



Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee 11th January 2021

Title	Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership update
Report of	Chairman of the Committee - Cllr David Longstaff
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership annual report Appendix B – Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership independent scrutiny report
Officer Contact Details	Chris Munday, Executive Director, Children’s Services Chris.munday@barnet.gov.uk

Summary

In September 2019 the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) was established, replacing Barnet Safeguarding Children Board with new multi-agency safeguarding [arrangements](#) in line with government [guidance](#) Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership is a statutory partnership between the local authority, clinical commissioning group and police to safeguard children and young people in Barnet and to promote their welfare. The Partnership also works with health providers, education and the voluntary, community and faith sector to improve safeguarding practice, respond to emerging safeguarding challenges, and deliver better outcomes for children, young people and families.

Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership is required to publish an annual report about how the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements have been delivered. This report, which outlines the Partnership’s key achievements and priorities for the coming months, is attached as **Appendix A**.

The Partnership is also required to make arrangements for independent scrutiny and in November 2020 a team of scrutineers conducted a virtual visit. They confirmed the Partnership is meeting all of its statutory requirements and have made recommendations for improvement in the coming year. The independent scrutiny report is attached as **Appendix B**.

Officers Recommendations

That the Committee consider the reports and provide any comments on the annual report prior to final approval by Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 In line with government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, local Safeguarding Children Partnerships must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of their work to promote safeguarding and the welfare of children and young people.
- 1.2 Safeguarding Children Partnerships must also make arrangements for independent scrutiny. Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership chose to commission independent scrutiny from a multi-agency team of Red Quadrant consultants, which is an innovative approach. The review team visited Barnet in November to review multi-agency working and what the Partnership has achieved in the first year of the new arrangements.
- 1.3 The Committee is asked to consider the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) annual report and provide scrutiny and feedback prior to final approval by the Partnership. The independent scrutiny report is attached for information.

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

BSCP annual report

- 2.1 The annual report sets out what BSCP has achieved September 2019-September 2020 under the first year of the new arrangements and how the Partnership has worked to deliver its five strategic priorities:
 - Strengthening leadership and partnership
 - Tailoring our work to local themes
 - Driving continuous practice improvement
 - Responding to serious child safeguarding cases
 - Listening to the voice of the child.
- 2.2 It sets out the Partnership's successes and areas for development in the coming year, as well as updates on the safeguarding work of key partner agencies.

- 2.3 This year the Partnership's core areas of focus have been embedding the new arrangements and responding to the safeguarding concerns posed by Covid-19. Alongside this the Partnership has delivered varied multi-agency training sessions and events, a robust programme of multi-agency audit, and responded to serious safeguarding cases effectively.

Independent scrutiny visit

- 2.4 The scrutiny visit took place 18-19 November 2020 by a team of three consultants with backgrounds in children's services, police and health. They spoke to over 40 representatives from Barnet and partner agencies, from Chief Executive level to frontline practitioners, before presenting their findings.
- 2.5 The scrutineers concluded that *"we can confirm with confidence and assurance, that the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership are compliant with Working Together 2018. The arrangements ensure that children in Barnet are safeguarded and their welfare promoted."*
- 2.6 They praised the smooth transition to the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the way in which partners have embraced change and created genuinely new arrangements. They found that the new arrangements had improved effectiveness and were working well. The scrutineers found that the three statutory partners are committed to a shared vision and workplan and that the Partnership has a "clear and impressive ambition" for children and young people in Barnet.
- 2.7 The scrutineers made five recommendations for how Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership can continue to improve in the coming year:
- Leadership Forum to consider the arrangements for the leadership of the overall Partnership and review the arrangements for scrutiny/challenge and whether these are sufficient.
 - Make partner contribution equitable and proportionate specifically from the police, including consideration of in-kind contributions.
 - Clarify governance arrangements with other partnership groups and strengthen joint and cross-borough working on shared priorities.
 - Review and improve mechanisms for measuring the impact on frontline practice and outcomes for children and young people from learning from case reviews, audit and multi-agency training.
 - Develop two-way communication with frontline practitioners to hear their feedback and engage them in the work of BSCP.
- 2.8 These recommendations will be included in the BSCP business plan for 2021/22 and delivery overseen by the Partnership's Leadership Forum. The Partnership has begun work towards some of these recommendations, for example mapping other strategic forums with a shared remit, working with the Safeguarding Adults Board on a

transitional safeguarding project, and having strategic discussions about the police contribution, scrutiny arrangements and measuring impact.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The annual report needs to be developed In line with statutory requirements for local Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 4.1 N/A

5. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 As a multi-agency report by the three statutory partners, the annual report will also be taken to police and health governance bodies prior to final approval by Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 5.2 The annual report will be published online [here](#) and shared with the National Panel. The independent scrutiny report and its recommendations will be implemented by BSCP.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

6.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 6.1.1 The Barnet Corporate Plan sets a clear priority for ensuring the effective safeguarding of the borough's vulnerable children. The work of BSCP is aligned to the Children and Young People's Plan and supports key objectives within it.

6.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.2.1 Partners including the London Borough of Barnet, police and health contribute to the annual budget for Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership and the contributions are set out in the published arrangements (see [online](#), page 27).
- 6.2.2 Financial commitments set out in the annual report and proposed by the independent scrutineers will be accounted for within current budgets.

6.3 Social Value

- 6.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 6.3.2 Protecting children from abuse and neglect has clear social value and is at the core of BSCP's purpose and activities. Working in partnership with other local agencies

improves responses to safeguarding concerns and delivers better outcomes for children and young people in Barnet.

6.4 Legal and Constitutional References

6.4.1 Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership exists in line with the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which sets a duty for the local authority, clinical commissioning group and police to make local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

6.4.2 The annual report and arrangements for independent scrutiny are in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the statutory guidance which sets out the requirements for local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

6.4.3 The Council's Constitution, Article 7 sets out the terms of reference for the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee which includes responsibility for all matters relating to schools, education and safeguarding, and to receive an annual report from the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

6.5 Risk Management

6.5.1 BSCP works within a risk management approach aligned to the Council's Risk Management Framework.

6.6 Equalities and Diversity

6.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and
- other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

6.6.2 BSCP works to keep equality at the core of its business and continually considers how Barnet's diverse populations may face different safeguarding challenges and require different forms of support.

6.7 Corporate Parenting

6.7.1 In line with the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in decision-making across the council. The outcomes and priorities in the refreshed Corporate Plan, Barnet 2024, reflect the council's

commitment to the Corporate Parenting duty to ensure the most vulnerable are protected and the needs of children are considered in everything that the council does.

6.7.2 BSCP monitors and receives assurance on Barnet's corporate parenting role and reviews reports and performance data on various safeguarding themes which relate to looked-after children.

6.8 Consultation and Engagement

6.8.1 BSCP works with a wide range of local partners to set priorities and deliver activities, including health, police, education and voluntary sector partners. The Partnership has consulted with young people and residents to inform its work over the past year, including through working with the Voice of the Child Team.

7 INSIGHT

7.1 BSCP has a multi-agency performance dashboard which helps set priorities and spot emerging trends, and its thematic deep dives draw on research and local and national data.
