



**Community Wellbeing Scrutiny  
Committee**  
24 January 2022

**Report from Brent Statutory  
Safeguarding Partners**

**Brent's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Children**

<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>No. of Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 - Multi-agency Safeguarding Children Arrangements in Brent (updated November 2021)  Appendix 2 - Brent Safeguarding Partners response to the Ofsted thematic review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges: engagement of schools and colleges
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Brian Grady Operational Director, Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy Brian.grady@brent.gov.uk  Sonya Kalyniak Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Sonya.kalyniak@brent.gov.uk

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 In accordance with amended statutory guidance and in line with changes in local authority areas nationally, new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children in Brent were transitioned to in June 2019 and fully implemented in September 2019.

- 1.2 Further to the report presented to Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny committee in November 2019, which set out these new partnership oversight arrangements for safeguarding Brent's children and young people, this paper updates the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the embedding of these new arrangements.
- 1.3 This report draws on the published annual reports and highlights the positive developments of the arrangements including
- Consistent, visible and active senior leaders driving improved multi-agency safeguarding practice through the Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group;
  - The wide range of organisations and stakeholders engaged in the safeguarding arrangements through the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum
  - The impactful learning which is improving multi-agency safeguarding practice through the development of clear and high quality Rapid Reviews of practice.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The committee is asked to review the implementation of the new partnership safeguarding oversight arrangements and consider the developments and impact of these local arrangements to safeguard children in Brent.

## **3.0 Detail**

### Context

- 3.1 As reported to Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in November 2019, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 made provision for the replacement of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with new locally determined arrangements agreed and delivered by three statutory safeguarding partners – local authorities, CCGs and police. Subsequently, statutory guidance in the form of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) was published setting out the framework for local safeguarding oversight arrangements.
- 3.2 These locally determined arrangements are designed to ensure that safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In doing so, they can involve other relevant local agencies. The guidance states that the safeguarding partners must:
- co-ordinate their safeguarding services
  - act as a strategic leadership group and
  - implement local and national learning including from serious safeguarding incidents

## Overview of the safeguarding children arrangements

- 3.3 The leadership of Brent Council, Brent CCG (now NWL CCG) and the Metropolitan Police, North West Basic Command Unit formed a Brent Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group (the Executive Group) in February 2018 to develop and establish the new arrangements. The designated members of the Executive Group are:
- Leader, Brent Council
  - Lead Member, Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care, Brent Council
  - Chief Executive, Brent Council
  - Strategic Director, Children and Young People and Statutory Director of Children's Services, Brent Council
  - Chief Nurse and Director of Quality, representing Brent CCG (in place of Accountable Officer, North West London Collaboration of CCGs)
  - Detective Superintendent, Head of Safeguarding, North West Basic Command Unit (Deputy for Chief Superintendent – BCU Commander).
- 3.4 In October 2018 this Executive Group confirmed the future safeguarding oversight arrangements for children and young people in Brent in the form of a two tier structure, consisting of the Brent Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group providing a high level strategic direction with a delivery focused Brent Safeguarding Children's Forum reporting to the Executive Group. The support to the Executive Group was agreed to be shared between the three safeguarding partner organisations and the Forum was agreed to be led by an Independent Convenor. This latter role has been filled by the former chair of the Brent Safeguarding Children Board. Statutory responsibilities and mandate remain with the Safeguarding Partners in the Executive Group.
- 3.5 Brent's multi-agency safeguarding oversight arrangements document is included as Appendix 1 to this report. Arrangements were first agreed in June 2019, were published on 21 September 2019 and recently updated in November 2021. They set out the detailed arrangements which capitalise on the strengths and local progress previously made by the Brent Safeguarding Children Board. The document includes:
- a list of the relevant agencies in the borough which sit on the Safeguarding Forum to work together with the statutory safeguarding partners
  - a description of the links with other strategic partnerships such as the Brent Children's Trust and the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board
  - a description of the function and role of the Independent Convenor of the Safeguarding Forum
  - confirmation that Brent continues to follow the London Child Protection Procedures
  - arrangements for quality assuring activities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people

- how the multi-agency learning and development offer to support the embedding of learning from local learning reviews and quality assurance audit findings are embedded across the partnership
- 3.6 The Brent Multi-agency Safeguarding Children Arrangements have recently been updated to reflect changes in the way the partnership arrangements have developed. The latest update of arrangements in November 2021 reflects the following developments:
- Priority groups, focusing on safeguarding themes, were no longer included in the arrangements as there was no longer capacity to manage them. This was to ensure the arrangements were achievable.
  - The updated document reflected the fact the safeguarding partnership now did much more work on learning from serious safeguarding incidents and reflected the evolution of how Rapid Reviews were conducted.
  - Changes had been made to reflect the new NWL CCG arrangements, which now cover all 8 North West London boroughs.
- 3.7 Legislation is anticipated in April 2022 regarding the future structures of the NHS, which if passed, would mean the CCG would become the Integrated Care System (ICS). The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will be further updated to reflect this change when and if required.

### Governance arrangements

- 3.8 The Executive Group works in partnership to 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 strategic links with other Brent partnerships
  - where appropriate, 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
- 3.9 Attendance at the Executive Group by the most senior accountable officers and democratically elected representatives reinforces the commitment from Brent's

Statutory Safeguarding Partners to ensure Brent's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are effective. The leadership demonstrated by the most senior representatives of Safeguarding Partners aims to ensure timely and effective decision-making and commitment. The rotation of the chair of the Executive Group between Statutory Safeguarding Partners ensures equitable and distributed safeguarding system leadership.

3.10 The Brent Safeguarding Children Forum is a wider partnership forum accountable to the Executive Group. The Forum co-ordinates and monitors multi-agency safeguarding oversight arrangements as set out in Working Together 2018. 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 having 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

3.11 The Safeguarding Partners selected the agencies and organisations drawn from a list of 'relevant agencies' set out in Working Together 2018. These agencies and organisations have been chosen as they provide key strategic and operational insight to the safeguarding children and young people in Brent. The selected relevant agencies form the core membership of the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum.

3.12 The Safeguarding Partners recognise the importance of involving the local community and agreed to retain the existing lay members who were part of the previous LSCB arrangements. Two of the five LSCB lay members continued as members of the Safeguarding Children Forum. The lay members 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

Working in partnership to identify and address key priorities

3.13 The Executive Group has enabled the Safeguarding Partners to be proactive in working together in identifying and responding to emerging risks for Brent children and young people.

- There has been a significant rise in demand for help for families through the Brent Family Front Door since summer 2020. The number of contacts being made to Brent Family Front Door has varied during the different stages of national lockdown which began in March 2020, but a clear pattern of rising demand has been established, with those cases that were subsequently referred being much more complex and with higher incidences of neglect.
- Although there has been a significant overall reduction in violent crime (including knife crime) in Brent, Brent Safeguarding Partners saw a significant number of adolescent safeguarding issues around knife crime in early 2021. This is in the context of growing national concern regarding incidents of serious violence involving young people.
- Domestic abuse, historically a consistent issue in the majority of referrals received through Brent Family Front Door, continued to be present as a significant issue throughout the last two years, with levels in 2021 above pre-lockdown levels.
- Poverty had been raised as a real issue for families during the pandemic, with there being an increase of families running into financial difficulties.
- The demand for mental health support in Brent has grown hugely during the period of the pandemic. As a result, the ICS Board is looking at CAMHS as an area of priority investment, as well as reviewing how children and young people could be supported from an earlier stage.

3.14 Informed by the Safeguarding Partners analysis of safeguarding needs, the Executive Group agreed the following strategic priorities for 2021/22:

- Serious youth violence
- Suicide prevention and mental health
- Domestic abuse

3.15 The Executive Group has coordinated multi-agency action on priority areas of work. For example, the development of contextual safeguarding practice in Brent, as reported to Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in March 2019, March 2020 and November 2020, has been informed by Safeguarding Partners.

3.16 A collective approach also continues to be developed by Safeguarding Partners in Brent to address serious youth violence. Brent Safeguarding Partners were invited by the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Secretary of State for Education, to participate in a national Learning from Excellence event on 17 March 2021 to inform local and national responses to the increased incidence of serious youth violence. A partnership briefing sets out the actions Brent Safeguarding Partners are taking to prevent

serious violence incidents involving children and young people. Following the murder of a Brent young person in February 2021, Brent Safeguarding Partners undertook a multi-agency Rapid Review to identify any practice learning from across the partnership.

- 3.17 Brent Safeguarding Partners also published a Serious Case Review regarding Child K on 23 April 2021 and are overseeing how recommendations from this review are being implemented. As an example, alongside learning from a recently published Islington Serious Case Review, the CYP department implemented a six-month departmental Serious Youth Violence Action Plan to improve practice to support young people at risk of serious youth violence.
- 3.18 Brent Local Safeguarding Partners were invited to contribute to the Ofsted Thematic Review of sexual harm in schools and colleges in the spring and summer of 2021. Senior representatives from the three Safeguarding Partners Brent Council, North West London CCG and the Metropolitan Police plus schools met with Ofsted on 5 May 2021 to explore what is working well currently, and also whether there are any gaps in national guidance about sexual harassment between children. Brent Safeguarding Partners have worked collaboratively in responding to the risks of Child Sexual Abuse highlighted with the June 2021 Ofsted Thematic Review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges, as set out in the Executive group paper in Appendix 2 – “Brent Safeguarding Partners response to the Ofsted thematic review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges”. Actions being taken to identify and respond to child sexual abuse and harassment, informed by the Brent partnership approach to contextual safeguarding and in the context of the introduction of compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education for secondary pupils from September 2020, have been reviewed and informed by the Executive Group and Brent Children’s Safeguarding Forum.
- 3.19 The Executive Group has ensured that other multi-agency governance boards integrate safeguarding priorities in their wider partnership work and plans. The Executive Group inform and develop partnership action to improve safeguarding. Most recent Executive Group-led actions include the following examples, which also demonstrate how the work of the Executive Group links with other strategic partnerships in Brent to promote the safeguarding of Brent children:
- Following the CQC inspection of London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust maternity services in April 2021, NWL CCG Safeguarding Partner representatives provided assurance to the Executive Group on work underway as a priority with related services to ensure the safeguarding of children and mothers was ensured. An Improvement Board had been convened to bring together the Trust, CCG and relevant partners to deliver a maternity improvement action plan, with a system oversight meeting chaired by the ICS Executive.

- Brent Council Public Realm Scrutiny Committee have enquired what safeguarding work was being done in partnership with TfL, the Police and the Local Authority on taxi licensing. The Executive Group supported a response to develop actions through the London Safeguarding Partnership with TfL, making links to Operation Make Safe, a police-led initiative to work with hotels to safeguard children and young people at risk of exploitation.
- Further to a rising demand for mental health support for Brent children and young people, including an increase in young people presenting at Northwick Park Hospital with mental health issues, Safeguarding Partners supported the ICS establishing a task group to improve access to mental health support, overseen by Brent Children's Trust and Brent Health and Wellbeing Board. Brent Children's Trust, chaired by the DCS, provides strategic leadership of collaborative work with North West London CCG, Brent Public Health and settings and schools and drives a consistent approach to working with children across partner agencies. The attendance of NHS partners and the Independent Convenor of the Safeguarding Forum has increased the level of safeguarding scrutiny in joint commissioning and joint planning arrangements and also ensured that safeguarding actions are progressed swiftly between Brent Council and the NHS. This has also helped confirm improving access to mental health support for Brent children and young people as a priority in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy of the Brent Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Following a Safeguarding Partners event sponsored by the Executive Group and Brent Safeguarding Children Forum in November 2019 to establish key actions to review and develop transitional safeguarding arrangements, the Executive Group have supported the Children's Trust to develop (with partners in the adult social care system) a seamless approach to transitional safeguarding for young people as they reach adulthood, recognising that harm and its impact does not stop at age eighteen.

3.20 The Brent Safeguarding Children Forum implements the work of the Executive Group to ensure strong operational partnership work. In 2020/2021, the Independent Convenor, with the support of the Local Authority, secured increased membership representation of the Forum from Brent primary and secondary schools. This enhanced representation from January 2021 has impacted positively on the work of the Forum, including the consideration of Brent's multi-agency safeguarding partners' response to the Ofsted review of sexual harm and abuse in schools and colleges described in section 3.18.

3.21 School and Metropolitan Police representatives of Forum have also worked together to support Safer Schools Officers to participate proactively in Brent local neighbourhoods regarding safeguarding issues with relevant partners including schools. As a result, information regarding emerging local



safeguarding issues is more consistently shared to enrich the existing police information through local Police intelligence teams.

- 3.22 The Forum has maintained the review of a number of reports regarding the safeguarding of children in Brent which were previously reviewed by Brent Safeguarding Children Board, including the Brent Council annual exclusion report, the Local Authority Designated Officer report, the Brent Family Front Door and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub report and the Private Fostering annual report.
- 3.23 The Forum enables safeguarding partners to consider in more detail partnership responses to the strategic priorities identified by the Executive Group. For example, informed by the fact that the majority of children subject to referrals at the Brent Family Front Door were direct or indirect victims of domestic abuse, the Forum meeting of September 2021 considered Brent's partnership response to the impact of domestic abuse on children. The Forum received updates on the work of the multi-agency Violence Against Women and Girls group, overseen by the Safer Brent Partnership. Updates on Safeguarding Partner-led interventions to support children impacted by domestic abuse included Brent Council commissioned support services, the London Ambulance Service actively promoting domestic abuse support services, for example by wearing badges when on duty and the Metropolitan Police led initiative, Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass was first introduced in Devon and Cornwall in 2011 to provide schools with information of children who had witnessed domestic abuse at home and help them through traumatic experiences and was launched by the Metropolitan Police in 2015.
- 3.24 School representatives of the Forum spoke positively of the benefits of Operation Encompass, particularly how alerts ensure that schools can deliver timely support for children being impacted by domestic abuse and help schools develop a dialogue with parents. Over the past two years, school representatives of the Forum worked with relevant senior Police officers to encourage other Brent schools to participate in the initiative, as not all schools in the Borough had signed up to the scheme.
- 3.25 As of November 2021, 63 of Brent's 87 schools are now signed up to Operation Encompass and Brent has the highest uptake of the initiative in London. The schools are collectively receiving approximately 120 notifications per month. School Designated Safeguarding Leads have confirmed the benefits of these notifications to support children who have witnessed domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity and provide an empathetic response to any behavioural concerns. To support the Partnership understand the impact of Operation Encompass, case studies are scheduled at a future meeting of the Forum in 2022. These will evidence where Operation Encompass has made a difference to a child's life and allowed positive interventions to take place.

#### Funding responsibilities of each partner.

- 3.26 The agreed contributions for Brent's Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements for 2021/2022 are set out in the table below.

<b>Projected partner funding contributions</b>	
Brent/NWL CCG	£45,900
Brent Council (Strategic Partnerships Team staffing projected costs)	*£127,000
MOPAC/Police	£5,000
<b>Projected relevant agency funding contributions</b>	
National Probation Service	£1,600
Fire Brigade	£500
London North West University Healthcare Trust	£11,000
<b>Projected total contributions</b>	<b>£191,000</b>
<b>Projected Actual budget available to spend</b>	<b>£64,000</b>

\* The support staffing arrangements funded by Brent Council include:

- 1 FTE - Strategic Partnerships Lead (*also supports Brent Children's Trust*)
- 0.4 FTE - Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Coordinator (*also supports Safeguarding Adults Board*)
- 0.3 FTE - Strategic Partnerships Manager post

NB - Other Brent Council resource provided to the partnership arrangements include:

- *Portion of Governance Team administration support for Executive Group and Safeguarding Forum meetings time (approx. 1 day a month)*

### National and local learning

3.27 Working Together (2018) sets out the arrangements for handling serious child safeguarding cases. The purpose of these arrangements is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children both at a local and national level. It has been recognised that whilst local learning is relevant, it also has a wider importance for all practitioners working with children and families and for the government and policy-makers.

3.28 The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies therefore at a national level with the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and at local level with the Brent Safeguarding Partners. The Safeguarding Partners have made arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area.

3.29 Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:

- serious abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and
- the child has died or been seriously harmed

3.30 When it has been determined that a serious safeguarding incident has taken place, Brent Safeguarding Partners must undertake a Rapid Review of the case. The aim of a Rapid Review is to:

- gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time
- discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately
- consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- decide what steps they should take next, including whether to commission a Local Safeguarding Practice Review

3.31 The strong multi-agency involvement in the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum has ensured that effective escalation routes are in place when multi-agency issues arise. The Forum has been a driving force in the development of Rapid Review processes and the subsequent action on learning points in Brent, with positive engagement of partners evidenced in each review undertaken in Brent leading to cross-partnership learning and practice improvement. The Executive Group have supported the development of reviews, a new way of working for all agencies, so that they are helpful and informative for practice learning, clear, well written and thorough which enabled them to understand the case well and ask further questions where necessary. Safeguarding Partners take ownership for this process and each partner reviews and signs off the final report before submission to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

3.32 Between April 2019 and October 2020, six Rapid Reviews were undertaken. Between October 2020 and October 2021, three Rapid Reviews were undertaken. Rapid Reviews have resulted in a significant amount of learning for all agencies. It is encouraging to note that the learning in earlier Rapid Reviews has resulted in improvements in practice which has been commented on in later Rapid Reviews. Brent partners have also received praise for their Rapid Reviews by the Chair of the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

3.33 Examples of the partners taking action regarding learning from Rapid Reviews cited in the annual report 2019-20, are:

- The Brent Council Chief Executive Officer challenging the CPS regarding the application of their safeguarding policies (Case Study Child A).
- NWL CCG Director seeking reassurance from the Case Review Group around partnership working in responding to domestic abuse in Brent.
- Metropolitan Police intervening with the Coroner's Office to expedite investigation into a child death which occurred over 2 years ago and still awaits an inquest.

3.34 Rapid Reviews undertaken in Brent since April 2019 have identified a significant amount of good practice which demonstrates strong partnership working. Examples of multi-agency good practice identified in Rapid Reviews include:

- Good practice by the Brent MARAC. Brent Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a process where professionals from agencies share information on cases of very vulnerable and high risk individuals whose personal safety is a concern. The meeting creates a risk management plan to offer immediate support. The aim of the process is to address the safety and protection of the individual, to review and coordinate the case and case management plan.
- In one case excellent working together, communication and information sharing from Brent CYP and the Metropolitan Police with other relevant agencies was noted.
- The Lavender Walk Adolescent Mental Health Unit was seen as example of best practice for Tier 4 mental health provision.
- Before a Rapid Review took place, the London Ambulance Service had strengthened systems based on case learning and immediately put in place a mechanism to ensure safeguarding referrals are made at the time of the incident, where appropriate.
- The Metropolitan Police offered families and direct witnesses victim support following the death of a baby.
- The schools involved provided a young person with an appropriate level of pastoral care support including mentoring (largely social, emotional, and behaviour-focussed), mental health support drop in sessions, wellbeing advisory services and Rap Therapy (therapy using rap lyrics).
- There was good communication between Brent CYP Early Help keyworker, ICHT Discharge Nurse and the school to share information and arrange support for a family.

3.35 Areas of local learning and multi-agency practice development include:

- Where possible, professionals should seek to clarify the structure and relationships within a family and ensure that records for both adults and children in the family are grouped together accordingly.
- All agencies where appropriate should review their arrangements set out to assess the suitability of volunteers working within a service where known family members are also clients receiving these services to ensure full impartiality and maintain clear boundaries within these roles.

- Agencies should ensure that as much historical/background information as possible is obtained from asylum seeking families when they access services.
- There appears to be an assumption that when perpetrators of domestic abuse leave the family home, the associated risks have also been removed and the situation becomes safe for the child. Staff should be reminded to consider the risks the perpetrator still poses to the child/ren even though they have left the family home.
- Where there are children living in other boroughs who are linked to known/suspected gang members, Brent CYP should consider including other boroughs in strategy meetings to avoid duplication and enable information exchange channels so that all children are safeguarded.
- There is a need to re-evaluate how agencies involved with a family can work together to understand and address the reasons why families do not engage with services.
- The importance of information sharing with schools around issues of serious youth violence.
- The need for health colleagues to gain a holistic picture of a family.

3.36 The case review group regularly reviews progress against the recommendations from Rapid Reviews to ensure that learning leads to practice improvement.

**Case study: Child A**

*Brent Council notified the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel of a serious safeguarding incident involving Child A, a five-year-old boy who was admitted to hospital with severe multiple injuries indicative of physical and sexual assault/abuse. Mother and her partner were arrested on suspicion of inflicting injuries to the child.*

*In preparation for the Rapid Review into this case:*

- *Another London borough was invited to join the Rapid Review meeting as mother and child had recently moved into Brent.*
- *Good practice templates to gather initial scoping information from agencies known to be involved were shared with and adopted by Brent as a standard part of the Rapid Review process.*
- *All agencies involved completed the initial information scoping template and the information was collated and shared with all participants ahead of the Rapid Review meeting. This enabled the meeting to comprehensively focus on key multi-agency practice episodes to identify both good practice and learning.*

*The Rapid Review of the case took place within 15 working days of the incident in line with Working Together 2018 guidelines and was chaired by the Independent Convener of Brent Safeguarding Forum who also chairs the Case Review Group.*

*The Rapid Review meeting was well attended by all the key agencies from both Brent and another London borough. There agencies included:*

- *Designated Professionals for safeguarding children (Clinical Commissioning Groups) from 2 boroughs*
- *Children and Young People services from 2 local authorities*
- *Central North West London Mental Health Trust (CNWL)*
- *0-19 Service from 2 boroughs*
- *2 Hospital Trusts*
- *Metropolitan Police (representation from the local BCU and from the Serious Crime Review Group)*
- *Primary School (located in another borough)*

*The meeting lasted 3 hours and the circumstances leading to the incident, the agencies' individual and collective responses were discussed, analysed and considered by all present. It was agreed that the Rapid Review was rigorous enough to identify learning, some of which has already been acted upon, to obviate the need for any further joint review.*

*As part of the Rapid Review, Brent identified a particular concern regarding the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) safeguarding children guidance in this case and asked the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (CSPR) to raise the concern through the CPS and Department of Justice.*

*The CSPR's initial response was challenged by Brent Council which resulted in their agreement to pursue concerns about CPS training and guidance with the CPS. The CSPR Panel raised this concern with the Head of Policy at the CPS and identified issues which appeared to arise from the application of the guidance rather than the guidance itself.*

*Brent Council further raised the concerns about the application of the CPS guidance in this case with the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner. Following our intervention, we were reassured by the CPS response. The alleged perpetrators have been charged and have appeared in court.*

3.37 The development of Rapid Reviews has been a key area of strength in Brent's developing multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Ofsted have been kept informed of the number and progress of Rapid Reviews in Annual Engagement Meetings. The Independent Safeguarding Convenor's opinion is that the Case Review Group's decision making was effective, leading to effective identification of those cases that truly warranted a Rapid Review. The maturity of the partner relationship means that agencies are confident in coming forward to ask for a review. A stable Case Review Group membership where participants know their roles and expectations, and with a consistent focus on professional curiosity, is helping ensure the high quality of Rapid Reviews.

3.38 There remain areas of development with Brent's Rapid Review process and arrangement. One priority is to develop further the dissemination of case learning from Rapid Reviews. Rapid Reviews are not public published documents; this is one of the intentions of the 2018 reforms, with the thinking that if documents are not published it can encourage more candour and cooperation in reviews. Therefore individual agencies who may have been directly involved in a review do not always have a consistent agreement on sharing all information from a review. More work is being undertaken in 2022 to disseminate learning to all practitioner groups across agencies to ensure the maximum impact from learning can be made to improve practice.

### Child K Serious Case Review

- 3.39 Child K was murdered in 2019 in an attack which is believed to have been part of a series of connected violent assaults and deaths involving young people associated with rival criminal groups across more than one London borough. Child K moved to Brent with his family from another area in the months before his death. The Serious Case Review was carried out under the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and published in April 2021. The review highlights 15 recommendations for practice improvement. The Safeguarding Children Forum Case Review group is monitoring partners' response to these recommendations.
- 3.40 Following the publication of Brent's Child K SCR and other similar SCRs relating to Serious Youth Violence, the London LSCP Chairs Network organised two webinars in April and July 2021 to share the learning points common to these reviews. Over 70 LSCP Chairs, Business Managers and other interested persons attended the webinars and work is being progressed through the LSCP Chairs Network.

### Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews

- 3.41 Since the introduction of Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Safeguarding Partners have not commissioned one of these as the learning has been identified to significant depth in the Rapid Review Process. The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has been in agreement with these decisions.
- 3.42 Families move to and from Brent and as such, serious safeguarding incidents have occurred in other local authorities with children who had previously lived in Brent and received some services. Representatives from Brent Safeguarding Children Forum Case Review Group fully participate in Rapid Reviews led by other London Local Authorities. There are currently two LSPRs that Brent is contributing to and these reviews will be shared in early 2022.

### National learning

- 3.43 The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel is responsible for identifying and overseeing the review of serious child safeguarding cases which, in its view, raise issues that are complex or of national importance. The Panel also maintains oversight of the system of national and local reviews and how effectively it is operating. On receipt of Rapid Reviews, the Panel must decide whether it is appropriate to commission a national review of a case or cases. The criteria which the Panel takes into account include whether the case:
- highlights or may highlight improvements needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including where those improvements have been previously identified

- raises or may raise issues requiring legislative change or changes to guidance issued under or further to any enactment
  - highlights or may highlight recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children
- 3.44 The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel publishes thematic and individual case reviews to share learning. The Brent Strategic Safeguarding Partners and the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum actively consider how this national learning can support local practice development. For example, this will take place following the national review into a recent high profile child death in Solihull.

### Multi Agency Learning and Development

- 3.45 The Safeguarding Partners continue to offer a multi-agency learning and development programme built upon the previous LSCB programme.
- 3.46 The programme is coordinated by the part-time Strategic Partnership Learning and Development Coordinator and the multi-agency Learning and Development Advisory Group, which reports into the Safeguarding Children Forum. The Safeguarding Children Forum is kept regularly updated of the multi-agency learning programme through a standing item at each meeting.
- 3.47 The programme is aimed to comprise a range of different learning opportunities including:
- themed briefings
  - awareness raising events
  - joint learning events/sessions with other strategic partnerships including Brent Safeguarding Adults Board
- 3.48 The findings of the Section 11 audit conducted in 2019 were utilised to shape the multi-agency learning and development programme.
- 3.49 In October 2019, the new joint multi-agency children and adults safeguarding partnerships learning management system (LMS) was successfully launched. The Brent safeguarding partnership learning site offers professionals and volunteers who work in Brent full access to the multi-agency learning events and sessions from both the safeguarding children's and adult's learning agenda.
- 3.50 A benefit of this partnership learning site is that delegates are able to register and book onto all sessions offered (safeguarding children and/or adult focussed topics). This allows for an increased multi-agency audience at sessions.
- 3.51 The learning management system is also able to generate detailed reports on individual organisation attendance, non-attendance and cancellations. It also offers a comprehensive evaluation framework to monitor knowledge transfer and improved outcomes of the learning.



- 3.52 In early 2020, it was agreed to fully integrate the learning from local and national case reviews into the training offer, this would include quarterly face-to-face sessions as well as monthly briefings.
- 3.53 The majority of sessions offered were classroom-based training. During 2019/2020, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the delivery of the multi-agency learning and development offer in a number of ways:
- All classroom-based sessions were cancelled during the first UK lockdown which began in March 2020.
  - Members of the Strategic Partnerships Team who coordinate the partnership work were redeployed for a period of time to support the Council's Covid-19 response.
  - The full multi-agency learning and development programme was put on hold until September 2020.
  - The sensitive nature of some topics (such as FGM) means that some thought has had to be given to developing an appropriate virtual offer.
- 3.54 From September 2020, work resumed on a new virtual multi-agency schedule including planning for the programme to focus on learning from local reviews. A time limited working group was set up to look at the themes from the 10 local Rapid Reviews.
- 3.55 The learning from Rapid Reviews led to the re-development of the multi-agency virtual sessions specifically focussing on domestic abuse and additional training focussing on themed topics including:
- adolescent mental health
  - parental mental health
  - serious youth violence
- 3.56 Following the Transitional Safeguarding event which took place in November 2019, joint sessions were developed to raise awareness of this topic across the safeguarding workforce in Brent. These sessions have been developed in partnership with the Adults Safeguarding Board and were open to delegates working across safeguarding children and adult services.

#### Multi-agency learning and development programme summary

- 3.57 Staff and volunteers from education settings and Brent CYP continue to be the highest proportion of attendees, as well voluntary sector that includes faith settings and community organisations. There continues to be low attendance from Probation Services and the Metropolitan Police, although there has been a slight increase from the previous year.
- 3.58 Review of learning and development offer:
- Using the results of the Safeguarding Survey to inform the learning programme.

- The learning and development advisory group remains confident that the multi-agency training offered continues to be relevant and of good quality.
- Feedback from evaluation forms would suggest the session are successfully being valued by delegates and are helping to contribute towards positive outcomes for children and young people.

### Overview of multi-agency training offered

Course topic	Sessions	Total no. of fully attended delegates
Adolescent Mental Health	2	22
Advance Charity Domestic Abuse MARAC Training	1	18
Advance Charity Domestic Abuse Awareness	1	5
Advance Joint Domestic Abuse + MARAC Training	3	54
Domestic Abuse: A local focus on children and young people in Brent	3	62
FGM - Female Genital Mutilation	1	6
Neglect	1	16
Parental Mental Health	1	11
Prevent and Radicalisation	4	77
Safeguarding Young Carer Training	5	47
Serious Youth Violence- Gang affiliation, criminality, vulnerability and safeguarding	1	16
Transitional Safeguarding Webinar	3	55
Working with families who are hard to engage	2	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>439</b>

3.59 The table below outlines the level of partner organisation attendance and demonstrates the majority of attendees were from Brent Council and Education followed by voluntary/community organisations sector.

### Overview of delegates by agency

Organisation/Sector	Delegates
Adults Services - Day/Support Centre	3

Adults Services - Residential/Home Care/Supported Living	10
Brent CCG	5
Brent Council	107
Central London Community Health Care Trust	48
Central North West London Health Care Trust	14
Children's Centres/Family Wellbeing Centres	18
Children's Home	9
Education: All through schools	12
Education: Further Education/College	14
Education: Nursery (including Private/Independent/Voluntary	24
Education: Primary school	43
Education: Secondary school	9
Education: Special school	1
Faith Setting	4
Housing Provider (Registered)	2
London Ambulance Service	12
London North West Healthcare NHS Trust	13
NHS England	11
Other Health Provider	7
Other not listed	7
Probation Services	24
Voluntary/Community Organisation/Charity	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>439</b>

3.60 Safeguarding partner agencies regularly provide updates on the impact of learning and development activities at Brent Safeguarding Children Forum.

3.61 NWL Brent CCG presented an update regarding the learning and discussions from child deaths and Rapid Reviews in Brent and how they were linked back in to primary care.

3.62 When there are any immediate lessons from a Rapid Review these are shared across Primary Care GP practices. Briefings may then be extended to smaller groups of professionals, for example all of the GPs or nurses in a practice and

this offer has been extended to include reception staff, an integral part of the General Practice team.

3.63 Feedback on Rapid Reviews is also offered at CCG governing body meetings and quality assurance meetings. For example, in January 2021 child death cases had been presented to the Integrated Governance Forum, and from that a learning summary had been agreed and circulated to the Primary Care Network and clinical leads attending that meeting.

3.64 Considering the impact of fewer face to face consultations during the pandemic period, an example of specific learning from a Rapid Review case related to mother and baby checks. Learning recommendations from the GP practice involved in the case were implemented by the practice and those lessons were then widened to the primary care network for future training. GPs then shared those lessons at a CCG safeguarding event.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 Brent Council has been contributing to the resourcing of the Brent Safeguarding Children Board since its inception in 2006. The three safeguarding partners continue to make the same annual contributions to the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements:

- Brent Council – staffing equivalent to the value of £127k approximately
- North West London Collaboration of CCGs - £45,900
- North West Basic Command Unit - £5,000

4.2 Other partner organisations who sit on the Safeguarding Children Forum also continue their contributions to the new arrangements through the commitment of staffing time and other agency resources.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The Council is exercising its functions within the legislative framework of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 sections (16) -(23), that repeals the statutory requirement contained in the Children Act 2004 for the establishment of an LSCB in each local authority area. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018 sets out the criteria the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel must take into account when determining whether serious child safeguarding cases raise issues that are complex or of national importance, along with arrangements for national reviewers and reports. Section 16 sets out the duties on local authorities to notify the Panel of events that meet the reporting threshold and the legislative requirements of the safeguarding partners in meeting their obligations.

5.2 Consideration for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 are taken into account within the statutory guidance for Information Sharing (July 2018). The legislative frameworks have been reflected within the Multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements in Brent document agreed by Brent Safeguarding partners.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, s149 Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2 The s149, Public Sector Equality Duty (outlined above) cover the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.3 The multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements in Brent have been jointly developed by Brent Council, Brent NHS CCG and the North West Basic Command Unit. 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. The safeguarding partners will also ensure that services are culturally aware and skilled in identifying, assessing and meeting the individual needs of Brent children and their families.

### **Related documents:**

[Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Report: Multi-Agency Arrangements for Safeguarding Children in Brent, November 2019](#)

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

**Gail Tolley**

Statutory Director Children and Young People