wider external inspection system administered by Ofsted, CQC and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.
- 3.4.6 The decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is made locally and Brent safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

3.4.7 In Brent, the Safeguarding Partners work closely with the Independent Scrutineer. The Independent Scrutineer should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.

Brent's safeguarding partnership arrangements

3.4.8 Brent's safeguarding children partnership arrangements consist of a four-tier structure:

- Tier 1 - The Joint Executive Group - provides high-level strategic leadership and fulfils the local Lead Safeguarding Partner role as required in Working Together 2023.
- Tier 2 - The Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group - provides high-level strategic leadership
- Tier 3 - Brent Safeguarding Children Forum - diverse and wider-ranging partnership group
- Tier 4 - Delivery focused sub-groups - responsible for carrying out specific statutory duties of the partnership, these include:
 - Case Review Group
 - Joint partnerships (Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board) Learning and Development Group
 - Multi-agency Audit Group

The Joint Executive Group

3.4.9 The purpose of the Joint Executive Group is to ensure there is a strong joined up strategic leadership from both the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) and the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

The Joint Executive Group also fulfil the LSP responsibilities for the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Membership includes senior representatives from the statutory safeguarding partners, Brent Council – Chief Executive, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development, Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy, Director of Adult Social Care, North West London Integrated Care Board – Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Metropolitan Police – Borough Commander NW BCU, The Independent Chair of Brent Safeguarding Adults Board and The Independent Scrutineer of Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group (DSPs)

3.4.10 The DSP Group membership includes senior representatives from the three safeguarding partners - Brent Council (Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development), North West London Integrated Care

Board (Director of Quality, Nursing and Safeguarding) and Metropolitan Police (Superintendent, Public Protection-Safeguarding Lead, Northwest BCU).

- 3.4.11 The Independent Scrutineer is a standing member of the DSP Group and, as the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools is politically accountable for ensuring the Local Authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, they are also a member of the DSP Group.

Brent Safeguarding Children Forum

- 3.4.12 The Brent Safeguarding Children Forum is the wider partnership forum accountable to the DSP Group, it is chaired by the Independent Scrutineer.
- 3.4.13 In line with the statutory guidance, the Brent Safeguarding Partners selected the agencies and organisations as members of the Forum. These agencies and organisations have been chosen as they provide key strategic and operational insight for the safeguarding of children and young people in Brent.
- 3.4.14 The membership of the Forum includes representation from the safeguarding partners, identified relevant agencies (including schools and other education settings, health service providers, the Probation Service, CAFCASS) and lay members.
- 3.4.15 The Safeguarding Partners recognise the importance of involving the local community and therefore the Forum currently has one lay member.

The lay member acts as valuable ambassador to help build stronger links with the local community as part of the new arrangements and are encouraged to:

- promote awareness of safeguarding across Brent's communities
- represent the community voice at Safeguarding Forum meetings
- engage with Brent's people and local groups to support community cohesion

Partnership support staff arrangements

- 3.4.16 Support staffing arrangements for the Brent safeguarding children partnership arrangements are funded and resourced by Brent Council.
- 3.4.17 The Strategic Partnerships Team is responsible for leading the coordination of the arrangements and is managed by the Strategic Partnerships Manager. The team is based in the Children, Young People and Community Development directorate of the Council.
- 3.4.18 Alongside the safeguarding children partnership arrangements, the Strategic Partnerships Team also currently coordinates activities for other strategic partnerships in Brent including Brent Safeguarding Adults Board, Brent Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Partnership Board and Brent Children's Trust.
- 3.4.19 This staffing structure enables stronger strategic coordination between the strategic partnerships in Brent to both avoid duplication and develop joint

initiatives. It also successfully facilitates a level of independence from the operational safeguarding activity of the council.

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

3.4.21 During the period of reporting, the Brent Safeguarding Children's Partnership carried out a range of activities, see the annual report (Appendix A) for further information. Further details of the functions and activity of the DSP Group, Forum and subgroups are laid out in the annual report (Appendix A).

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

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

5.0 Financial Considerations

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

5.2 For the 2024/25 financial year, the Safeguarding Children Partnership had an annual budget of £68,125.24 excluding staff costs.

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

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| • Metropolitan Police | £5,000 |
| • NWL Integrated Care Board | £48,489 |
| • Probation Service | £3,627.24 |
| • London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust | £11,000 |

5.4 The Local Authority makes additional contributions in the form of staffing costs to support the running and coordination of the safeguarding partnership arrangements.

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

6.0 Legal Considerations

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

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

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

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 The multiagency safeguarding children arrangements in Brent have been jointly developed by Brent Council, NWL Integrated Care Board and the North West Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police.
- 7.2 The three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Brent. In discharging their duty safeguarding partners must be assured by partner agencies in the borough that multi-agency services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of Brent's children and young people, including those with additional needs and/or vulnerabilities.
- 7.3 The safeguarding partners also ensure that services are culturally aware and skilled in identifying, assessing, and meeting the individual needs of Brent children and their families.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

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

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

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

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 Once the annual report has been through the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny committee process it will be accessible on the Brent Safeguarding Partnerships website at www.brentsafeguardingpartnerships.uk

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director, Children, Young People and
Community Development