

	<b>Health and Wellbeing Board</b> October 2021
	<b>Report from the Chair of Brent Children's Trust</b>
<b>Brent Children's Trust update</b> <b>April 2021 – September 2021</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	N/A
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<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>No. of Appendices:</b>	0
<b>Background Papers:</b>	0
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## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. The Brent Children's Trust (BCT) is a strategic partnership body made up of commissioners and key partners. The primary functions of the BCT include commissioning, joint planning and collaborative working to ensure that resources are allocated and utilised to deliver maximum benefits for children and young people in Brent.
- 1.2. To strengthen the Health and Wellbeing Board oversight and remit, the BCT provides the HWB with an annual priorities report at the start of each municipal year plus one additional update report per year.
- 1.3. This paper provides an update of the BCT work programme covering the period April 2021 to September 2021.

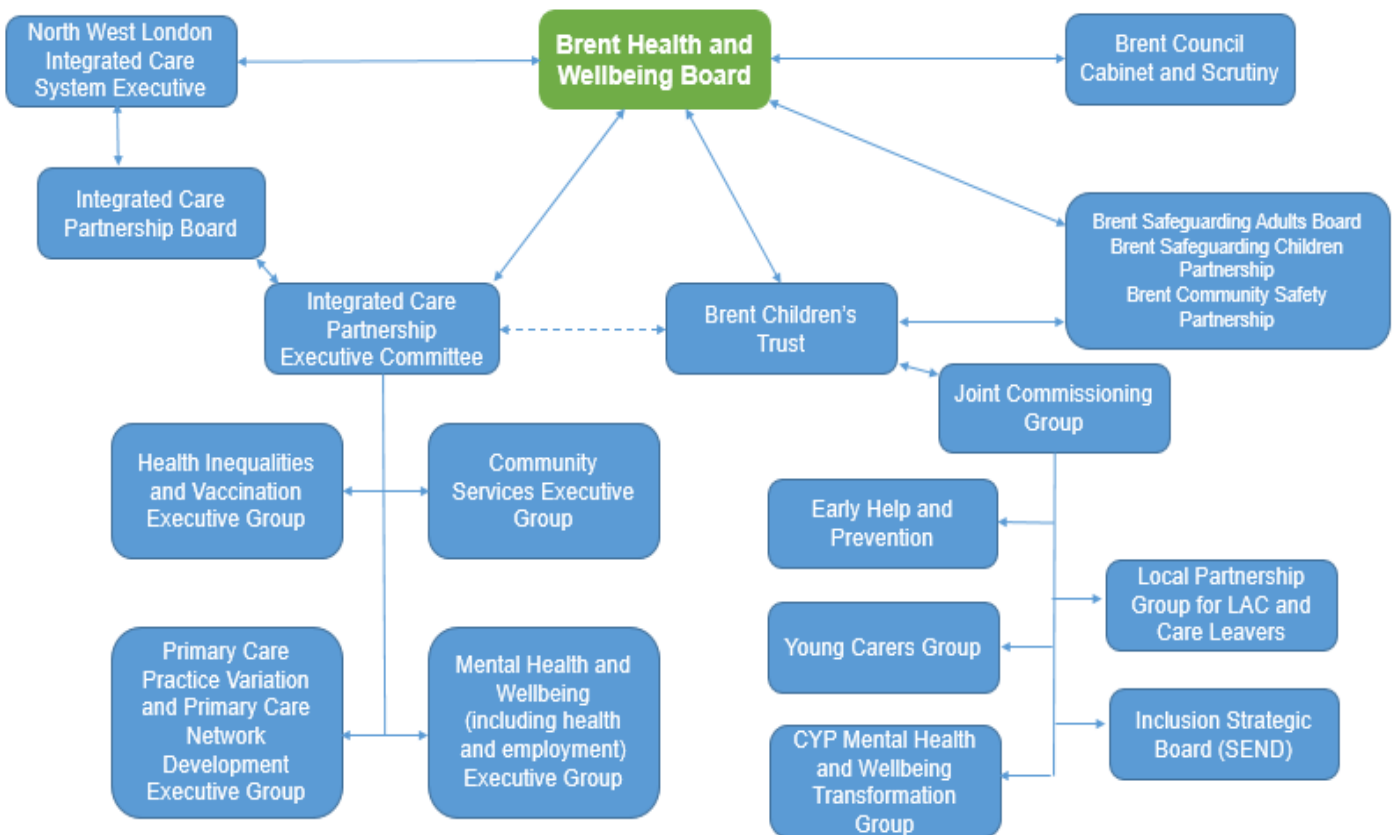
## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the work of the Brent Children's Trust for the period April 2021 to September 2021.

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1. The BCT meets every two months to review progress against the priority areas of focus and address any emerging local and national issues. The BCT met three times during the period covered within this report, on 25 May 2021, 20 July 2021 and 21 September 2021.

- 3.2. The BCT, through its Joint Commissioning Group (JCG), oversees five groups tasked with implementing specific priorities across the partnership. These five groups are:
- Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing
  - Local Partnership Group LAC and Care Leavers
  - Inclusion Strategic Board (Children and Young People with SEND)
  - Early Help and Prevention Group
  - Young Carers Group
- 3.3. The BCT, JCG and transformation groups have consistent attendance with representation from Brent Council and Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Other key stakeholders attend the JCG, which includes three school head teachers who have been active members since September 2017.
- 3.4. In May 2021, the NWL Brent Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Lead joined the BCT as a standing member to strengthen the links between the Trust and the development of the NWL, Brent ICP.
- 3.5. The BCT receives updates from the JCG and each of the five transformation groups as part of a standing item at every meeting.
- 3.6. The diagram below illustrates the governance structure in which the BCT currently sits.



- 3.7. Since April 2021 the BCT has examined three main strategic themes:
- a) Transitional Safeguarding
  - b) Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing
  - c) Support for children with special needs and disabilities (SEND) in Brent

## **Transitional Safeguarding**

- 3.8. Since November 2019, the BCT has considered Transitional Safeguarding as a priority area of focus. There has been a continued focus through the Brent Children's Trust on developing transitional safeguarding to ensure there is a seamless approach for young people as they reach adulthood, recognising that harm and its impact does not stop at eighteen.
- 3.9. Transitional safeguarding has solid links with evolving work around Contextual Safeguarding and it is recognised that risks continue into adulthood and particularly for young people during the 18-25 transitional period. There are several reasons why a more fluid and transitional safeguarding approach is needed for young people entering adulthood. These are summarised as:
- Adolescents may experience a range of distinct risks and harms, and so may require a distinctive safeguarding response
  - Harm, and its effects, do not stop on the 18th birthday
  - Many of the environmental and structural factors that increase a child's vulnerability persist into adulthood and can result in unmet needs and costly later interventions
  - The children's and adults' safeguarding systems are conceptually and procedurally different, and governed by different statutory frameworks, which can make the transition to adulthood harder for young people facing ongoing risk and arguably harder for the professionals who are trying to navigate an effective approach to helping them
  - Young people entering adulthood can experience a 'cliff-edge' in terms of support, exacerbated by the notable differences between thresholds/eligibility criteria of children's and adults' safeguarding and health services
- 3.10. Since the original workshop held in November 2019, Brent safeguarding partnerships have been focussed on developing practice based on questions raised by Dez Holmes, Director of Research in Practice:
- What do we really know about our local population of older adolescents, and their lives, as they become young adults? How are we planning for their needs?
  - What leadership behaviours do we demonstrate to enable courageous, creative and coherent practice and services for these people?
  - What learning is there from SCRs, SARs, and DHRs around how our approach to safeguarding across transitions could be improved?
  - How are we ensuring that our strategic approach to this group is underpinned by data, research, practice wisdom and people's lived experience?
- 3.11. Additional training sessions were developed in partnership with Research in Practice. Four sessions of multi-agency training were conducted in early 2021. Attendees included practitioners from Community Wellbeing, Children and Young People alongside health partners, commissioned services, schools and local charities. There was overall positive feedback from the sessions.
- 3.12. The BCT is encouraged by the introduction of the Transitional Safeguarding Sub-group of the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group, which was launched in October 2020. This group is focussed on ensuring there is a seamless approach to transitional safeguarding for young people as they reach adulthood, recognising that harm and its impact does not stop at eighteen. There are representatives from Children and Young People, Community Wellbeing and Regeneration and Environment. The current work

is focused on transitions for children leaving care, with a specific focus on developing transitional and contextual safeguarding. Current areas of work around transitional safeguarding include:

- Drafting guidance and a flowchart on how Children and Young People and Community Wellbeing can work more effectively together including referral processes and eligibility criteria
- Understanding the process for young people who do not meet the thresholds for adult safeguarding
- Sharing best practice on Mental Capacity Assessments

3.13. A more collaborative approach was piloted between Leaving Care and Adult Safeguarding. Although there was support for the pilot and the need to do things differently, many of the cases identified did not meet Community Wellbeing statutory criteria, where there is no duty or current resources to support these young people. There is agreement that there needs to be further work on how vulnerable young people are supported where non-statutory safeguarding interventions are needed.

3.14. A learning event took place in February 2021 to discuss the challenges and opportunities emerging from the pilot, looking at innovative ways to reimagine systems to support this cohort, encouraged by the new SMART team in Community Wellbeing that has been set up to support people who were 'falling through gaps' in the system.

3.15. The BCT supports the identified next steps for progressing the transitional safeguarding process in Brent which include:

- A mapping exercise looking at transitional safeguarding services and interventions in Brent aimed to inform a Council-wide approach for transitional safeguarding for over 18s that reflects vulnerability whilst balancing issues around adult consent.
- Developing a multi-agency pathway for children transitioning to adulthood with concerns around exploitation, including ensuring a good understanding of our local response when a police referral is completed for a young person aged 18-25.

3.16. The BCT requested that the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board be apprised of the progression of this joint work in Brent. A report is going to the Safeguarding Adults Board on 18<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing**

3.17. During the July 2021 meeting, the BCT explored, in detail, the Brent mental health and emotional wellbeing provision with a focus on potential solutions to service pressures.

3.18. The BCT expressed growing concerns regarding the increase in demand for children's mental health services in the borough, which have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Examples of this increasing demand include:

- 10% increase each quarter in 20/21 in children and young people logging onto KOOTH (online mental health support for 11 to 25-year-olds.) out of hours service and a 20% rise in new registrations.
- Increase in children and young people presenting at Brent Centre for Young People with moderate/severe complex needs
- Increasing demand on specialist services resulting in increased waiting times
- Increasing number of children and young people presenting in crisis to A&E or as urgent referrals to core CAMHS - in particular children and young people who have autism or eating disorders

- Increasing demand on eating disorder services - the CYP Eating Disorder team saw higher levels of activity towards the end of 2020. This has continued throughout 2021 and, with few exceptions, it has been 70% higher than the same period in the previous year.
- CAMHS Adolescent Community Treatment Service (ACTS) saw elevated levels of activity in the last two months of 2020. This has continued into 2021 with weekly activity levels routinely above that seen in the same period in 2020.
- Increasing demand for the Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team (WEST) service commissioned by the Anna Freud Centre.
- Urgent care CAMHS teams have seen increased rates of referrals between September and November 2020, and again since March 2021, in line with schools opening.
- May 2021 saw the highest number of monthly referrals received and accepted in any month ever.

3.19. It is clear that CAMHS (commissioned by CCG and delivered by CNWL in Brent) is struggling to meet demand for specialist services and longer-term therapeutic services and is currently unable to provide a full service for children and young people who have moderate to severe levels of mental health and emotional wellbeing need.

3.20. All CAMHS services have long waiting times for assessment and clinical interventions and there is a need for more capacity to increase access. Overall, it has been identified there needs to be a 20% increase in capacity to keep up with current demand, with an additional 76% short term increase in capacity to clear current backlog (CReST Data from CNWL).

3.21. The BCT recognised that there is a need to strengthen a number of areas including:

- coordination, awareness and promotion of universal services offering advice to CYP and their families with emotional wellbeing mental health issues
- services for children and young people with moderate to severe need to address gap between targeted services and specialist services
- services for children and young people with moderate/severe complex needs who do not meet the criteria for LD Specialist CAMHS
- support for parents with children who have been diagnosed, or are awaiting diagnosis, of neurodevelopmental need, such as autism and ADHD
- bereavement support
- targeted services that are ethnically sensitive, for example, for black young men
- an early intervention and prevention service that would see children and young people within 2/4 weeks
- co-ordinated approach to commissioning mental health services in schools and education settings
- services for children suffering from trauma due to violence or fear of violence
- clarity on the current pathways for access to services

3.22. It was also highlighted that:

- There is a need to establish a robust Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- It is vital that pathways for services are articulated in a clear and legible way
- There is a need to produce a strong workforce development plan

3.23. The BCT requested that priority is given to developing an action plan that addresses the identified areas of improvement. It was agreed that this activity would be carried out through a newly formed ICP Mental Health and Wellbeing working group.

- 3.24. The BCT is encouraged by the planned development of:
- a piece of work, led by Brent CYP and CNWL to match the CAMHS waiting list cohort with a range of other mental health support services
  - a communication strategy aimed at children, young people and parents/carers to update them whilst on the waiting list
  - a review of what provision schools and education settings are offering to their students to support their mental health and wellbeing
- 3.25. The ICP Mental Health and Wellbeing working group will provide progress updates to the BCT at future meetings.

### **Support for children with special needs and disabilities (SEND) in Brent**

- 3.26. In September the BCT approved the draft Brent SEND Strategy 2021-2025 which describes Brent's strategy for children and young people aged 0-25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- 3.27. The refreshed strategy sets the direction of travel for partners in Brent over the next four years. It is informed by the progress made through the 2018-2021 SEND Strategy as well as other key local strategic documents such as the 2021 Brent Health and Wellbeing Strategy refresh, Brent Borough Plan 2021-2022, Brent Inclusive Growth Strategy 2019-2040, Brent Black Community Action Plan, Brent Poverty Commission Report 2020, Brent Youth Strategy 2021. At a national level the strategy is informed by the National Autism Strategy 2021, National Disability Strategy 2021 and NHSE 10 Year Plan.
- 3.28. This strategy is also cognisant of the expected SEND review and the principles that Ofsted and the CQC identified (July 2021) as critical for an effective SEND system:
- The first is Strategic Leadership, a shared and ambitious vision for children and young people with SEND, with local area partners working together to provide the foundations for strong and robust strategic commissioning arrangements that are rooted in co-production.
  - The second feature is practice. The quality and impact of practice, relationships and a clear graduated approach/response in place that results in children's needs being identified at the right time and assessed in a timely and effective way.
  - The third feature is entitled experiences. In the best area SEND arrangements, children and families are influential in decision-making, they can articulate how the support they have received has enabled them to progress, and make effective transitions from one stage of their lives to the next, with a clear pathway into adulthood. Children and young people will be valued, visible and included in the communities where they live and work.
- 3.29. The refresh of the Strategy has been the result of a five month consultation period (February 2021-July 2021). A working group drawn from the Strategic Inclusion Board, a group of young people with SEND and parents from the Brent Parent Carer Forum (BCPF) has provided oversight of the consultation process. This has included designing the questions for the survey and reviewing the feedback from the consultation.
- 3.30. During the consultation period 350 individual and group responses were received from an online survey. Additionally, group feedback was received from two special schools as well as engagement with approximately 100 young people, parents and carers in various focus group sessions. Three specific workshops were held for professionals to identify both the successes from the ambitions identified in the last strategy as well as to identify the key future priorities. The final consultation session was held on 9th

September 2021 at the Strategic Inclusion Board where the draft contents of the Strategy were discussed along with the outline priorities captured in the document.

- 3.31. The BPCF plans to launch the Strategy on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 along with a new website designed with, and for young people with SEND that will sit on the Brent Youth Zone platform.
- 3.32. It was agreed that the ICP Director will co-sign the strategy alongside the Strategic Director (CYP) and the Director of the BPCF.
- 3.33. The BCT will continue to have oversight of the implementation of the strategy and will scrutinise the progress of the implementation plan on a regular basis.

#### **Other BCT work programme activity**

- 3.34. The BCT continues to have oversight of:
- the local implementation of Supporting Families Programme (formerly known as the Troubled Families Programme)
  - the development of the Integrated Disabled Children and Young People's 0-25 Service
  - the progress of the Young Carers (YC) Champions Group and activity to support Young Carers in Brent

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

#### **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equality implications as a result of this report.

#### **7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 7.1 Brent Council and NWL CCG (Brent CCG) are members of the BCT and its sub groups and have contributed to this report.

#### **Report sign off:**

**Gail Tolley**

Strategic Director Children and Young People