	<p align="center"><b>Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</b> 30 June 2026</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Safeguarding Children Partnership</b></p>
	<p align="center"><b>Lead Cabinet Member – Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment &amp; Climate Action (Cllr Jake Rubin)</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements) Annual Report April 2025 - March 2026</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 - Annual Report 2025-2026
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <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. This report presents the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) Annual Report for the period April 2025 to March 2026 to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. It provides members with an overview of the partnership's activity, progress, and impact in strengthening safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Brent.
- 1.2. The BSCP is an independent, multi-agency partnership responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements. The Annual Report sets out how statutory partners and relevant agencies have worked together over the reporting period to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, highlighting key achievements, learning, and areas for further development.
- 1.3. The report outlines progress against local safeguarding priorities, including efforts to strengthen multi-agency practice, and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. It also demonstrates how learning from reviews, audits, and partnership activity has informed continuous improvement.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and note the contents of the BSCP Annual Report (Appendix A) and consider how scrutiny can support the ongoing effectiveness and accountability of safeguarding arrangements in Brent.

## 3.0 Detail

### 3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 The BSCP work has connections to the following outcomes within the Borough Plan:

**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.

**Thriving Communities** – The BSCP incorporates community engagement by including a Lay Member alongside representatives from the voluntary and community sector. The Lay Member plays a key role in engaging Brent's residents and local groups, helping to promote community cohesion. In addition, the BSCP remains committed to amplifying the voice of children and young people within its work and has begun work to recruit Young Scrutineers who will be represented within the Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group. Expanding this reach is a key priority for the next 12 months.

**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. Multi-agency auditing is carried out with all statutory partners to monitor and review the safeguarding provision in Brent.

### 3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) is the statutory multi-agency body responsible for overseeing local safeguarding arrangements to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people in Brent. It brings together the three safeguarding partners; the Local Authority, Integrated Care Board (ICB), and the Police, who share equal and joint responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding practice across the borough.
- 3.2.2 The BSCP was established in line with the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which introduced a system of locally determined safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements are underpinned by the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, which sets out how agencies must collaborate to safeguard children effectively.

3.2.3 The partnership provides strategic leadership, scrutiny, and challenge to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust, responsive, and continuously improving. It monitors the effectiveness of local services, promotes multi-agency learning, and ensures that the voices of children and families inform practice and service development.

3.2.4 Since December 2024, the BSCP has operated in full compliance with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), including strengthened governance arrangements. This includes the introduction of Lead Safeguarding Partners to provide enhanced strategic oversight and a greater emphasis on the role of education as a 'forth partner' within safeguarding arrangements. It should be noted that this guidance has since been superseded by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), which now provides the current statutory framework.

### Safeguarding Partners

3.2.5 The responsibility for the strategic oversight of this join-up locally rests with the three safeguarding partners (Brent Council, Metropolitan Police and West and North 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

3.2.6 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.

3.2.7 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.

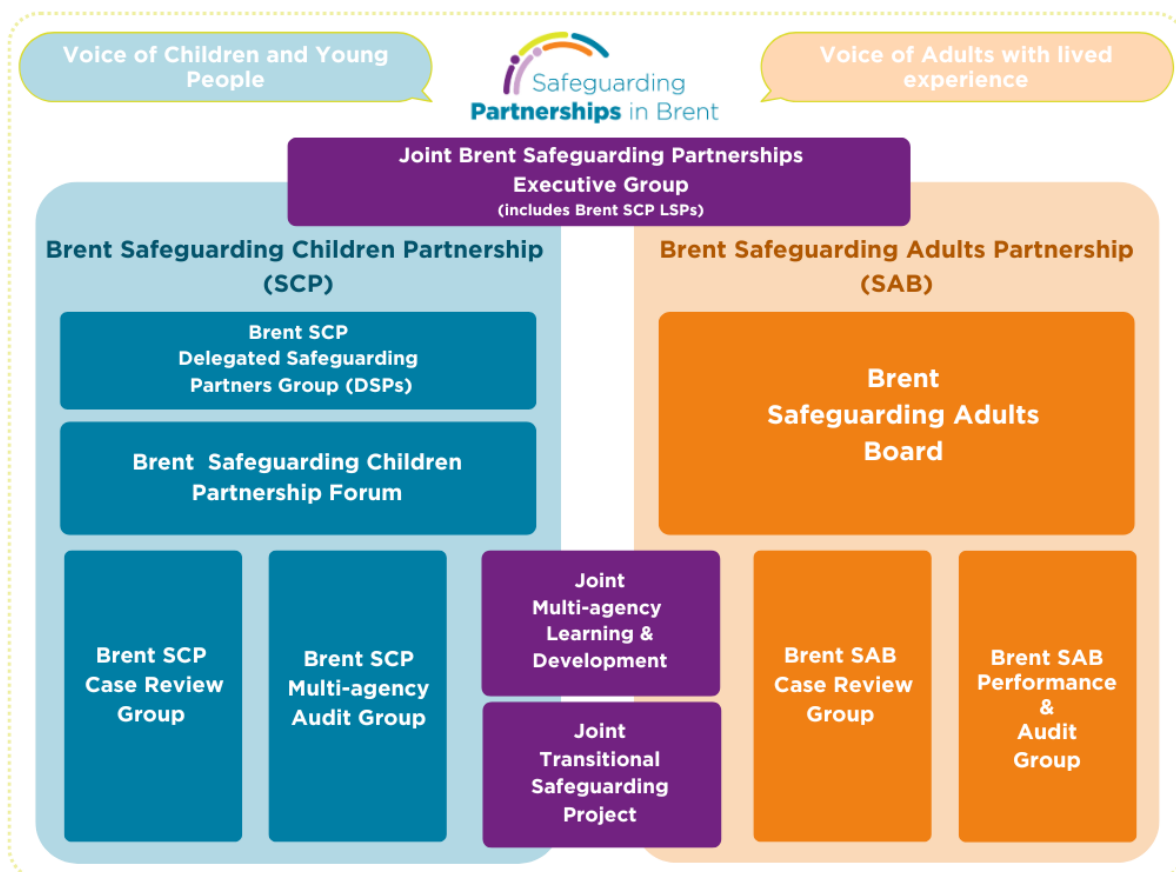
3.2.8 In Brent, the Safeguarding Partners work closely with the Independent Scrutineer. The Independent Scrutineer should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.

### Brent's safeguarding partnership arrangements

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

- Tier 1 - The Joint Partnerships Executive Group - provides high-level strategic leadership across both the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board and fulfils the local Lead Safeguarding Partner role as required in Working Together 2026.
- 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 Programme
  - Multi-agency Audit Group
  - Joint Transitional Safeguarding Project
  - Themed/focused Task & Finish groups as and when required



- 3.2.10 Support staffing arrangements for the SCP are funded and resourced by Brent Council.
- 3.2.11 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.
- 3.2.12 Alongside the SAB arrangements, the Strategic Partnerships Team also currently coordinates activities for other strategic partnerships in Brent including Brent Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Brent Health and Wellbeing Board and Brent Children's Trust.
- 3.2.13 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.

## Key activities

3.2.14 During 2025–26, the BSCP made measurable progress in strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and improving outcomes for children and young people.

3.2.15 The main achievement has been the advancement of key strategic priorities, particularly in relation to online safety, transitional safeguarding, and children's social care reform.

- The partnership completed a borough-wide schools mobile phone survey, aligning with national trends and directly informing local policy development. This has been complemented by the development of the *Always Online Together* guidance, aimed at improving awareness and understanding of digital safeguarding risks among parents, carers, and professionals. These initiatives demonstrate a proactive and preventative approach to emerging safeguarding risks in an increasingly digital environment.
- The BSCP has also played a central role in supporting the Families First Partnership Programme, contributing to the transformation of early help and social care services. This has included the establishment of governance arrangements and the submission of formal updates to the Department for Education, ensuring that Brent is well-positioned to deliver national reforms locally.
- A key achievement this year has been the strengthening of transitional safeguarding arrangements. The establishment of a joint Transitional Safeguarding Group with the Safeguarding Adults Board has improved oversight of the needs of young people aged 14–25. Initial workshops identified both strong practice and areas requiring improvement, particularly the need for earlier and more consistent planning for transition into adult services. This work represents a step towards addressing a historically challenging area of safeguarding practice.
- The partnership has continued to demonstrate strong multi-agency governance, leadership, and accountability. The established four-tier structure, including the Joint Executive Group and Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group, has ensured clear strategic oversight, effective challenge, and shared ownership of safeguarding priorities. This has supported improved collaboration between statutory partners and strengthened links with education, health, police, and the voluntary sector. Evidence of improved joint working includes enhanced information-sharing arrangements, such as collaboration between police and the local authority to improve responses to domestic abuse incidents affecting children.
- Significant progress has also been made in embedding a culture of learning and continuous improvement across the partnership. The multi-agency safeguarding learning and development offer has undergone a comprehensive review, resulting in a more strategic and flexible approach to delivering learning.

- The existing multi-agency learning and development programme has seen increased engagement across agencies and an evidenced impact on practice, with an average reported learning gain of 22.3% by delegates and evidence that learning is being applied in frontline safeguarding work.
- The BSCP has maintained a robust approach to audit, scrutiny, and learning from practice. Multi-agency audits have been undertaken across key safeguarding themes, including serious youth violence, domestic abuse, and child sexual abuse, providing valuable insight into the effectiveness of multi-agency practice and identifying areas for improvement. The introduction of a “Case of Concern” process represents an important innovation, enabling the partnership to capture and respond to learning from near-miss incidents, thereby strengthening early identification of risk and improving system responsiveness.
- Another key area of achievement has been the partnership’s focus on amplifying the voice of children and young people. Participation has been embedded across a range of partnership activities, including through engagement with Brent Youth Parliament and the co-production of the Brent Youth Strategy 2025–2028. Children and young people are increasingly influencing service design and strategic priorities, with plans underway to further strengthen this through the recruitment of Young Scrutineers to participate in governance and decision-making processes.
- Finally, the partnership has strengthened safeguarding responses for vulnerable groups, including children at risk of exploitation, those experiencing extra-familial harm, and children with neurodiverse needs. Improved joint working, targeted training, and enhanced understanding of vulnerability have contributed to more effective identification of risk and more coordinated interventions. The positive findings from Ofsted in relation to children in care further demonstrate the impact of strengthened practice across the system.

### Key Challenges

3.2.16 The report also highlights a number of key challenges facing the partnership including:

- the complexity of safeguarding risks in a digital environment
- increasing demand and pressure on services
- systemic challenges such as delays in specialist provision for vulnerable children, including those with neurodiverse needs.
- ensuring effective transition from children’s to adult services remains an area requiring continued focus.

3.2.17 The BSCP continues to respond to these challenges through strengthened partnership working, improved data sharing, targeted audit activity, and a renewed focus on learning and development. By maintaining strong governance, promoting innovation, and embedding learning across the system, the partnership is working collectively to ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective, responsive, and focused on improving outcomes for children and young people in Brent.

## Priorities for 2026/2027

- 3.2.18 Looking ahead to 2026, the partnership will focus on key priorities including:
- strengthening the multi-agency response to neglect, which has been identified as a significant and often under-recognised safeguarding issue,
  - further embedding the voice of children and young people through the recruitment of Young Scrutineers and increased participation in strategic governance.
  - the continued implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme will also be a central area of work, supporting earlier intervention, whole-family approaches, and improved multi-agency collaboration.

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

- 4.1 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action is a core member of the Safeguarding Children Forum with oversight of wider partnership activity 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 2025/26 financial year, the Safeguarding Children Partnership had an annual budget of £65,576.45 excluding staff costs.

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

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| • Metropolitan Police                               | £5,000     |
| • NWL Integrated Care Board                         | £45,941    |
| • Probation Service                                 | £3, 635.45 |
| • 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 Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) exercises its functions in accordance with the statutory framework set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which places a duty on safeguarding partners to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- 6.2 The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* provides the overarching framework for local safeguarding arrangements, setting out the

roles and responsibilities of safeguarding partners and relevant agencies in delivering effective multi-agency safeguarding practice.

- 6.3 The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018 set out the duties of local authorities to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel of serious child safeguarding incidents that meet the prescribed threshold. The Regulations also define the responsibilities of safeguarding partners to undertake local child safeguarding practice reviews, ensuring that learning is identified and effectively disseminated across the partnership to improve multi-agency systems, practice, and outcomes for children.

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

- 7.1 The multiagency safeguarding children partnership arrangements in Brent have been jointly developed by Brent Council, West and North London Integrated Care Board and the North West London 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 does not relate to any HR or property related issues.

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

- 10.1 Following consideration by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, the annual report will be published and made accessible on the Brent [Safeguarding Partnerships website](#).

**Report sign off:**

***Nigel Chapman***

Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development

Named Delegated Safeguarding Partner for Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership