



Brent

NHS

Brent

Clinical Commissioning Group



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

DRAFT

MULTI-AGENCY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

ARRANGEMENTS IN BRENT

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Contents

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Overview of the safeguarding children arrangements in Brent**
 - Brent Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group
 - Brent Safeguarding Forum
 - Priority Groups
 - Support arrangements
 - Independent Convenor
 - Financial arrangements
 - Independent scrutiny
- 3 Working in partnership**
 - Relevant agencies
 - Role of early years settings, schools and other educational settings in Brent
 - Role of youth offending and custody services
 - Relationship with other Brent strategic partnerships
 - Relationship with other boroughs
 - Relationship with Brent Children's Trust
- 4 Identifying and responding to the needs of Brent's children and families**
 - Using data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of help
 - Hearing and responding to the voices of children, young people and families
 - Brent Thresholds Guide
 - Information sharing
 - Freedom of Information
- 5 Local child safeguarding practice reviews**
 - Links with Brent and Harrow Child Death Overview Panel
- 6 Multi-agency learning and development**
- 7 Quality assurance and multi-agency auditing**
 - Section 11 audit
 - Themed multi-agency audits
- 8 Challenge, escalation and dispute resolution**



1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the agreed new partnership arrangements for safeguarding children and young people in the London Borough of Brent.
- 1.2. These new arrangements follow the introduction of the Children and Social Work Act in 2017 and the publication of the revised statutory guidance Working Together 2018: both of which set out what is expected of organisations, individually and jointly, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 1.3. Brent's arrangements have been designed to capitalise on the pre-existing engagement of a range of partner agencies and momentum developed by the Independent Chair of the Brent LSCB. The arrangements also aim to reflect the national legislative changes and the statutory leadership roles of the three safeguarding partners – local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and police.
- 1.4. The focus on these key agencies is not intended to diminish the important contribution other partners make to safeguarding local children and young people. It recognises that to make further progress, then the three safeguarding partners need to take a greater level of responsibility.
- 1.5. Working Together 2018 names the lead representatives from each of the three safeguarding partners as “the local authority chief executive, the accountable officer of a clinical commissioning group, and a chief officer of police”. For Brent the lead representatives are:
 - Chief Executive, London Borough of Brent
 - Accountable Officer, Brent CCG
 - Chief Superintendent, North West Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commander, Metropolitan Police (Brent, Harrow and Barnet)
- 1.6. The lead representatives are able to delegate their functions although they retain accountability for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency. In Brent, the lead representatives have identified the following senior officers in their respective agencies who have responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with these arrangements:
 - Strategic Director Children and Young People and Statutory Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Brent
 - Director of Quality, Brent CCG
 - Superintendent (Safeguarding Lead), North West BCU
- 1.7. The senior officers have delegated authority to;
 - make decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency and commit them on policy, resourcing and practice matters
 - hold their own organisation to account on how effectively they participate in and implement the local arrangements



2. Overview of the safeguarding children arrangements in Brent

- 2.1. The three Brent safeguarding partners (Brent Council, Brent CCG and the Police) began meeting as a collective in December 2017 to agree a response to the national consultation on Working Together 2018.
- 2.2. In February 2018, the partners agreed that the pre-existing 'safeguarding Keeping in Touch' meetings would expand and form the Brent Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group (Executive Group).

Brent Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group

- 2.3. The Executive Group agreed that the membership and attendance of this group must be (where possible) the most senior level of each organisation and remain consistent to ensure timely and effective decision-making and commitment.
- 2.4. The Leader of Brent Council and the Statutory Lead for Children's Services (Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care) are politically accountable for ensuring the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. They provide the political leadership needed for the effective co-ordination of work with other agencies who have safeguarding responsibilities and therefore are also members of the Executive Group.
- 2.5. In October 2018, the Executive Group confirmed the direction of the future safeguarding oversight arrangements for children and young people in Brent. The arrangements consist of a two tier structure with the Executive Group providing high level strategic direction to a delivery focused Brent Safeguarding Children Forum made up of a diverse and wide ranging partnership.
- 2.6. The statutory responsibilities and mandate will remain with the Executive Group. However, they may wish at points to delegate responsibilities to the Forum as appropriate.
- 2.7. The Executive Group will fulfil the objectives, functions and responsibilities set out in Working Together 2018 to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Brent by;
 - agreeing the overarching strategic vision and local priorities for safeguarding children
 - challenging and holding the Safeguarding Forum to account
 - agreeing, publishing and reviewing the safeguarding oversight arrangements
 - monitoring serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance
 - ensuring that the arrangements to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area are effective and robust
 - identifying any new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
 - making the strategic links with other Brent partnerships
 - working closely with Harrow and Barnet equivalent executives on common strategic safeguarding issues across the North West BCU Police area
 - making provision for independent scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements
 - producing an annual report



- 2.8. The Executive Group will meet quarterly, with the three partners sharing the responsibility to lead the planning, hosting and chairing of the meetings on a rotational basis. The meetings of the Executive Group will not be held in public.
- 2.9. A formal record of all Executive Group meetings will be taken and submitted for approval at the next meeting. This record, subject to issues of confidentiality and legal considerations, will be a public document and published on a Brent safeguarding independent website.
- 2.10. The meetings will aim to take place after the Safeguarding Children Forum meetings in order to receive a progress update from the Forum, to review priorities (if needed) and take decisions on relevant matters.
- 2.11. A meeting of the Executive Group requires at least one representative from each of the three safeguarding partners to be quorate. No decisions can be made without the meeting being quorate.

Brent Safeguarding Children Forum

- 2.12. The Brent Safeguarding Children Forum is a wider partnership forum accountable to the Executive Group.
- 2.13. The Forum will co-ordinate and monitor multi-agency safeguarding oversight arrangements for effectiveness as set out in Working Together 2018 and will be led by an Independent Convenor.
- 2.14. The Forum is responsible for;
- driving delivery of local safeguarding priorities set by the Executive Group
 - building relationships with other strategic partnerships, the local community, and schools and other educational establishments
 - seeking assurance on behalf of the Executive Group that partners are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities, sharing information effectively and have robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place through multi-agency audits (including S.11 audit) and Forum meetings
 - continuing to follow the London Child Protection Procedures and develop and maintain a Brent thresholds document
 - developing, implementing and monitoring the impact of an interagency safeguarding children learning and development offer, incorporating local and national learning from serious child safeguarding cases
 - analysing and considering partnership responses to any new safeguarding issues and emerging threats identified by the Executive Group
 - undertaking Local Learning Reviews on behalf of the Executive Group
 - developing ways for the safeguarding oversight arrangements to include the voices of children and families in Brent



- agreeing a way of reporting and using multi-agency management information, data and intelligence to establish an overview of and assess the effectiveness of safeguarding activity within Brent
- supporting agencies in resolving disputes that have been appropriately escalated
- developing an annual work programme for agreement by the Executive Group
- overseeing and guiding the work of the agreed priority groups.

2.15. The Safeguarding Forum will meet at least quarterly ahead of Executive Group meetings and the meetings of the Safeguarding Forum will not be held in public.

2.16. A formal record of all Safeguarding Forum meetings will be taken and submitted for approval at the next meeting. This record, subject to confidentiality and legal considerations, will be a public document and published on the Brent safeguarding independent website.

2.17. Attendance at all Safeguarding Forum meetings will be monitored and reported as part of the Executive Group annual report.

2.18. A meeting of the Safeguarding Forum requires at least one representative from each of the three safeguarding partners to be quorate. No decisions can be made without the meeting being quorate.

2.19. The Independent Convenor may raise any concerns regarding attendance and engagement of relevant agencies with both the agency concerned and the Executive Group.

2.20. The Safeguarding Forum can also request updates from the Brent Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE), the Brent Vulnerable Adolescents Panel (VAP), the Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPP), the Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and any other Brent partnership forums to keep abreast of and consider future emerging issues.

Priority Groups

2.21. The Executive Group has agreed to set up strategic priority themed groups that will be led by, and report to, the Safeguarding Forum.

2.22. The priority groups will be tasked with identifying and developing ways to enhance the multi-agency identification and response to tackling each agreed priority, set by the Executive Group.

2.23. The Executive Group has also agreed to include a Learning and Development Advisory Group and Case Review Group in this structure.

2.24. A graphical outline of the agreed structure is included in **Appendix A**.



2.25. In addition to the agreed priority groups, the Executive Group may decide to set up specific strategic working groups to consider particular emerging local or national priorities or initiatives.

2.26. The Executive Group will review the structure of these arrangements on an annual basis.

Support arrangements

2.27. Brent Council's Strategic Partnerships Team will support the Executive Group with the coordination of these arrangements.

2.28. As well as supporting these arrangements the Strategic Partnerships Team also coordinates activities for other strategic partnership groups in Brent including;

- Brent Health and Wellbeing Board
- Brent Safeguarding Adults Board
- Brent Children's Trust

2.29. This arrangement allows stronger strategic coordination between the strategic partnerships in Brent to both avoid duplication and develop joint initiatives.

2.30. Brent Council will continue to take the lead responsibility in recruiting and managing appropriate staff to support the coordination of these arrangements.

Independent Convenor

2.31. The Executive Group have agreed that the Safeguarding Forum will be led by an Independent Convenor.

2.32. The Executive Group is responsible for engaging the services of the Independent Convenor and consult the relevant agencies on any appointments to this role.

2.33. The appointment of the role will be as a paid position under contract. The contract will last for one year from the date of appointment, subject to annual review by the Executive Group. The number of contracted days will be at least 30 days within this period.

2.34. The Executive Group can extend the same appointment to the Independent Convenor role annually for a maximum of five years.

2.35. The Independent Convenor's role will include:

- attending the Executive Group
- chairing the Safeguarding Forum meetings
- appropriately challenging partner agencies and professionals for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Brent
- providing direction to the Safeguarding Forum and ensuring statutory obligations and local priorities are being delivered

- managing all aspects of the Safeguarding Forum meetings, including setting the agenda in consultation with the Executive Group and Forum members
- preparing for and chairing meetings of the Local Learning Review Panel
- overseeing the progression case reviews to ensure they meet required timescales
- ensuring that the voices of children, young people and their families are represented in the work of the Safeguarding Forum
- ensuring that key local issues and national developments are considered by the Safeguarding Forum
- ensuring that the membership of the Forum is appropriate and representative of the local community and partner organisations
- challenging and monitoring the performance and participation of partners in the work of the Safeguarding Forum
- attending relevant regional and national meetings on behalf of the Executive Group
- reporting progress and any concerns to the Executive Group

Financial Arrangements

- 2.36. The Executive Group will agree the annual contribution to the safeguarding partners funding required to meet the responsibilities, duties and objectives of the arrangements.
- 2.37. This agreement will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 2.38. For 2019-2020 the funding arrangements will remain the same as previously agreed for Brent LSCB.
- 2.39. The financial year will run from the 1 April to the 31 March the following year, with contributing agencies being invoiced by the 1st October each year.
- 2.40. The income and expenditure will be managed and monitored by the Strategic Partnerships Team on behalf of the Executive Group.
- 2.41. The Executive Group will receive six monthly reports on the income and expenditure.
- 2.42. A comprehensive report identifying income and expenditure in line with Working Together 2018 requirements will be included in the Annual Report.

Independent Scrutiny

- 2.43. The independent scrutiny function as set out in Working Together 2018, will provide the critical challenge and appraisal of Brent's safeguarding partnership arrangements.
- 2.44. The role of independent scrutiny will work independently of the Executive Group and will form part of the arrangements to;
- provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of services to protect children on an annual basis



- assist when there is disagreement between the leaders responsible for protecting children in the agencies involved in multi-agency arrangements
- support a culture and environment conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge

2.45. The Scrutineer will be independent from the statutory partners, and they will have expertise in child safeguarding, an understanding of local need and effective partnerships.

2.46. The Executive Group recognises that at the time of writing, consideration was being given at a regional level to how this function could be carried out across London. As a result, the Executive agreed an interim arrangement for the Independent Convenor to undertake this role.

2.47. Going forward, the Executive Group will:

- regularly review the scrutiny system and delivery against the scrutiny plan and will make changes as required
- be responsible for ensuring that any recommendations from scrutiny are taken forward

3. Working in Partnership

Relevant agencies

3.1. The Executive Group have selected the agencies and organisations drawn from a list of 'relevant agencies' set out in Working Together 2018.

3.2. These agencies and organisations have been chosen as they provide key strategic and operational insight to the safeguarding children and young people in Brent and these selected relevant agencies will form the core membership of the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum.

3.3. The Executive Group have selected the following relevant agencies and organisations as members of Brent's Safeguarding Partnership Forum;

- Brent Council Children and Young People Department
- Brent Council Housing
- Brent Council Adult Social Care
- Brent Council Public Health
- Metropolitan Police North West Borough Command Unit (BCU)
- Brent CCG (including the Designated Professionals)
- London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust
- Central London Community Healthcare Trust
- Central North West London Mental Health Foundation Trust
- London Ambulance Service
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)



- Queens Park Rangers Football Club
 - Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
 - Barnardos
 - Education establishments
- 3.4. In line with statutory guidance, the Executive Group will also consider the option of requesting representatives from additional agencies/organisations as the partnership develops.
- 3.5. The relevant agencies must nominate a particular senior officer with strategic responsibilities to represent their organisation as member of the Safeguarding Forum and attend all meetings, this is to ensure consistency and continuity in the membership and engagement.
- 3.6. The relevant agencies should take the necessary steps to ensure their representative is able to effectively contribute to the partnership work and is of sufficient authority to commit resources of their agency where required.
- 3.7. Forum members are responsible for sending a deputy to meetings in their absence. Forum members are also responsible for updating the group on any significant changes to personnel within their organisation (as well as any operational changes).
- 3.8. Forum members are expected to;
- proactively and enthusiastically engage with the partnership safeguarding arrangements
 - be able to influence the strategic planning for safeguarding children within their agency
 - be able to secure appropriate information from their agency to support the partnership work
 - ensure that decisions of the Forum are taken forward within their own agency, and any impediments or delays to their implementation are reported to the Board
 - be responsible for communicating the partnership work effectively within their agency
- 3.9. The Executive Group also recognise the importance of involving the local community in the arrangements and have agreed to retain the existing lay members of the LSCB arrangements.
- 3.10. These lay members will continue to act as valuable ambassadors to help build stronger links with the local community as part of the new arrangements and are encouraged to:
- promote awareness of safeguarding across Brent's communities
 - represent the community voice at Safeguarding Forum meetings
 - engage with Brent's people and local groups to support community cohesion



Role of early years settings, schools and other educational establishments in Brent

- 3.11. The Executive Group recognise that early years settings, schools and other education establishments (including colleges) are an important part of safeguarding in Brent. They have responsibility to identify concerns early, provide help for children and families and prevent concerns from escalating.
- 3.12. Brent already has strong engagement from early years and schools with School representatives on the Board, priority groups and through the Section 11 audit process.
- 3.13. All Brent schools and colleges have designated safeguarding leads who meet regularly through the Brent Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) Network to discuss local issues.
- 3.14. The annual DSL conference (led by the Brent Schools Partnership - Safeguarding Lead School) also links into the Safeguarding Forum and explores identified priorities.
- 3.15. The education members of the Safeguarding Forum link into this network to enable the promotion of regular communication, challenge and support between these two groups.
- 3.16. The majority of schools in Brent are members of the Brent Schools Partnership, established by Brent schools to support schools in achieving the best possible outcomes.
- 3.17. In addition to the list of relevant agencies noted in section 3.3, the following representatives from Brent Primary, Secondary and Special Schools and Academies will also be core members of the Safeguarding Partnership Forum;
- Deputy Head Teacher - College of North West London
 - Head Teacher - Stonebridge Primary School (Chair of the Brent Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum)
 - Head Teacher – Village and Woodfield Special Schools (Chair of Brent Schools Partnership - Partners for Excellence)
 - Deputy Head Teacher - Capital City Academy (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
 - Deputy Head Teacher – Newman Catholic College (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Role of youth offending and custody services

- 3.18. Youth Offending Services in Brent sit within Brent Council's Children and Young People Department and these services will be represented on the Safeguarding Forum through the Children and Young People senior management team.
- 3.19. The Young Offending Service will also contribute directly to the work of the Safeguarding Forum through relevant priority group activity and are already active members of the Child Exploitation Priority Group.

Relationship with other Brent strategic partnerships

- 3.20. The Executive Group recognises that there is potential cross over in some areas of work and priorities with other strategic partnerships in Brent.
- 3.21. To allow the opportunity for other strategic partnerships to consider the progress of the safeguarding arrangements and contribute to the identification of local safeguarding priorities, the Executive Group will;
- continue to strengthen alignment with other Brent partnerships including the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safer Brent Partnership
 - request the Independent Convenor to attend as a standing member Brent Children’s Trust and Safer Brent Partnership
 - share their annual report with other relevant partnership forums including Community Safety Partnership, and Brent Children’s Trust
 - continue to seek opportunities to develop joint areas of work through addressing priorities such as violence against women and girls and exploitation

Relationship with other boroughs

- 3.22. The Executive Group will promote the introduction of an annual safeguarding leadership summit to enable a level of strategic consistency and join-up with the two neighbouring boroughs (Harrow and Barnet) with which Brent shares a police command unit and some healthcare services.

Relationship with Brent Children’s Trust

- 3.23. The Executive Group agreed that the strong relationship developed between Brent LSCB and the Brent Children’s Trust (BCT) will continue as part of the new arrangements.
- 3.24. The remit of the BCT links into the new arrangements as its primary function relates to ensuring that resources are allocated and utilised through commissioning, joint planning and collaborative working, to deliver the maximum benefits for children and young people in Brent.
- 3.25. The BCT remains responsible for;
- developing a joint vision and strategy for improving outcomes for children, young people and their families in Brent
 - ensure that priorities are informed by the views of children, young people, their families and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
 - work in partnership with all key delivery agencies to ensure delivery of key priorities and associated aims, targets and inspection criteria
 - set a clear framework for strategic planning and commissioning promoting integration and collaborative working between partners

4. Identifying and responding to the needs of Brent’s children and families

Using data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of help

- 4.1. On behalf of the Executive Group, the Safeguarding Forum will receive and scrutinise the following to identify good practice and highlight any shortcomings within those agencies that require;
- existing data collected, analysed and reported on by safeguarding partners and relevant agencies
 - quality-assurance reports
 - data shared with other strategic partnerships in Brent

Hearing and responding to the voices of children, young people and families

- 4.2. On behalf of the Executive Group, the Safeguarding Forum will seek assurance from the relevant agencies and other partners on how they ensure they have captured the voices of children, young people and families in their work.
- 4.3. The Safeguarding Forum will consider how to identify other innovative ways to gather this feedback through the partnership, including appropriately linking with existing forums for children, young people and families in Brent.

Brent Thresholds Guide

- 4.4. The Executive Group agreed to adopt the recently published (February 2018) [Brent Thresholds Guide](#) which is aimed at all practitioners and volunteers supporting or working with children and/or their families within statutory, voluntary, private or independent organisations in Brent.
- 4.5. This guide is aimed at all practitioners and volunteers supporting or working with children and/or their families within statutory, voluntary, private or independent organisations in Brent. It aims to help individuals and organisations when making a referral for services to ensure children and families get the right level of support at the right time. It should be read alongside the [London Child Protection Procedures](#) and the [London Threshold: Continuum of Help and Support](#).
- 4.6. The Executive Group will review and update the Brent Thresholds Guide every three years or at the point of any legislation changes.

Information sharing

- 4.7. Effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential and the Executive Group expects all organisations in Brent to have arrangements in place which set out clearly the processes and the principles for sharing information between each other and with other professionals.



4.8. Practitioners and senior managers should also refer to the Government’s guidance [‘Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners’](#) (updated July 2018) which has been produced to support practitioners in the decisions they take to share information, to reduce the risk of harm to children and young people.

4.9. The Executive Group expects that all members of the Safeguarding Forum will:

- ensure that their own organisation’s Data Protection Registration and requirements under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) meets the requirements
- adhere to the provisions of the Data Protection requirements as amended by the GPDR 2018 and maintain confidentiality at all times, other than where a specific exemption under the Act arises ¹
- make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 are properly complied with

Freedom of Information

4.10. As the Executive Group is not a ‘public authority’ (as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Act), there is no obligation to respond to approaches to the Executive Group for information made under the Act.

5. Local child safeguarding practice reviews

- 5.1. In line with Working Together 2018, the safeguarding partners have agreed procedures to manage the consideration of cases that might meet the criteria for both national and local learning reviews.
- 5.2. Brent Council must report a serious incident of child abuse or neglect, or the death of a child who is looked after to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel within 5 working days of becoming aware of a serious incident.
- 5.3. The safeguarding partners will, in consultation with the senior officers (paragraph 1.6), determine whether a case meets the criteria to be referred to the National Panel or an alternative form of learning lessons review.
- 5.4. A case review group will be the key mechanism for carrying out a rapid review of the case and will report to the safeguarding partner. This group will be chaired by the Independent Convenor.
- 5.5. The case review group will also be responsible for;
 - considering all serious incident cases in Brent and making recommendations to the Safeguarding Partners for determination if the learning review criteria has been met

¹ this principle will apply during a member’s participation in the Safeguarding Forum, and will continue after the individual is no longer a member of the Partnership, or following the Partnership’s dissolving. If any individual who has access to confidential information or data, knowingly breaches the law relating to particularly (but not limited to) the unauthorised disclosure of confidential information, they may be personally liable.

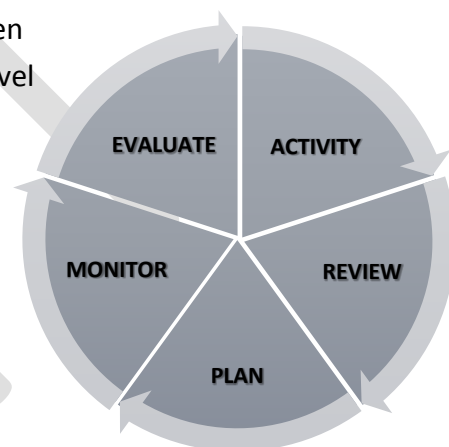
- identifying recommendations for any lessons to be learnt from serious incidents in Brent
 - coordinating the arrangements on behalf of the safeguarding partners for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews
 - developing the terms of reference, monitoring progress developing improvement plans coming for each local review
 - making recommendations for multi-agency learning events based on the findings arising from case reviews and what the process is for undertaking them
 - sharing examples of good practice to develop understanding of what works well
- 5.6. The case review group will have a fixed core membership drawn from the statutory partners and relevant agencies and with the flexibility to invite other relevant professionals to discuss certain cases as and when appropriate.
- 5.7. In order to ensure that a coordinated response fully addresses all concerns surrounding serious incidents, all relevant data should be shared and reviewed as permitted within legal and legislative data protection stipulations.
- 5.8. In recognition of the sensitive and confidential nature of business all agency representatives must sign a confidentiality agreement which includes the requirement to appropriately share and securely store information.
- 5.9. The impact that any local and relevant national reviews have on improving services and reducing the incidence of serious harm to children will be included in the safeguarding partners annual report.
- 5.10. Where possible and appropriate to do so, children, young people and families will be involved in learning reviews and events.
- 5.11. The activities of the case review group will be included within the safeguarding partners annual report.
- 5.12. Where matters of a confidential nature are discussed, any information published will be redacted accordingly to protect the subject.
- 5.13. Whilst the new Child Death Review arrangements are subject to a separate process, there are existing links with the Child Death Review process which will remain part of the new arrangements including;
- shared membership of the CDOP and the review group from Brent Council, Brent CCG and Metropolitan Police
 - a standing item on both groups agendas to provide two-way updates
 - discussions about how the processes will link where cases are considered by both groups

6. Multi-agency learning and development

- 6.1. The Executive Group have agreed to develop a multi-agency learning and development offer which builds upon the existing programme.
- 6.2. The offer will be coordinated by the part-time Strategic Partnership Learning and Development Coordinator and the multi-agency Learning and Development Advisory Group, which will report into the Safeguarding Forum.
- 6.3. The Learning and Development Advisory Group is responsible for;
 - promoting learning from safeguarding best practice
 - promoting learning around identified local and national priorities
 - promoting learning from local and national learning reviews and audits
 - providing updates on the progress and the impact of the multi-agency learning offer
 - providing recommendations and suggested actions to improve multi-agency practice through learning and development in Brent
- 6.4. The learning and development offer will comprise of a range of different learning opportunities including;
 - e-learning modules
 - themed briefings
 - awareness raising events
 - joint learning events/sessions with other strategic partnerships including Brent Safeguarding Adults Board
- 6.5. Any recommendations for learning and development activity will be approved by the Executive Group.
- 6.6. Learning events held to either launch or conclude one of the safeguarding priorities will include the input of the Independent Convenor as well as any experts as appropriate.
- 6.7. The Learning and Development Advisory Group will provide an annual update on the impact of the safeguarding learning and development programme to the Safeguarding Forum for inclusion the annual.

7. Quality assurance and multi-agency auditing

- 7.1. The Executive Group is committed to the continuous improvement of multi-agency safeguarding practice.
- 7.2. The Executive Group recognises there must be opportunities to learn from quality assurance activity in order to bring about sustained changes in practice and improved outcomes for children and families in Brent.
- 7.3. The Safeguarding Forum will undertake auditing activity to understand strengths and areas for improvement and take action to promote good practice.
- 7.4. The process will be based on a quality assurance and learning improvement cycle whereby;
- quality assurance audits/case review activities are undertaken
 - information is collated at both a strategic and operational level reviewing the work taking place
 - actions are identified to address development areas in order to improve practice or safeguarding arrangements
 - plans are monitored and impact is evaluated
- 7.5. Multi-agency auditing work will take place in two main forms of activity;
- section 11 audit
 - themed multi-agency audits (informed by identified local and national priorities)



Section 11 audit

- 7.6. Section 11 of the Children Act (2004) places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 7.7. The Executive Group have agreed that the Safeguarding Forum will assess and monitor compliance by undertaking a Section 11 audit.
- 7.8. This has been acknowledged to be an effective way of providing assurance to the Executive Group that partners and agencies are meeting their statutory safeguarding obligations.
- 7.9. The Executive Group will review the frequency and methodology of S11 audits on an annual basis.

Themed multi-agency audits

- 7.10. Multi-agency themed audits focussing on the identified safeguarding priorities will be built into the Safeguarding Forum's annual work programme.
- 7.11. The multi-agency audit tool, developed by Brent LSCB, will be used which will be adapted to each specific audit. The use of this tool will support an effective and consistent auditing process.

8. Challenge, escalation and dispute resolution

- 8.1. Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Differences and debates are all part of multi-agency working and escalation guidance provides a useful framework to explore and resolve professional disagreements.
- 8.2. Disagreements are most likely to arise around;
- levels of need/thresholds
 - roles and responsibilities
 - progressing plans
 - communication
- 8.3. The Executive Group expects that;
- all agencies make use of escalation procedures to avoid exacerbating or prolonging conflict, and avoid any possible impact on children and young people
 - all agencies have their own escalation and whistleblowing procedures and should use these (as appropriate) in the first instance
 - agencies will have systems for recording when escalation policies are used and how disagreements are resolved
 - all agencies should use the [London Child Protection Procedures](#) professional conflict resolution procedures where there are disputes involving child protection procedures
 - the terms of reference for all multi-agency panels and meetings includes reference to what to do if there is a disagreement
- 8.4. If it has not been possible to resolve professional differences between agencies, relating to safeguarding children, then this can be brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Forum (on behalf of the Executive Group).
- 8.5. The Independent Convenor will consider what support partners require to resolve their differences and may act as an arbitrator/mediator in the case of prolonged or intractable disagreements.
- 8.6. All professionals have a duty to act assertively and proactively to ensure that a child's welfare is the paramount consideration in all professional activity, therefore all professionals must challenge the practice of other professionals where they are concerned that this practice is placing children at risk of harm.



8.7. The Executive Group encourages all professionals with concerns about how safeguarding issues are being handled in their own/another organisation to share their concerns. This may include making use of their agencies whistleblowing procedures or contacting the NSPCC's [Whistleblowing Advice Line](#) which offers free advice and support to professionals.

This document was agreed and signed off by the Brent Safeguarding Partners in June 2019.

Chief Executive, London Borough of Brent

Name..... Signed.....

Accountable Officer, Brent CCG

Name..... Signed.....

**Chief Superintendent, North West Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commander,
Metropolitan Police (Brent, Harrow and Barnet)**

Name..... Signed.....

References

Child and Social Work Act 2017
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>

Working Together 2018
<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/>

Local Safeguarding Partners Relevant Agencies Regulations 2018
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111167540>

Appendix A

