

Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report

1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Local organisations and agencies have a duty¹ to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions.
- 1.2. In addition, there is also a shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
- 1.3. The responsibility for the strategic oversight of this join-up of this locally rests with the three safeguarding partners, who have a shared and equal duty² to arrange to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

The three safeguarding partners in relation to a local area in England are defined as:

1. **The local authority**
2. **A clinical commissioning group (now known as Integrated Care Board)**
3. **The police**

1.4. The three safeguarding partners must:

- agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services
- act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others
- implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents

The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to **work together in a system** where:

- **Children are safeguarded** and their welfare promoted;
- **Partner organisations and agencies collaborate**, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- **Organisations and agencies challenge** appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- **There is early identification and analysis** of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- **Learning is promoted and embedded** in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- **Information is shared effectively** to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

1.5. To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners have set out jointly how they work together and with other relevant agencies in the Brent multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements.

¹ Under section 11 of the Children Act 2004

² Under the Children and Social Work Act in 2017 and statutory guidance Working Together 2018

2. Brent multi-agency safeguarding children partnership arrangements

- 2.1. Brent's statutory multi-agency safeguarding children partnership arrangements were published on the [Brent Safeguarding Partnerships website](#) in June 2019 and implemented on 30 September 2019.
- 2.2. The published arrangements were reviewed and updated by the Partnership in November 2021.

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

- **Tier 1 The Executive Group** - provides high-level strategic leadership
- **Tier 2 Brent Safeguarding Children Forum** - diverse and wider-ranging partnership group
- **Tier 3 Delivery focussed sub-groups** - responsible for carrying out specific statutory duties of the partnership, these include:
 - Case Review Group
 - Learning and Development Advisory Group
 - Multi-agency Audit Group

Brent Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group

- 2.3. The Executive Group 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
- making provision for independent scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements

- 2.4. The Executive Group membership includes:

Brent Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief Executive• Corporate Director of Children and Young People• The Leader of Brent Council• Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools ³
North West London Integrated Care Board (ICB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director of Quality, Nursing and Safeguarding
Metropolitan Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Superintendent (Public Protection-Safeguarding Lead), North West BCU
Independent Scrutineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent Convener for Brent Safeguarding Children Forum

³ The Leader of Brent Council and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools 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 members of the Executive Group.

Brent Safeguarding Children Forum

2.5. 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 and is led by an Independent Convenor.

2.6. 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, local 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 consideration of a S.11 type audit as used under the previous LSCB arrangements) and challenge at Forum meetings
- ensuring that safeguarding partners and relevant agencies follow the London Child Protection Procedures
- develop and maintain a Brent Thresholds document giving guidance on children getting the right help at the right time
- developing, implementing, and monitoring the impact of an interagency safeguarding children learning and development programme, 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 (e.g., refining rapid reviews to include agencies who can properly represent the voice of the child/ren, such as schools)
- considering multi-agency management information (e.g., scrutinising annual reports presented to the Forum) 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
- scrutinising the learning, good practice, and implementation of recommendations from rapid reviews
- responding effectively to emerging safeguarding issues

2.7. The membership of the Forum includes representation from the following partners, relevant agencies, organisations, and lay members;

SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

North West London ICB	Designated Safeguarding Children Professionals for Brent Named GP for Safeguarding, Brent
Brent Council	Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services (Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care) Children and Young People Housing Needs Safeguarding Adults Public Health Community Safety
Metropolitan Police	North West Borough Command Unit (BCU) Public Protection

AGENCY/ORGANISATION

Education establishments	College of North West London / United Colleges Group Newman Catholic College Lyon Park Primary School The Village and Woodfield Special Schools Kingsbury High School Preston Manor School
Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH)	
Central North West London Mental Health Foundation NHS Trust (CNWL)	
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)	
London Ambulance Service (LAS)	
London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWUHT)	
Probation Service	

OTHER

Lay members

- 2.8. The Brent Safeguarding Partners selected the agencies and organisations as members of the Forum. These agencies and organisations have been chosen as they provide key strategic and operational insight for the safeguarding of children and young people in Brent.
- 2.9. The selected relevant agencies form the core membership of the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum. 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
- 2.10. The Safeguarding Partners recognise the importance of involving the local community and therefore the Forum has two lay members.
- 2.11. The lay members 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
- 2.12. The Forum continues to develop and strengthen the existing engagement from early years, schools and the Further Education College in the borough and has a significant membership from this sector.
- 2.13. Attendance at all Safeguarding Forum meetings is monitored and where any concerns arise regarding attendance and engagement of relevant agencies, the Independent Convener raise these with both the agency concerned and the Executive Group.

Case Review Group

2.14. The Case Review Group is critical to the work of the Safeguarding Partners in Brent. It is the key mechanism for carrying out reviews of serious safeguarding cases that meet the criteria set out in Working Together 2018.

2.15. The Case Review Group meeting is chaired by the Independent Convenor and is 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
- 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

2.16. The Case Review Group has a fixed core membership drawn from the statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. It has the flexibility to invite other relevant professionals to discuss certain cases as and when appropriate (including rapid reviews).

2.17. The core membership of the Case Review Group includes representation from the following partners, relevant agencies, and organisations;

SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS	
North West London ICB	Designated Professionals for safeguarding children, Brent Named GP for Safeguarding, Brent
Brent Council	Children and Young People Community Safety Legal Services
Metropolitan Police	North West Borough Command Unit (BCU) Public Protection
AGENCY/ORGANISATION	
Central London Community Healthcare Trust (CLCH)	
Central North West London Mental Health Foundation Trust (CNWL)	
London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWUH)	

2.18. In recognition of the sensitive and confidential nature of business, all agency representatives/members must sign a confidentiality agreement, which includes the requirement to appropriately share and securely store information.

2.19. The Case Review Group also ensures that where possible and appropriate to do so, children, young people and families are involved in Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR).

2.20. The Case Review Group maintains links with the North West London Child Death Review process and ongoing considerations take place about linking review processes locally where child deaths are considered as part of both processes.

Multi-agency Learning and Development Group

- 2.21. The Safeguarding Partners agreed that a multi-agency safeguarding children learning and development programme would be offered as part of the partnership arrangements from September 2019.
- 2.22. The safeguarding children partners tasked a Learning and Development Advisory Group to oversee the development and delivery of the multi-agency learning and development programme. This group was supported by the Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Coordinator.
- 2.23. As the Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Officer post was vacant from October 2021 to July 2022, this group was unable to meet or progress any development activity.
- 2.24. In August 2022, following a review of the function of the existing group, a proposal was developed to create a new joint Learning and Development sub-group for both the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 2.25. The proposal identified the need for the joint group to have a reinvigorated focus on:
- Delivering a joint multiagency safeguarding learning and development programme that is effective at responding to identified local and national safeguarding issues and priority areas of focus
 - Redesign the current programme to increase the impact on multi-agency practice, processes, and systems in Brent.
 - Maximising and raising the profile, and uptake, of the programme through the development of a communications plan
 - Reviewing the evaluation process and defining impact
- 2.26. In September 2022, the proposal for the joint group was agreed by both the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum and the Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 2.27. The Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Officer will support the progress of this group and will lead on identifying the multi-agency membership and development of the work plan.

Multi-agency Audit Group

2.28. Multi-agency audit activity evaluates the effectiveness of agencies, individually and together, to improve the wellbeing of children, including ensuring that children and young people get the right help and protection at the right time.

2.29. The Safeguarding Children Partnership is committed to strengthening the multi-agency case auditing activity and in February 2022 it was agreed that the partnership would set up a multi-agency audit group.

2.30. The Multi-agency Audit Group meeting is chaired by Brent Council Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance and is responsible for:

- Developing a good oversight of multi-agency practice through audit activity.
- reviewing how agencies work together to create the right conditions for effective practice
- evaluating how and where improvements are needed
- developing and implementing a programme of multi-agency audits to establish that appropriate safeguarding activities are being undertaken and that effective procedures and practices are in place
- conducting multi-agency audits, making multi-agency practice recommendations, and disseminating learning
- monitoring implementation of multi-agency recommendations and actions arising from audits and consider what difference these have made
- testing and monitoring multi-agency compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requirements

2.31. The Multi-agency Audit Group has a fixed core membership drawn from the statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. It has the flexibility to invite other relevant professionals to participate in certain audits as and when appropriate.

2.32. The core membership of the Multi-agency Audit Group includes representation from the following partners, relevant agencies, and organisations;

SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

North West London ICB	Designated Professionals for safeguarding children, Brent Named GP for Safeguarding, Brent
Brent Council	Children and Young People
Metropolitan Police	North West Borough Command Unit (BCU) Public Protection

AGENCY/ORGANISATION

Central London Community Healthcare Trust (CLCH)
Central North West London Mental Health Foundation Trust (CNWL)
London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWUH)
Education representatives (Designated Safeguarding Lead – Preston Manor School)

Independent Scrutiny

- 2.33. The Safeguarding Partners agreed that the Safeguarding Forum is led by an Independent Convenor, who also undertakes the role of the Independent Scrutineer.
- 2.34. The current Independent Convener's contract was extended for a further 12 months until June 2023.
- 2.35. The Independent Convenor's role includes:

- 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
- overseeing the progression case reviews to ensure they meet required timescales
- ensuring that key local issues and national developments are considered by the Safeguarding Forum
- challenging and monitoring the performance and participation of partners in the work of the Safeguarding Forum
- chair and agree the record of rapid reviews and oversee the implementation of recommendations and learning

Officer support arrangements

- 2.36. Support staffing arrangements for the Brent safeguarding children partnership arrangements are funded and resourced by Brent Council.
- 2.37. The Strategic Partnerships Team is responsible for leading the coordination of the arrangements and is managed by the Strategic Partnerships Manager. The team is based in the Communities and Regeneration Department of the council.
- 2.38. Alongside the safeguarding children partnership arrangements, the Strategic Partnerships Team also coordinates activities for other strategic partnerships in Brent including; Brent Safeguarding Adults Board, Brent Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Partnership and Brent Children's Trust
- 2.39. This staffing structure enables stronger strategic coordination between the strategic partnerships in Brent to both avoid duplication and develop joint initiatives. It also successfully facilitates a level of independence from the operational safeguarding activity of the council.
- 2.40. The following staffing provision within the Strategic Partnerships Team that coordinate the safeguarding children arrangements include:

A full time Strategic Partnerships Lead

(This post also manages and coordinates the Brent Children's Trust)

A full time Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Officer

(This post also jointly manages the Safeguarding Adults Board learning and development)

- 2.41. The Brent Council Governance Team provide some administration support for both the Executive Group and Safeguarding Forum meetings (approximately 1 day a month).
- 2.42. During the period, the Learning and development Officer post was vacant between October 2021 and July 2022. This restricted the development of the joint multi-agency safeguarding children and adults learning and development programme

Financial arrangements

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

Safeguarding Partnership Contributions

2.44. Whilst Working Together 2018 states the funding from each partner 'should be equitable and proportionate' this is not the case in Brent:

Brent Council

- As Brent Council's contribution consists of the officer support staffing/resource arrangements for the partnership, no additional financial contribution is made to the partnership financial arrangements. *The staffing/resource arrangements are equivalent to approximately £127,000*

Metropolitan Police

- Despite numerous repeated challenges made at all levels across London, all London boroughs, regardless of size, continue to receive the same level of financial contribution from the Metropolitan Police, agreed centrally by the Mayor and set at **£5,000**.

North West London ICB

- NWL ICB financially contribute towards the partnership financial arrangements, this is a continuation of the contribution previously made by Brent ICB and is set at **£45,900**.

Relevant Agency Contributions

2.45. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership also received financial contributions from the following relevant agencies:

- National Probation Service **£1,600**
- London North West University Healthcare Trust **£11,000**

Partnership Financial Budget

2.46. The total annual financial contributions to the safeguarding partnership arrangements for 2021/2022 is therefore **£63,500**.

Financial Contribution	Amount (£)
Metropolitan Police	5,000
NWL ICB	45,900
Probation Service	1,600
London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust	11,000
Total	63,500

2.47. The income and expenditure are managed and monitored by the Strategic Partnerships Team on behalf of the partnership.

Partnership Financial Expenditure

2.48. The table below outlines the expenditure of the safeguarding arrangements during the 2021-2022 financial year (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022):

Expense	Amount (£)
Independent Convener	31,750
Online multi-agency learning and development management system (50%)	1,250
ICT equipment Independent Convener	981
External facilitators costs for delivery of multiagency L&D programme	16,078
Total expenditure	50,059

2.49. The total underspend of £13,441 was moved to the partnership's financial reserves.

3. Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Activity

Timeline of activity: October 2021 – September 2022

	Meeting	Key areas of focus
NOV 2021	Executive Group meeting 11 Nov 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Executive Group discussed the partnership response to missing children. The group sought reassurance regarding the increase in safeguarding concerns for vulnerable children presenting at Northwick Park Hospital with mental health issues. The CQC inspection of London North West University Healthcare (LNWUH) NHS Trust maternity services (rated inadequate) was discussed by the Executive Group. It received reassurance from the ICB that resolving these areas of concern were a matter of priority.
DEC 2021	Safeguarding Forum meeting 2 Dec 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Brent Safeguarding Partnership response to Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (Everyone's Invited) was discussed. The possible safeguarding concerns for Afghan refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers in Brent were explored. The Forum received an annual update on the Children and Young People's department work with schools and alternative provision on exclusions.
	Executive Group meeting 16 Dec 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The multi-agency budget contributions to the partnership arrangements was discussed. The Executive Group heard that the increase in referrals to Brent CYP are also being experienced across the country The Executive Group agreed for an extra-ordinary meeting of the Safeguarding Children Forum to be arranged to seek assurance from the wider partnership in Brent in response to the implications from the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson.
FEB 2022	Executive Group meeting 02 Feb 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The safeguarding partners signed off the refreshed Brent thresholds guide. The proposed safeguarding partnership budget for 2022/2023 was agreed: An update on the NWLUHT Maternity Services Improvement Plan was provided to the safeguarding partners.
	Extraordinary Safeguarding Forum meeting – Local response to child neglect murders 8 Feb 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education colleagues highlighted the importance of staff training, behaviour observations of students and advice through Designated Safeguarding Leads as vital in ensuring the early detection and action regarding neglect. Brent health service providers receive appropriate safeguarding training, and supervision of practice. It is recognised that one of the biggest issues for health service providers was when a child had not attended an appointment. In these instances, there are policies in place to ensure follow up and liaison with the GP. All volunteers in foodbanks have safeguarding training and partnered with Brent hubs who are safeguarding trained and are able to share information. Within the Brent Family Front Door (BFFD) staff are aware of the complexity of abuse and neglect and recognise the value of referrals from partners. Multi-agency BFFD audits provide reassurance and partners are invited to take part in those audits. From a community perspective (through Lay Member input), members of the community are concerned about how stretched agencies are, with an extensive workload and high turnover of staff. The updated Brent Thresholds Guide was shared with the wider partnership, the new guide incorporated some of the guidance from local and national reviews. The guide includes information about the BFFD consultation line for professionals, where staff can talk through a concern with an expert to help them decide whether or not to make a referral.
	Case Review Group meeting 24 Feb 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group continued to monitor the progress on the outstanding learning from all Brent partnership case reviews with a focus on what impact the learning has had on multiagency practice. The group discussed the findings and recommendations of the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection carried out in Solihull and sought assurance from partners on Brent's position. Brent's involvement in two other local borough practice reviews that involve learning for Brent services was discussed.

Meeting	Key areas of focus
MAR 2022 Multi-agency Audit Group 3 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The audit group met for the first time to draw up Terms of Reference. The group agreed the methodology of the multi-agency audit process and the initiation of a pilot multi-agency audit to test out the process.
APRIL 2022 Safeguarding Forum meeting 21 April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update on Operation Encompass was discussed and education colleagues fed back that as soon as they received Operation Encompass information, support would be put in place immediately with the relevant child or children. The notifications received through Operation Encompass were critical for school staff to support the child both academically and emotionally in the immediate aftermath. The Forum considered the recommendations from the recently published Hackney Child Q Local Safeguarding Children Practice Review and discussed the possible impact in Brent. Locally, police had reinforced to uniformed officers the guidance for conducting intimate searches and reinforced the necessity of having an appropriate adult present. Education colleagues advised that the Safer School Programme in Brent had been running for a long time so officers had been able to forge positive relationships with parents. Parents are confident about the way Safer Schools Officers interact with their children.
MAY 2022 Executive Group meeting 23 May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Safeguarding Partners discussed the multi-agency preparation for a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). The Group received the 2020-2021 Brent Family Front Door (BFFD) Annual Report, which covered data to March 2021. The Safeguarding Partners considered the local response to the Hackney Child Q Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review,
JUNE 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group continued to monitor the progress on the outstanding learning from all Brent partnership case reviews and discussed how partners are embedding the learning from local reviews. The group discussed updates on Brent's involvement in two other local borough practice reviews that involve learning for Brent services The group reflected on the themes, findings and recommendations of the recent national review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson - Child Protection in England.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forum received an update on the progression of Operation Encompass. The Forum dedicated a large portion of the meeting reflecting on the themes, findings and recommendations of the Child Protection in England review and considered the local multi-agency safeguarding response to the key messages for all Safeguarding Partners. The review had made reference to education being the missing fourth partner, and it was highlighted as a positive that there was good representation from schools on the Forum membership.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The audit group discussed the findings and agreed the recommendations of the completed pilot multi-agency case audit. The group agreed the multi-agency case audit programme and meeting schedule for September 2022 – July 2023 The group agreed the next audit would be begin in September 2022.
AUG 2022 Executive Group meeting 4 Aug 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Executive Group acknowledged and approved the annual report for year ending 30 September 2021. The Brent Family Front Door (BFFD) Annual Report for 2021/2022 was discussed by the Executive Group. The Executive Group considered the implications for Safeguarding Partners from national reports including Child Protection in England and the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.
SEPT 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forum discussed the Brent Family Front Door (BFFD) Annual Report for 2021/2022 which detailed the achievements of the BFFD service and highlighted the services success in providing continued effective responses. The Forum discussed the update report on the activity of the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer (LADO). The Forum also discussed update report on the activity of the Private Fostering Service in 2021-2022.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group discussed updates on the continuing operational activity of cases that have previously been subject to rapid reviews in Brent. The group continued to monitor the progress on the outstanding learning from all Brent partnership case reviews and discussed how partners are embedding the learning from local reviews. The group discussed updates on Brent's involvement in two other local borough practice reviews that involve learning for Brent services.

Multi-agency learning and development

- 3.1. The Safeguarding Children Partnership, jointly with the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board, continue to offer a virtual multi-agency safeguarding learning and development programme.
- 3.2. This multi-agency programme is accessible to all people who work, support or volunteer with children, families and adults at risk in Brent.
- 3.3. The strategic partnerships' multi-agency programme is not intended to provide basic safeguarding training for practitioners as it is the responsibility of each agency to provide safeguarding awareness to their workforce.
- 3.4. The programme is updated annually and includes both safeguarding children and safeguarding adults at risk learning opportunities.
- 3.5. The learning topics offered are chosen in response to learning from Safeguarding Reviews, development needs identified by practitioners and managers, and feedback from evaluations.
- 3.6. The programme is coordinated by the Strategic Partnerships Learning and Development Officer with support from both the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board through the newly redesigned joint multi-agency Learning and Development Group.
- 3.7. The Safeguarding Children Forum is kept regularly updated of the multi-agency safeguarding children learning programme through a standing item at each meeting.
- 3.8. The programme aims to comprise of a range of different learning opportunities such as themed briefings, themed awareness raising events and joint learning events/sessions with other strategic partnerships including Brent Safeguarding Adults Board.

Multi-agency learning and development programme summary October 2021 – September 2022

- 3.9. A virtual multi-agency schedule of events was put in place for the 2021/2022 annual programme in September 2021.
- 3.10. The topics included within this period's annual programme were agreed to be focussed on themes identified from learning from local partnership reviews and areas of focus which include:

- **The impact of domestic abuse on children in Brent** – this session includes exploration of an anonymised case study exploring the identified practice learning from local partnership reviews that have featured domestic abuse.
- **Exploring adolescent mental health** - this session includes exploration an anonymised case study exploring the identified practice learning from local partnership reviews that have featured concerns including adolescent mental health concerns, suicide and self-harm.
- **Serious youth violence** – this session includes exploration of the practice learning from the published Brent Child K Serious Case Review.
- **Responding to child neglect** – this session includes exploration of an anonymised case study exploring the identified practice learning from local partnership reviews that have featured child neglect.

3.11. The table below details the multi-agency sessions focussed on safeguarding children as part of the strategic partnership learning and development programme that were delivered during this period:

Course Topic	No of sessions	No. of fully attended delegates
Adolescent Mental Health	4	29
Domestic Abuse + MARAC Training (delivered by Advance)	1	19
Domestic Abuse: A local focus on children and young people in Brent	3	43
Early Help Assessment	2	12
FGM - Female Genital Mutilation	4	25
Parental Mental Health	4	49
Prevent and Radicalisation	3	26
Responding to Child Neglect	4	46
Safeguarding Young Carer Training	3	13
Serious Youth Violence - Gang affiliation, criminality, vulnerability and safeguarding	4	48
Working with families who are hard to engage	4	62
Total	36	372

3.12. The programme comprised of 36 learning sessions which was delivered to a total of 372 multi-agency professionals and volunteers in Brent.

3.13. In previous years, staff and volunteers from education settings and Brent Council were the highest proportion of attendees. During this annual period, the highest proportion of attendees were from Brent Council and health service providers. Attendance from the voluntary and community organisations also remains high.

3.14. The table below outlines the level of partner organisation attendance:

Organisation/Sector	Delegates
Adults Services	6
Brent ICB	16
Brent GP	1
Health Services	18
Central London Community Health Care Trust	46
Central North West London Health Care Trust	5
London Ambulance Service	9
London North West Healthcare NHS Trust	8
Education	7
All through schools	11
Further Education/College	22
Nursery (including Private/Independent/Voluntary)	6
Primary school	4
Secondary school	1
Special school	112
Pupil Referral Unit)	5
Brent Council	6
CAFCASS	3
Family Wellbeing Centres	1
Children's Home	15
Faith Setting	70
Probation Services	
Voluntary/Community Organisation/Charity	
Total	372

- 3.15. It remains a priority for the partnership to increase attendance at the multi-agency training. It is recognised that the current staffing and capacity issues make it difficult for partner agencies to release staff to attend the partnership training as well as mandatory internal safeguarding training.
- 3.16. During the period, the Strategic Partnerships Team enabled the delivery of the scheduled programme in the absence of a Partnership Learning and Development Officer (due to the post being vacant between October 2021 and July 2022).
- 3.17. In September 2022, it was agreed that, with a new Learning and Development Officer in post, the strategic partnerships learning and development programme for October 2022 – July 2023 would be further expanded to include additional learning identified through the introduction of the partnership multi-agency audit programme.
- 3.18. Other practical areas of focus to improve the multi-agency learning and development programme for the next annual period include:
- Management of non-attendance – this has historically been too high, resulting in reduced cost effectiveness.
 - The development of the joint Multi-agency Learning and Development Group to support the identification of training and delivery of learning opportunities.
 - Encouraging attendance from the wider partnership practitioners - including Metropolitan Police
 - Heightened promotion of the strategic partnerships learning and development programme – this includes the re-introduction of an expanded monthly newsletter.

Serious child safeguarding incidents

- 3.19. 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.
- 3.20. 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 developed a process to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases, which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area.
- 3.21. 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
- 3.22. 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

- 3.23. At all Brent rapid reviews, the circumstances leading to each incident as well as the agencies' individual and collective interventions are discussed, analysed and considered by all present.
- 3.24. 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.
- 3.25. The Case Review Group has been the driving force in the development of rapid review processes and the subsequent action on learning points in Brent. There continues to be positive engagement of partners in each review undertaken in Brent, leading to cross-partnership learning and practice improvement.
- 3.26. The Executive Group have discharged their responsibility for the review process by ensuring that:
- Providing constructive challenge to the findings and recommendations
 - Giving support to the Convener and Strategic Partnerships Lead in terms of the appreciation for the thoroughness of each review.
 - Taking ownership for this process and each partner reviews and signs off the final report before submission to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- 3.27. During the annual period, the Brent safeguarding partnership:

- **Considered 5 serious incidents involving children to determine if they meet the criteria of a serious child safeguarding case.**
- **Re-considered the learning that was identified from one rapid review (carried out in 2019) following the conclusion of the court trial in relation to the death of the child.**
- **Carried out 3 rapid reviews – all three of which were conducted with appropriate rigour and diligence meaning that a Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review was unnecessary.**
- **Contributed to two Local Safeguarding Child Practice Reviews carried out by other local authority area partnerships (both of which are in London).**

- 3.28. The Brent Safeguarding Strategic Partners are encouraged all rapid reviews carried out to date have been well attended, with appropriate levels of representation from all the agencies involved in each case.

4. Achievements

Brent Thresholds Guide 2022

- 4.1. All practitioners working with families need to know how to identify children who have additional needs and know how to make a referral for help.
- 4.2. The Brent Thresholds Guidance is a guide for those working with children and families in Brent on making referrals to access the right level of support at the right time.
- 4.3. Working Together 2018 lays out the requirement for safeguarding partners to publish a threshold guidance document. It states that the threshold guidance document should set out the local criteria for action in a way that is transparent, accessible and easily understood.
- 4.4. The threshold document should include:
 - the process for the early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided
 - the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services
 - clear procedures and processes for cases relating to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children
- 4.5. On 4 February 2021 the Safeguarding Children Forum agreed the scope of the Brent Safeguarding Partnership Thresholds Guidance revision.
- 4.6. Between February 2021 and January 2022, the following multi-agency partnership groups, teams and individuals were consulted with and provided valuable input into the 2022 refreshed guide:
 - Brent Safeguarding Forum (including education providers-schools and colleges)
 - The Brent Safeguarding Partnership Case Review Group
 - Brent Family Front Door/MASH Stakeholders Group
 - Prevent Strategy Manager
 - Early Help Team Managers Group
 - Metropolitan Police (Public Protection Desk Brent MASH Supervisor)
 - Brent CYP Operational Director Integration and Improved Outcomes
 - Brent CYP Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team
 - Brent CCG Safeguarding Designated Professionals (including Lead GP)
- 4.7. Following feedback from the colleagues listed above, a number of updates were made, including:
 - adding the important message 'if a child is in immediate danger, you should call 999' in the header of each page
 - adding the links to the London Procedures, Practice Guidance and London Threshold Continuum in the footer of every page
 - developing clear and simple graphics
 - updating to use of BRAG (Blue, Green, Amber and Red) rating graphics in line with use by Police and other organisations
 - using the spectrum colour scale to visually demonstrate the 'continuum of need'
 - highlighting important key words and phrases
 - signposting to the Brent Family Front Door consultation line
 - advice on seeking consent, highlighting the exceptions for not needing to seek consent when safeguarding children

- 4.8. The updated guidance included learning points from both Brent rapid reviews and national reviews. These include:
- highlighting the need for professionals to communicate, exercise professional curiosity and make informed judgements
 - highlighting the need to consider learning from local and national reviews when identifying and assessing risk
 - highlighting the importance of face-to-face contact and that professionals should spend time with the child/ren in their home and/or education environment
 - the importance of information sharing
 - best practice guidance for recording information
- 4.9. This guidance was developed with the intention to be used as a digital guide; therefore, the document contains a number of live links to external websites and also to specific sections within the Appendix B. This development aims to promote easy access to specific sections.
- 4.10. To gain reassurance that the thresholds guidance is effective, it was agreed that an evaluation process would be undertaken about the use of the guide by practitioners.
- 4.11. The updated Brent Thresholds Guide is published and can be accessed on the dedicated page on the [Brent safeguarding partnerships independent website](#).

Priority area of focus - Identifying and responding to emerging safeguarding issues

- 4.12. The Safeguarding Partnership has been proactive in working together to identify and respond to emerging risks for Brent children and young people:
- There has been a significant rise in demand to support 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.
 - The impact of domestic abuse on children has been consistent issue and is seen as a factor in the majority of referrals received through Brent Family Front Door. The Safeguarding Children Partnership has strengthened links with Brent Community Safety and the Community Safety Partnership Board to progress joint working and highlight the need for services to focus on the impact of domestic abuse on children.
 - The impact of the cost-of-living crisis had been raised as a real issue for families following the pandemic and this could contribute to increased concerns for safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Partners also recognise that this is an issue that impacts professionals working to safeguard children in the borough.
 - The demand for mental health support in Brent has grown hugely during the period of the pandemic. As a result, the Integrated Care System Board are 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. This is also a priority area of focus of the Brent Children's Trust.
 - Brent 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 to explore what is working well currently, and whether there are any gaps in national guidance about sexual harassment between children.

4.13. The Safeguarding Partnership inform and develop partnership action to improve safeguarding. Most recent Safeguarding Partnership led actions include the following examples:

- Following the CQC inspection of London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust maternity services in April 2021, NWL ICB Safeguarding Partner representatives provided assurance to the Executive Group on work underway with related services to ensure the safeguarding of children and mothers was ensured.
- Brent Children's Trust, chaired by the Corporate Director, Brent Children and Young People provides strategic leadership of collaborative work and joint commissioning of services with North West London ICB. The attendance of the Safeguarding Forum Independent Convener has increased the level of safeguarding scrutiny in joint planning arrangements and 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 Health and Wellbeing Strategy of the Brent Health and Wellbeing Board.

4.14. The Brent Safeguarding Children Forum implements the work of the Executive Group to maintain oversight of strong operational partnership work. The Independent Convenor, with the support of the Local Authority, secured increased membership representation of the Forum from Brent primary and secondary schools. This expanded representation has positively enhanced the work of the Forum, specifically with the consideration of Brent's safeguarding partnership response to the Ofsted review of sexual harm and abuse in schools and colleges.

Learning from local multi-agency case reviews and audits

4.15. The learning from local multi-agency case reviews and audits is the main priority area of focus for Brent Safeguarding Partners.

Identifying multi-agency good practice

4.16. The partnership is focussed on recognising good practice and the following good practice examples have been identified as part of the multi-agency review process:

Rapid review 1

Educational settings/schools

- There was clear evidence all education settings acted proactively in addressing attendance and safeguarding concerns

Health

- There was good evidence of communications between all health sector agencies including strong
- There is good evidence that the child's views were documented, heard and responded to within interventions
- Good evidence that medical professionals worked with the schools to understand the child's medical conditions and what support was needed within the school setting.

Brent CYP

- There is evidence that Brent CYP carried out an internal case practice audit on the case. The internal audit evaluated the practice as 'Good'.
- The child's views were evident within the intervention with views and wishes recorded.
- There was proactive engagement of father, including understanding the relationship and contact between the child and father.

Multi-agency

- There was good identification of risk with clear plans put in place to work with mother in addressing concerns.
- There is evidence of strong multi-agency engagement in the Child in Need and Child Protection processes.
- The rapid review found that this case demonstrated Brent has the structures in place through multi-agency intervention and Child Protection processes to respond and effectively promote the welfare of the child.

Rapid review 2

Metropolitan Police

- There was excellent and prompt response from uniformed officers who were present for an unrelated matter was immediate and reactive.
- Child Abuse Investigation Team officers were responsible for the initial investigation, however, another police team responsible for the case (due to the circumstances) were linked into the investigation at an earlier stage than normal.

Health

- There appears to have been appropriate collaboration and sharing of information between the health and the Police,
- A baby new birth visit and subsequent follow ups were comprehensive and complete.
- The depth and quality of the Health Visitor's documentation was commended by the rapid review.
- Comprehensive assessment was carried out by the GP during mother and baby check.
- There was clear coding and documentation of maternity discharge and record keeping by the GP.

Multi-agency

- There is good practice in ensuring staff are supported with trauma management.

Rapid review 3

Health

- Staff demonstrated professional curiosity and spoke to the child alone, they also followed national clinical guidelines to aid their decision making.
- Hospital staff kept the Brent Family Front Door updated and an attempt was made to challenge the decision to close the case.
- Hospital staff made numerous attempts to share information with the school Designated Safeguarding Lead
- There was good communication between Brent CYP Early Help keyworker, hospital staff and the school to share information and arrange support for the family.
- The multiagency response following the police Child Abuse Investigation Team referral was described by police colleagues as very good partnership working.

Multi-agency audit 1

Multi-agency

- The group identified good practice in relation to professionals listening to the child, this is demonstrated by the GP during one consultation where father was asked to leave the room so the GP could speak to the child alone about health concerns.

Identifying multi-agency areas for improvement

4.17. The partnership identified a number of areas for improvement in locally in conducting partnership case reviews and multi-agency case audits:

Rapid review 1

Health

- Raise awareness with staff about the need to complete the correct forms when notifying partners of child deaths.
- For CAMHS to attend a future schools Designated Safeguarding Leads network to hold a 'myth busting' session on mental health service provision for children and young people.

Brent CYP

- To develop learning briefings and workshops that include the topics focussing on the long-term impact of neglect/adolescent neglect alongside hoarding, self-harm and self-neglect both in children and adults.
- To deliver training to Brent Family Front Door practitioners to raise awareness of Elective Home Education and Education Welfare Service.
- To provide training for Education Welfare Officers on neglect that includes recognising patterns of neglect over time.
- To include practice learning from this case in assessment training with a focus on:
 - Understanding parental functioning and mental health in the context of neglect
 - Adult siblings and their experience of being parented and their role in family life

Rapid review 2

Health

- Hospital staff should be reminded that all documentation in records and external communication clearly addresses all areas of concerns, treatments undertaken and any plans made.
- Continued education and awareness to staff should be undertaken of the 'think child' 'think family' 'think father' approach with contacts with patients.
- All health visitors to be reminded to arrange the baby weight clinic appointment for new mothers.
- All staff to be reminded to escalate notifications of serious safeguarding incidents to senior managers as per policy.

Rapid review 3

Health

- Consideration is given to auditing the 'access policy' across primary, secondary and tertiary health services with a focus on the wider presentation issues identified including family composition and non-attendance of medical appointments.

Education

- Brent Schools to be encouraged to ensure that there is information on their out of office notifications on how to contact the DSL in an emergency out of open hours/school term time.

Multi-agency

- Consideration should be given to issuing guidance for front line practitioners to ensure they have a clear understanding of the purpose, appropriateness and expected response of police welfare check requests as well as reporting crimes to the police.
- Specific information about the remit and referral pathways of the police Child Abuse Investigation Team should be re-shared across the partnership.

Multi-agency audit 1

- Brent CCG Designated Professionals to attend Brent schools Designated Safeguarding Leads network and share best practice about working with Brent GPs.
- Develop a learning session for GPs focussing on awareness of CAMHS services and other local support services. Other appropriate health professionals e.g., school nurses will also be invited to the session.
- Brent CYP and Met Police to build on existing joint child protection investigation(s.47) awareness training for professionals in Brent CYP with specific focus on the factors that differentiate between single and joint child protection (s.47) investigations
- Brent CYP to share the learning from this case with the Schools DSL network.
- Strategic Partnerships Team to ensure the themes identified from this audit are included in the existing Safeguarding Partnerships multi-agency neglect training session (possibly through case study exercise).
- Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership to review, update (where necessary) and promote the current multi-agency safeguarding children 'challenge, escalation and dispute resolution' arrangements.
- Promote the 'Trauma Informed Practice' multi-agency training offered through the Safeguarding Partnerships learning portal and consider using this case as an anonymised case study within the training.

4.18. The Safeguarding Partners agree that the partnership review processes in place in Brent demonstrate the strengths of our partnership working, the willingness to learn and implement change thereby ensuring better outcomes for Brent's children.

4.19. The preparation for these reviews enables open and insightful exchange of views and agencies demonstrate how they already consider areas for improvement, both individually and collectively to lead to a programme of change.

4.20. Progress in implementing the all identified learning and their impact upon outcomes is monitored by the Case Review Group.

Closing Remarks

This report demonstrates the commitment, engagement and dedication of all the partners working in Brent to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Brent's children.

Sadly, children in Brent have died or been serious injured by the actions of others (in the majority of cases, a parent or carer). Whilst each of these cases is a tragedy, the rigour and thoroughness of the rapid review process highlights the continuing desire to improve policies and procedures to reduce the risk to other children facing similar circumstances.

Whilst we are not by any means complacent, the partnership response to local rapid reviews, national reviews into child neglect murders and sexual abuse in schools shows that Brent has an effective partnership response.

We would like to record our thanks to everybody who works tirelessly in the borough to make our children safe.