

Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual report

September 2019-September 2020

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Introduction

Welcome to Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership annual report.

As the three statutory partners for Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP), it is our pleasure to introduce the annual report following our first year of working under the new safeguarding arrangements.

Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership was established in September 2019 following new government guidance, Working Together 2018. This has been a transitional year as we embed the new arrangements. We look forward to building on this foundation going forward and we have plans to expand our partnership working and build evidence of the impacts and outcomes of our work.

Our aim is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Barnet, and to achieve this we work collectively to improve safeguarding practice and respond to local issues.

Our vision is to enable children, young people and families to thrive and achieve, and a core part of our approach is to foster resilience. We aim to create a Family Friendly Borough, a place where children and young people excel and enjoy living.

We bring together a broad spectrum of organisations in Barnet who work with children and young people and our new board structure has allowed us to collaborate more effectively with a range of partners. We strive to work closely with children and young people, as well as practitioners and volunteers in Barnet, to hear their views and experiences and use this to shape our priorities.

Of course, Covid-19 has meant 2020 has not been the year we planned, but we are proud of the way we have adapted to new ways of working and continued to provide strategic leadership and support.

As we go forward, we will continue to work collectively to tackle the safeguarding challenges posed by Covid-19, including harm hidden in the home, increased mental health issues and online abuse.

Our new Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) strategy sets outreach as a key priority for the Partnership and in the coming year we will work with more VCFS organisations to improve safeguarding practice and respond to the challenges faced in Barnet.

This report will outline how BSCP works and the Barnet safeguarding context, before setting out what we have achieved against our five strategic priorities for the year. There are updates from our key partners agencies in Barnet about their safeguarding activities and upcoming areas of focus.

We want to thank you everyone who has contributed to the work of BSCP over the last year, whether that is as a member of one of our panels, attending training or acting on our learning for agencies Barnet. We would love to hear from you if you have any reflections or suggestions for our work in the coming year.

We look forward to continuing to work with you all to safeguard and improve the wellbeing of children and young people in Barnet.

Email: BSCP@Barnet.gov.uk / Web: www.thebarnetscp.org.uk.

Signed by three statutory partners – Kay Matthews, Barry Loader and John Hooton

About Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership

How we work

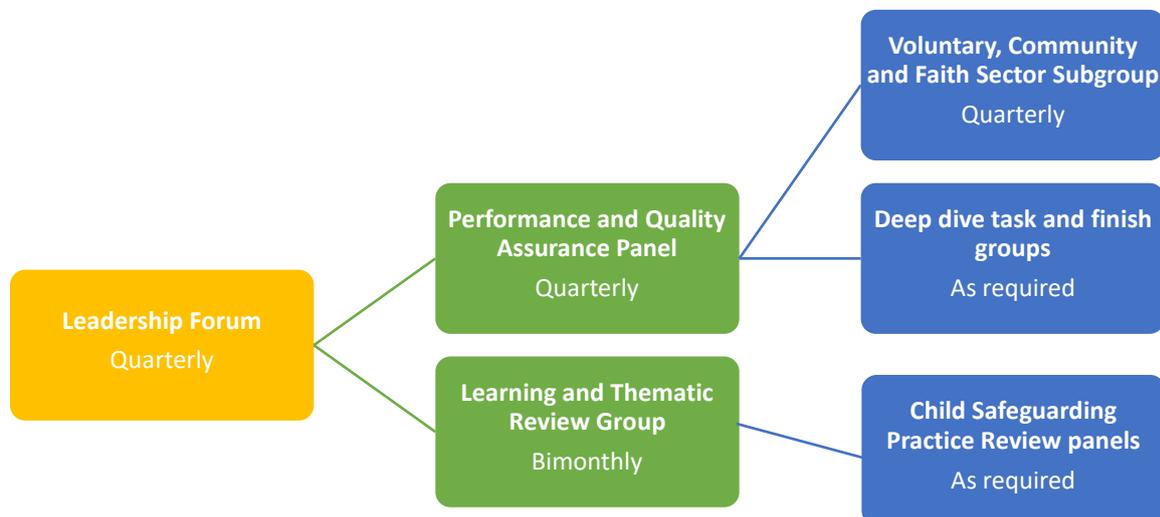
Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) is a statutory multi-agency body which exists to safeguard and improve the wellbeing of children and young people.

Our three statutory partners are the London Borough of Barnet, North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group and the Metropolitan Police Service, and we work with a range of other partners including health providers, education and the voluntary, community and faith sector. Our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are published online.

The purpose of the BSCP 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.

Our board structure draws on our wide partner membership to deliver scrutiny, drive practice improvements and quality assure the work of BSCP.



Leadership Forum

The Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership is led by a small Leadership Forum with membership from the three statutory partners, which provides strategic oversight to all the Partnership's activities. This year it was chaired by John Hooton, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Barnet.

Performance and Quality Assurance Panel

This Panel is chaired by the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care services and has representatives from many partner organisations including police, North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group, Royal Free London Foundation Trust, Central London Community Healthcare Trust, Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust, education and community safety.

It has a crucial scrutiny and assurance function, reviewing multi-agency performance data and a range of annual reports about service delivery, as well as monitoring and advising many of the BSCP activities.

Learning and Thematic Review Group

The Learning and Thematic Review Group is chaired independently by Bridget Griffin and has membership from across the council, police, health, community safety, public health and a legal adviser.

Its role is to lead improvements to practice in response to serious safeguarding cases in Barnet and local and national learning.

Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Subgroup

The Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) group has recently been reinvigorated in Barnet with a new strategy and terms of reference. Its membership consists of larger community groups from Barnet and umbrella organisations which represent the wider sector.

Its aims are to bring the voice and knowledge of the VCFS to the Partnership, as well as to improve safeguarding practice across the sector and increase engagement with Partnership activities and training.

The safeguarding context in Barnet

Our population

- Barnet is the largest borough in London by population with **402,700 residents** and is continuing to grow.
- The number of children aged 0-19 years living in Barnet is currently **99,300** (almost a quarter of the Boroughs population) representing a 5.7% increase since 2018. The child population is projected to increase further between 2020 and 2030 by a further 4.9% to 104,200.
- People from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds are represented across 38.7% of the population and over 180 languages are spoken in our primary schools. **52%** of children and young people in Barnet are from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds compared with 30% across England.
- There are 70.5 crimes per 1000 people, below the London average of 92.9 per 1000.
- All secondary school pupils, and 94% of primary school pupils are educated in **good or outstanding schools**. We are second nationally in Progress 8 scores.
- The percentage of children at secondary school in receipt of **free school meals** is in line with the national average of 13.2%, and there are fewer children in low income families in Barnet at 13.5% against the national average of 16.8%.

Our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

- Over the past two years the number of contacts to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has **increased by 4%**. The increase is attributed to a well understood single front door for children's services.
- During the Covid-19 period (April – October 2020) there were 8184 contacts received in the MASH which is **8.3% lower** than the contacts received in the same period in 2019 (8929).
- **Timeliness of decision making** has remained at 99% since April demonstrating the MASH is continuing to consistently manage the working arrangements imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A single front door and a well understood continuum of need and support document has seen a **20% reduction in contacts resulting in a referral to Children's Social Care** and a 13.5% increase in contacts being passed to our 0-19 Early Help Services over the last two years. The 'front door' is outward-facing to ensure that there is interface and engagement with key referrers including schools and GPs and ensures that the continuum of need and support is well understood.
- Strategic and operational meetings are held regularly with multi-agency partners, including 0-19 Early Help Services to facilitate understanding of trends, organisational learning and discussion across the partnership on the application of **thresholds**.

Our services

- Barnet local authority **re-modelled Early Help Services** in 2018 to create an integrated 0-19 Early Help offer which is locality-based and places services closer to where children live and go to school. The 0-19 Early Help model is strengthened by a multi-agency panel which facilitates information sharing across partners.
- There has been a **36% increase in Early Help Assessments** over the past two years. Between April – October 2020 there have been 1303 Early Help Assessments which is 5% higher than the volume reported over the same period last year (1267).
- 309 Section 47 enquires were undertaken in the reporting period April – October compared with 428 in the same period in 2019 representing a **27.8% reduction** during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- There have been 2761 children subject to Child in Need Plans over the past six months compared to 2987 in the same period in 2019 representing a **5% reduction**.
- **New looked-after children totalled 13 children during September**, lower than the 19 reported at the same point last year and just below the 12-month rolling average of 14.

Safeguarding concerns

- **Emotional abuse** remains the highest assessment factor and has increased by a further 9.5% over the period 2018/19 to 2019/20. Physical abuse remains the second highest assessment factor and this has increased by a further 28% over the past two years; this is relative to incidents of inappropriate physical chastisement.
- **Neglect** has seen the lowest increase at 3.2% and this follows a period of multi-agency focus on identifying and responding to neglect through the adoption of the NSPCC's Graded Care Profile 2 Tool. Where Neglect is identified, children are more likely to be subject to Child Protection Plan under the category of neglect representing 58% of the cohort.
- A **Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy** was developed in 2018 (updated 2020) which has facilitated developments across multi-agency workstreams, including the voluntary, community and faith sector in safeguarding adolescents vulnerable to exploitation, gangs and serious youth violence.

- Since 2018 Barnet has seen a 20% increase in children and young people about whom there are concerns regarding **child criminal exploitation and/or gangs**. 68% of young people with a 'gangs' indicator are from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds, 88% are male and 78% are aged 15+.
- **Antisocial behaviour** in children has increased by 24.5% since 2018/19 when compared to assessment factors in 2019/20; similarly, **substance misuse** by children and young people has increased by 8.5% over the same period.
- Multi-agency approaches to reducing risk to children vulnerable to **sexual exploitation** reduced the volume by 25% over the period 2018/19 when compared to 2019/20, and there has been a 26% reduction in children being assessed as vulnerable to sexual exploitation over the past two years.
- **Missing episodes** increased by 22% in 2019/20 when compared to 2018/19; this is attributable to stronger reporting and tracking systems being in place.
- **Youth homelessness** in Barnet is relatively low, effective joint working with Barnet Homes enables diversion from entry into care, this is evidenced in the 27% reduction in children aged 14+ coming into care between 2017/18 - 2018/19.
- 388 children this year **attended A&E** related to alcohol harm, substance misuse, self-harm or possible mental health issues, assault or violence. This is a 14% decrease from last year.

What our young people think

- The majority of young people (**84%**) think Barnet is a family-friendly place to live and **90%** are satisfied with the local area as a place to live.
- **96%** of young people feel safe at school and **91%** feel safe when they are out and about in the area they live.
- Young people's biggest concern is crime (**56%**), followed by litter in the streets (**37%**) and lack of jobs (**24%**).
- Top concerns for personal safety are knife crime (**71%**), gangs (**52%**), and people taking drugs in parks and on the street (**37%**).

Strategic priorities

Our annual business plan sets five key outcomes for the Partnership to work towards, specifically:

1. Strengthening leadership and partnership
2. Tailoring our work to local themes
3. Driving continuous practice improvement
4. Responding to serious child safeguarding cases
5. Listening to the voice of the child.

The following sections of this report outline our achievements in the past year as well as our key priorities for the coming months.

Changes to published arrangements

After a year of embedding the new safeguarding arrangements, we have made some changes to better capture how we are working, in addition to minor formatting improvements. Specifically, the arrangements have been updated in September 2020 as follows (these changes have already been implemented in practice):

- Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group has now merged to become North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group and the health arrangements have been updated accordingly.

- More detail has been added about the role of the subgroups, local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and the multi-agency training offer.
- Following Ofsted assessing Barnet as Good, the Barnet Improvement Board has been disbanded and therefore removed from the arrangements.
- The annual budget and contributions have been updated for 2020/21.

Our strategic priorities and achievements

1. Strengthening leadership and partnership

This has been a transitional year, with our focus being on embedding the new multi-agency arrangements and providing strategic leadership and cross-Partnership collaboration in response to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

We have managed a smooth transition to the new Partnership arrangements and we have put in place robust governance, clearly defining the role of each of our boards. Our new board structure and subgroups have allowed us to be more focused in meetings, having strategic discussions at the right level. Our Leadership Forum with the three statutory partners is helping to drive an increasingly shared approach to leadership.

We have engaged a wide range of partners in our activities, including frontline practitioners, education and the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS). This has helped to build a shared understanding across the local system and improve practice in targeted areas.

We have also created a new VCFS Strategy which we are taking forward, using the subgroup to support organisations with safeguarding and increase engagement with BSCP, particularly from small organisations.

We are pleased to welcome Red Quadrant to visit BSCP as independent scrutineers in November and look forward to hearing their recommendations for our development.

Priorities for 2020/21:

- As we continue to embed the new arrangements, we will work to make sure that our approach to leadership, financial contributions and engagement is shared and equal
- We want to strengthen our links to other key local forums (eg the Safeguarding Adults Board and Health and Wellbeing Board) as well as neighbouring areas so we can tackle shared priorities more effectively.

2. Tailoring our work to local themes

Our focus this year has been on Covid-19, using our strategic forums to discuss and coordinate responses to the safeguarding challenges Covid-19 has created. New multi-agency training sessions (eg virtual working and safeguarding) have helped practitioners to adapt and we have shared resources with the VCFS to help them create new safeguarding policies.

We have created a new outcomes-focused multi-agency performance dashboard which enables us to scrutinise service demand across the local area and respond strategically. We will continue to build on this to measure the impact of our work.

For example, the dip in referrals to services over the Summer led to Partnership-wide conversations about managing systems capacity should there be a surge in the Autumn. Covid-19 datasets have highlighted mental health, neglect and domestic abuse as rising areas of need and we have targeted multi-agency training and audits towards these areas.

Earlier in the year we carried out targeted work on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and harmful practices, engaging practitioners through events and training to raise awareness and improve the way we work together on cases. In response to partner concerns, we also held events on youth violence and healthy relationships to improve practitioner understanding about the issues and the support services available locally.

Our October youth violence Professional and Young People Forum was one such event bringing together practitioners, volunteers and young people in Barnet to discuss and share learning about knife crime and violence. This was a popular event with over 70 attendees and sessions from Growing Against Violence, the Youth Offending Team, a demonstration from St John's Ambulance and testimonials from survivors. All attendees agreed the event was useful and relevant to their role.

Building on our harmful practices consultation last year, we have continued to work with the National FGM Centre to deliver our strategy, with a focus on raising community awareness and improving professionals' ability to respond effectively to disclosures or concerns. This has included training sessions about child abuse linked to faith and belief, the creation of a new FGM pathway and protocol to improve multi-agency responses, and changes to our data recording system to improve our ability to monitor harmful practices in the area.

We also hosted a harmful practices Professional and Young People's Forum in February, with sessions from the National FGM centre and Barnet MASH as well as stories from survivors and information stands with local voluntary organisations. This event also attracted over 70 attendees, and participants agreed it had improved their understanding about harmful practices and taught them where to go for more information. We are now rolling out an e-learning tool and training school ambassadors to embed and sustain the learning.

There have been several successful operations which involved extensive multi-agency working in response to safeguarding concerns. These operations were designed to disrupt activities such as child sexual/criminal exploitation and modern slavery. For example, Operation Make Safe involved test purchasing hotel rooms to investigate growing concerns about hotel rooms being used for child sexual exploitation and hotels were engaged with to raise staff awareness about exploitation. The full list of disruption and engagement operations in relation to safeguarding issues is given in the Vulnerable Adolescents [annual report](#).

Priorities for 2020/21:

- We will continue to monitor and respond to the safeguarding challenges posed by Covid-19, particularly concerns around mental health, online safety and hidden harm
- We will work with the Safeguarding Adults Board to review local practice and policies for transitional safeguarding and drive improvements in this area.

3. Driving continuous practice improvement

We have driven improvements to frontline practice through our multi-agency training offer. From April 2019-April 2020 we offered 42 different multi-agency training courses which were attended by over 500 professionals. As well as child protection training, designated safeguarding lead training and courses designed to improve understanding of multi-agency services and thresholds, we offered specialist courses including the voice of the child, neglect, adolescent mental health, drug and alcohol awareness and young carer awareness. In response to Covid-19 we have added new virtual sessions on bereavement and safeguarding in virtual working.

Training received positive feedback and was well-attended across the partnership with particularly strong representation from education, health and the voluntary sector, as well as childcare providers.

We have reviewed frontline practice through our multi-agency audit programme, which examines cross-agency working in specific areas of practice, sharing learning across the Partnership and promoting practice improvements. This year we undertook multi-agency audits on child sexual abuse and vulnerable adolescents, using a multi-agency team to review cases and agree feedback.

The child sexual abuse audit found that responses to risk were proportionate and timely and information sharing was good. It identified the need for further awareness raising through multi-agency training, which was carried out. The vulnerable adolescents audit found that our multi-agency forums were valued by partners and the voice of the child was used to improve understanding of risk. Improvements such as increasing oversight/escalation of cases and improving reintegration of excluded young people back into mainstream education are being taken forward by the Vulnerable Adolescent Community Partnership and shared with practitioners through seven minute briefings.

We undertook our annual Section 11 safeguarding self-assessment audit process in the Autumn, receiving 16 responses from partner agencies, which was a marked improvement from recent years. All responses received individual feedback about how to improve safeguarding in their organisation – common themes were that the training offer needs to be better publicised and a wider range of partners encouraged to attend, and that partners need more support embedding listening to the voice of the child across their organisation. We hosted a learning event to share good practice which was well-attended by partners, and particularly focused on listening to the voice of the child. We have also offered multi-agency voice of the child training to build partners' expertise in this area.

Our voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) Safeguarding Checklist, a similar self-assessment about safeguarding practice and policies, received 18 responses. Organisations were most confident that their staff had received safeguarding training and supervision/support is provided, and asked for more assistance with creating of culture of listening to children and putting in place effective Information Sharing Agreements. The VCFS group will be taking this forward and providing more support to the sector.

Our Performance and Quality Assurance Panel oversees all this activity and leads on the scrutiny of safeguarding practice and driving improvements. This year the Panel has reviewed a wide range of reports about core partnership services, offering constructive challenge to improve standards and shape future direction, including facilitating join-up with other multi-agency activities.

Priorities for 2020/21:

- We plan to develop our approach to Section 11 audits and VCFS Safeguarding Checklists to be a more meaningful and impactful exercise for organisations
- Following from our multi-agency training consultation, we are taking forward feedback to broaden participation in training activities and co-deliver/open out more single-agency training.

4. Responding to serious child safeguarding cases

We have established an independently-chaired Learning and Thematic Review Group which has conducted six rapid reviews this year, two of which led to Child Safeguarding Practice

Reviews (currently underway) and one to a local learning exercise. We have reviewed and publicised our process for rapid review referrals and decision-making in line with best practice.

We conducted a single-agency health review into Child G, which led to embedding the Unborn Protocol across agencies and increasing awareness about increase in head circumference as a cause for concern. Work was undertaken with health professionals to increase professional curiosity about familial risk.

As well as undertaking Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, the Group uses other mechanisms to explore learning and drive improvements. In response to specific cases, this year the Group has considered local learning and actions around vulnerable adolescents, male circumcision practices and diplomatic immunity, raising issues to a national/London level as appropriate.

Our local learning exercise around vulnerable adolescents has shared learning with frontline practitioners and informed the new Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy, specifically with recommendations about the mental health response to incidents of serious youth violence and the transition of young people into adult services.

We have also responded to a case involving an unsafe male circumcision practice (orogenital suction, or metzitzah b'peh) leading to serious health complications in an infant, and we are working to increase community awareness about the risks involved in this practice and to improve the child protection response.

Learning and Thematic Review Group has also discussed national reviews and learning from other local areas, offering constructive challenge to Barnet partners and monitoring implementation of any actions arising.

Priorities for 2020/21:

- We are putting in place a robust process to monitor implementation of the recommendations from the current Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and to measure the impact for children
- Through the Learning and Thematic Review Group we will continue to proactively draw on national learning and other local reviews to improve safeguarding in Barnet.

5. Listening to the voice of the child

We use a range of mechanisms to listen to children and young people and to use their views to shape our services and priorities. We have also provided support to our partners to improve their voice of the child work, including training and Section 11 learning events.

We have involved young people through our Professional and Young People Forums, which young people attend to learn more about services in Barnet and share their thoughts about particular issues. Young people have been powerful advocates at these events, sharing their experiences around Female Genital Mutilation, knife crime and serious youth violence to inform practitioners' work with other young people.

We have consulted with young people in our thematic work, particularly on harmful practices where we ran focus groups with Barnet residents to better understand how prevalent Female Genital Mutilation is in Barnet and what people's experiences are.

Our Youth Perception Survey, Children in Care and Care Leavers surveys are all key tools to help us understand what children and young people think in Barnet. Specifically the Youth Perception Survey showed that:

Our youth perception, children in care and care leavers surveys have told us more about what young people think. The Performance and Quality Assurance Panel have reviewed these surveys, using them to set priorities and inform wider discussions.

- The majority of young people feel Barnet is a family friendly place to live and are satisfied with local services
- Young people's top concerns are crime, lack of jobs and littering in the street
- Top personal safety concerns are knife crime, gangs and people taking drugs in public places.
- Young people feel least safe in their local area at night, followed by in local parks and open spaces
- Compared to 2017, young people feel significantly more listened to and informed about local services.

All these concerns are being listened to across the Partnership and used to shape our priorities, for example the youth violence Professional and Young People Forum and the new Vulnerable Adolescent strategy.

Priorities for 2020/21:

- We will keep the voice of the child front and centre at our discussions in board meetings, and continue asking ourselves how our work will impact children
- We will develop our approach to multi-agency service user experience, bringing together existing feedback from partner organisations to lead multi-agency action.

Independent scrutineer findings

To provide independence and external oversight to the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) arrangements, the Partnership arrangements set out the requirement to have an annual review of the Partnership undertaken by independent scrutineers. BSCP commissioned annual independent scrutiny to take place in the form of a visit from a team of three scrutineers with a background in each of the statutory partners' disciplines from Red Quadrant. The use of Red Quadrant and the scrutiny team approach is an innovative step to examine and scrutinise the new partnership arrangements.

The independent scrutineers' terms of reference are those set out in Working Together 2018: to evaluate the extent to which the arrangements are delivering against their purpose, which is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare. This also covers to what extent the safeguarding partners, with other local organisations and agencies, have developed processes to effectively manage and fulfil these responsibilities. The scrutineers were also asked to comment on the extent to which the lead representative from each of the three safeguarding partners plays an active role and whether all three safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements. Further to this the goals set out for the independent scrutineers were to comprehensively review the activities of the BSCP, to ensure statutory duties are being met and to identify areas for further development.

The Red Quadrant team are able to 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. This annual report 2019-2020 was also scrutinised and we can confirm that it is compliant with the requirements of Working Together 2018.

There appears to have been a smooth transition to the new arrangements in the last year, embedding these and engaging partners through the new structure, putting in place robust governance and foundations. The review found that the new arrangements are not just a re-badge of the previous safeguarding children board. There is a well-thought out new structure that has been designed to ensure that safeguarding is prioritised, discussed, and acted on in the right groups to provide appropriate response.

All three of the statutory partners are totally engaged in a shared vision and workplan including providing support and commitment throughout all the groups and subgroups. Subgroups were well-attended with the right representation at the right level. There is an active group focusing on involvement and engagement with the voluntary sector and faith groups, which was seen as good practice. There is good sharing of information at the strategic and operational level and in links with other partners. The threshold document is embedded and well understood by agencies across the partnership.

There is an individual willingness to work to effective inter-agency communication – against the challenges of Covid-19, diminishing resources and ever-changing landscapes across the Partnership and this has continued and improved during the lockdown period. The BSCP has a clear and impressive ambition for the children and young people of Barnet and priorities are informed by learning from local and national case reviews and emerging needs in the communities. Children and young people are given the opportunity to have their voices heard and their views are acted upon.

There is an independent chair for the Learning and Thematic Review Group which enables scrutiny of the most serious child safeguarding cases. The Group carries out all of its statutory responsibilities and has made good progress in implementing findings from reviews during the year. Performance monitoring is good and the Partnership have identified areas for improvement to make this stronger and more robust, with additional data and audit activity. Multi agency training was viewed as a strength by partners – it was reported to be responsive and of good quality.

The review recognised that there were some areas for consideration to further strengthen these arrangements, ones that had already been recognised and identified by the BSCP including sustainability of budget contributions, working across other partnerships and borough boundaries, and greater engagement of service users. The Partnership will be able to build on a history of strong collaborative arrangements at a strategic level, but it is acknowledged that there is more to do to ensure that this is embedded throughout all agencies with safeguarding responsibilities and at every level of organisations through to frontline staff.

Updates from our partners

Barnet Education and Learning Service

Overview

Barnet education services were delivered in partnership with Cambridge Education until 31 August 2020, and following that by Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS). BELS works with schools to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding duties and to ensure that all guidance and legislation is understood and followed. This includes the requirements of Ofsted in order to judge that our schools are effective for safeguarding when inspected.

A continued close liaison and partnership with Family Services, including the Heads of Service of MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and Duty, Assessment and Planning, the Early Help Team and the Local Authority Designated Officer, has facilitated the School Improvement

Team being able to give our schools the best support and challenge to ensure that there is the highest quality safeguarding provision in schools.

The School Exclusion and Safeguarding Lead works closely with all schools (local authority maintained, academies, free schools and independent schools) to offer advice and support, and updates the Education and Skills Safeguarding Action Plan. A School Safeguarding Audit is produced every year for schools and is seen as a useful tool in ensuring schools have the necessary policies, processes and systems in order to keep their children safe.

The Home Office awarded additional funding to Barnet to appoint a Prevent Education Officer to support schools with their Prevent Duty. The post holder, who took up post in September 2017, is employed by Community Safety but sits in the School Improvement Team. He has been able to offer advice, support and training to schools as well as liaising closely with the Prevent Coordinator on referrals. Funding for his post has been extended to 2021.

Achievements 2019/20

- Every Barnet state school inspected by Ofsted this year has had safeguarding judged as “effective”.
- Observed practice and engagement with the MASH Team, and greater depth of understanding built between Family Services and schools of processes and expectations of MASH referrals – including by distributing an anonymised model referral to all schools.
- Education and Skills staff and schools’ increased involvement in 0-19 Hubs.
- Resilience in Schools programme – increased number of schools now taking part in this programme being driven by BELS and Public Health.
- All Headteacher Network meetings, Office Support Forums and Governor Briefing have safeguarding on the agenda. An update on the UNICEF programme was shared with all head teachers, deputy head teachers and assistant head teachers.
- Escalation and resolution processes updated and circulated to schools.
- Safeguarding Briefings created in response to Covid-19, focusing on child criminal exploitation, mental health, MASH and Early Help referrals and sharing good practice. Breakfast Briefings well attended including representation from the independent sector.
- Regular safeguarding advice and guidance given to schools through Covid-19 period, including circulating new templates for safeguarding policies to meet Covid-19 requirements.
- Training and support relating to Covid-19, Department for Education guidance and new working arrangements to support vulnerable children and young people offered by BELS. This included training and support delivered by the Early Years Lead, Education Psychology Service and Inclusion Advisory Team.
- Supported Family Services with increasing attendance for vulnerable pupils during the partial closure of schools.
- Education psychology survey of children and young people, asking their views on returning to school. The findings were distributed to wider education services.
- Closer working between Virtual School and relevant services within Family Services to prioritise school placements and educational provision for looked-after children.
- Third wave of child protection and safeguarding training for Education and Skills staff and special educational needs transport rolled out this year.

- School Safeguarding Audit Tool seen by schools as an invaluable aid to effective safeguarding arrangements and embedded in workstreams. Feedback and safeguarding visits to schools on request or if concerns raised.
- Close liaison with the Police Safer Schools Team regarding incidents in or around schools.
- Elective home education post enhanced and reallocated to Education Welfare to further support partnership working.
- Strong representation on committees and sub-committees of the BSCP.

Upcoming priorities

- Recruit an Advisory Teacher for elective home education.
- Support schools to achieve full attendance.
- Work in partnership with agencies to support vulnerable families.
- Continue to provide information to schools on the Barnet context and implementing guidance and best practice.
- Continue to work towards all schools in Barnet being 'good' or 'outstanding' through rigorous monitoring and challenge.
- To work with all partners to improve the attendance of looked-after children.

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust

Overview

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust (BEH MHT) provides mental health services to communities across the three boroughs and has recently become part of the North Central London Strategic Transformation Partnership, working in close collaboration with Camden and Islington Mental Health Trust.

The safeguarding team comprises the Head of Safeguarding, data administrator, Safeguarding Adult Lead and Safeguarding Children Lead. The team have undergone a period of transition with the new team now fully embedded within the Trust. The role of safeguarding champions is well established in teams across the Trust to support safeguarding at an operational level.

Through North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group BEH MHT share legal responsibility with police and social care in safeguarding children and adult service users, and working to ensure that their families and staff are effectively protected. We respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns by sharing information in a timely manner with relevant agencies.

We have a focus on Brilliant Basics, getting the basics done well to drive improvement across all areas of the Trust.

Achievements 2019/20

- Delivering a cascaded model of safeguarding supervision via safeguarding champions. In all clinical appointments, particularly initial assessments, best practice is followed and children and young people have an opportunity to speak with clinicians on their own. Recent development of a 24/7 dedicated crisis line with access to qualified clinicians between 9am and midnight enables young people to call us directly.
- Business continuity plans across all divisions have a dedicated section for safeguarding children. A bespoke safeguarding session was delivered for the

clinicians working in the North Central London crisis pathway and the crisis hub. The Safeguarding Children Lead and lead nurse for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provided consultation in the development of the triage paperwork.

- The continued development of our dashboard and safeguarding database to ensure oversight and governance of the Trust's safeguarding activity. This has enabled the identification of hotspots allowing for a targeted and supportive response from the safeguarding team, for example the quality review completed at the Beacon with follow-up reviews planned.
- Development and embedding of sexual safety standards, with sexual safety charters displayed in the ward areas.
- Providing in-reach to the local authority multi-agency planning group, vulnerable adolescents group and youth offending teams. We also support local authority clinicians working with vulnerable families with supervision.
- RAG rating introduced in case records to effectively prioritise children who needed to be seen face to face during the pandemic.
- The development of an integrated safeguarding level 3 in an elearning format in collaboration with My Care Academy for ease of accessibility for staff. After this staff attend a Safeguarding Surgery Workshop held by the safeguarding team.
- An away day for safeguarding champions with a focus on supervision, enabling the champions to further support staff operationally.
- Dissemination of learning from local reviews Trust-wide via central communications in seven-minute briefings. Some of the changes that have occurred as a result include specific targeted audits (self-harm deep dive, section 17 checklist) and development of a protocol between education and CAMHS.
- Creation of a dedicated page for seven-minute briefings so staff have access to all learning in a user-friendly format.
- Commitment to co-production, including through our service user involvement and engagement strategy. We actively seek the views of children, young people and carers in our service design, research and quality reviews, using a variety of methods to capture their views. This includes a weekly forum for young people at our Tier 4 in-patient unit.
- BEH MHT Safeguarding Children Lead and Head of Safeguarding have consistently attended Safeguarding Forum meetings and NHSE meetings where central information has been disseminated to staff during the height of Covid-19.
- Consistent and continued participation in multi-agency audits as determined by social care.
- Continued work with partner agencies in the newly formed Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

Upcoming priorities

As a result of Covid-19 and the measures taken to protect the country, BEH MHT had to respond quickly and efficiently to use technology to meet the needs of patient. This meant that children were not being seen face to face for a period of time, but were seen virtually.

Concerns were raised nationally regarding hidden harm and the potential abuse children and young people were subject to during lockdown. This manifested in a noticeable reduction in safeguarding activity pertaining to children in BEH MHT. To address this concern, BEH MHT will engage in a safeguarding children campaign, bringing to the forefront the 'Think family' approach – this is planned for November 2020.

The workplan is currently underway with new priorities being added to ensure children, adult service users, staff, and families are safe.

Central London Community Health Trust

Overview

Central London Community Health NHS Trust (CLCH) provides community services across 11 London Boroughs, alongside the delivery of sexual health and respiratory services across Hertfordshire and since October 2019, adult community services in West Hertfordshire.

CLCH is committed to working in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure children, young people and adults accessing CLCH services are seen, heard, supported and safe. In the face of significant NHS change, austerity and the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 we have ensured our services are responsive to the needs of our communities and upholds the rights, choices and safety of all our service users. We have robust recruitment processes in place that are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The safeguarding team in Barnet includes a named nurse for safeguarding children, supported by safeguarding children advisors.

Achievements 2019/20

In response Covid-19 we reviewed our safeguarding processes and developed a risk assessment to support our 0-19 teams in identifying and prioritising need and vulnerability. Our staff use virtual technology to engage with children and families, in addition to completing face to face contacts and a 'duty' line that runs seven days a week to offer advice and support to parents, carers and professionals. The safeguarding service also runs a single point of contact to ensure our staff have access to timely advice and support. We changed our model of safeguarding supervision in Covid-19 to ensure practitioners had access to more frequent and ad hoc safeguarding supervision, which was well received by practitioners.

CLCH training compliance remains above 90% for our 0-19 practitioners and we have delivered virtual feedback sessions to practitioners regarding the graded care profile and research findings from the Triennial Review of serious case reviews.

CLCH has engaged with case conferences, strategy meetings, core group meetings and safeguarding forums. We have shared information to support multi-agency risk assessment and decision making to safeguard and protect children and young people and the statutory review of child deaths.

We have engaged in the work of the safeguarding partnership and the delivery of board priorities.

Family Services, London Borough of Barnet

Overview

Our commitment to Barnet's vulnerable children is to deliver services that give children and young people the platform to succeed and thrive. We work closely together with focus and drive to deliver timely and effective services, achieving good outcomes for children and young people in Barnet.

Our underlying philosophy is based on the concept of resilience. We want resilient children, families and staff. This has been extremely important this year, where we have faced an unprecedented set of challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have three core strategic objectives that cut across our plans for children, young people and families and underpin the systemic and cultural change needed to drive improvement within the borough:

- Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful social work assessments and interventions with families.
- Ensuring our involvement with the most vulnerable children in the borough positively impacts on their outcomes.
- Providing effective practice leadership and management throughout the system to ensure progress is made for children within timescales that are appropriate and proportionate to their needs and that practitioners are well supported, curious and child focussed.

The Ofsted inspection took place 7-24 May 2019, and inspectors awarded a 'Good' rating across all judgment areas: the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families, the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection, and the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers. This has been the foundation that we have built on during this year.

Responding to Covid-19

Covid-19 and the imposed lockdown, while necessary to protect health, has had widespread individual, social and economic impacts and considerable negative effects on health and wellbeing.

Children are at increased risk of being exposed to these negative impacts. Nationally and locally there is an increased demand on mental health and wellbeing services. We have seen a 25% increase of anxiety-related presentations due to Covid-19 in our Barnet Integrated Clinical Service (BICS) and our KOOTH online counselling service for young people.

Families are facing increasing pressures due to a strain on finances, the stress of isolation and managing childcare demands alongside work commitments. In Barnet, the number of work-related benefits being claimed in July 2020 tripled from claims made in February 2020. Young people are at significant risk of economic hardship with 18-24-year olds in Barnet claiming benefits up from 2.5% in July 2019, to 9.5% in July 2020; they are also more likely to be furloughed. There has been a reduction in young people in education, employment and training.

Children have missed a significant part of their education which will impact on their social and emotional development as well as educational outcomes. Furthermore, for some children attending school is a protective factor and forms part of their support plan. After an initial reduction of contacts into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) we are now seeing an increase, with more contacts in the first two weeks of August compared to the same point last year. Now schools have fully reopened for all children we have observed contacts in line with previous years' activity. We remain vigilant and prepared should there be an increase in demand, which has been the experience of neighbouring boroughs.

Children remain at the centre of all we do. All of our services have remained operational, albeit primarily through virtual means. Throughout the pandemic we have continued to see children, making use of technology when face to face contact has not been possible. This will continue into the future with a blended offer of face to face and virtual support and interventions.

Supporting children to return to school safely and catch up on lost learning

For full return in September we have supported early years providers and schools by developing risk assessment templates which were collated and passed to Health and Safety and Public Health teams. All schools opened for all pupils in September. We continue to work closely with schools to monitor the attendance of children on plans and are confident that the vast majority are in school.

Reassuring parents is critical to ensuring good school attendance. There is a risk that parents will choose not to send their children to school due to concerns about safety. This can include concerns about travelling on public transport. The change in policy on home to school transport due later this year will also have an impact. While our focus is on the transition back to school, we have also expanded our elective home education capacity to manage the increase in children being home educated (up approximately 8%).

Our Back to School campaign has supporting the transition, both in June and ahead of the return to schools in September. The campaign signposts children, young people, parents, carers, teachers and other practitioners to a wealth of services, resources and articles aimed at supporting a smooth transition back to school.

As far as possible, our focus throughout the pandemic has been on children continuing to learn. As children transition into school, we will address any concerns of lost learning. We have participated in a six-borough project on lost learning which is being used by schools to look at programmes in the Autumn term.

Our Virtual School has been operational throughout the pandemic, adapting to new ways of working. At the start of the pandemic, tuition for all children was offered for two hours a week for four weeks to bridge the gap as schools got their online learning up and running and some children returned to school.

For children with Special Educational Needs we have maintained a range of services. In a recent visit by the Department for Education, NHS England and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Advisor, it was concluded that “the Barnet’s response to Covid-19 has been strong in comparison to many other areas. I am unaware of any significant initiatives taken elsewhere that have not been taken in Barnet”.

Keeping safeguarding children as our highest priority

During the Covid-19 period our data shows there has been a reduction in the number of contacts by around a quarter, with 7916 contacts in the past six months, compared to 9283 in 2019. We are now seeing contacts at the expected levels and are monitoring closely to respond if there is an increase in demand into the system. Timeliness of decision making has remained at 99% since April demonstrating the MASH is managing the working arrangements imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic very well.

Patterns of agency contacts continue to fluctuate with the biggest swings in data being recorded against police, education and health services; there has been a 14% increase in police contacts. Education contacts have halved compared to last year, whereas health has seen 27% increase since last year. The MASH Steering Group will be analysing a breakdown of this information to better understand it. There are noted decreases against the level of contacts from all other agencies following a sharp rise in June (backlog clearance following lift of lockdown restrictions), and the July data is lower than the rolling average at this point in the year.

The Performance Matters report shows the volume of referrals (234) is 20% lower than at the same point last year (294) and 6% lower than June (249). However, the referral conversion

rate for July is 16% (234 contacts progressed to statutory social work assessment) this is closely in line with the yearly average of 17%. It is also lower than England and London average, which is positive. Low caseloads mean that there is capacity in the system if there is a spike in referrals when schools go back.

The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (162) is 4.7% lower than at the same point last year (170) and 5% lower than June 2020 (171). We have been conducting virtual child protection conferences and have had some good feedback on these. Parents find them less intimidating, and more professionals are attending, including those who would often not be able to due to other commitments, such as psychiatrists and probation services.

Health attendance at strategy discussions has reduced, and we will work with the partnership to improve this. NHS staff have been redeployed to other services, however MASH still have health staff so there is a need to understand why attendance has fallen.

Proportionately more boys are on child in need plans, and more girls on child protection plans. There has been a reduction in child sexual exploitation, which last year was the reason for more girls on child protection plans, so we are revisiting this to understand the impact of gender on our approach to managing risk. We will also be looking at ethnicity data to try to understand whether families are receiving early help interventions at the right time due to some disproportionality showing in the data.

234 Early Help Assessments (EHAs) were opened in July which is a 29% increase on opened EHAs at the same point last year (166), and a 33% increase from June (156). 208 EHAs were closed in July which is a 12% increase on the same point last year (183) and 3% higher than the rolling average (201), resulting in a net difference of 26 more cases. The multi-agency Early Help Panels have continued to operate remotely with good attendance from all key agencies.

In partnership with key local providers, schools and the voluntary and community sector, a summer programme of activities was delivered building on the virtual delivery since the start of lockdown. Early Help staff have delivered online programmes of activity with interactive, live and pre-recorded sessions in place. Staff are virtually facilitating online sessions via Zoom for young people aged 7-19 years, and up to 25-years-old for young people with special educational needs. Pre-recorded sessions take place throughout the week via YouTube. Early Help buildings and settings are prepared to re-open; risk assessments were undertaken during June and in accordance with government guidance issued on 1st July (revised on 10/07/20).

Early Help practitioners have maintained weekly contact with families on the NHS shielded list and ensured weekly food deliveries, prescription collection and any additional help is identified and provided; this continued until 31/07/20 when shielding was no longer required. Group work programmes with parents including domestic abuse and parenting programmes remain a challenge to deliver as limitations remain in place regarding social distancing and support bubbles.

Supporting corporate parenting

Numbers of children in care remain stable. Some unaccompanied asylum-seeking children came into care in the last month but during the lockdown the numbers of children coming into care were very low.

Placements stability has been good in the last six months. In the last month there have been some moves for very specific reasons, but largely in the last six months foster carers and residential homes have held the children and provided a lot of stability. Relationships in

placements have been very positive. There was a group of children persistently going 'missing' because they wanted to go home, and risk assessments were completed and some of these children did go home and have remained in the care of family members while being closely monitored.

The pandemic has had an impact on the availability of permanent housing for our care leavers. We are monitoring this closely with housing colleagues to ensure that no care leavers who needs to transition into permanent housing are prevented from doing so.

Improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

The impact on children's mental health and wellbeing has been seen nationally and locally. Our local survey highlighted this as a key area of concern; 40% of children surveyed considered that the effect of the crisis is harming their mental health. There has been an increase in anxiety-related presentations to our Barnet Integrated Clinical Service (BICS) and to KOOOTH (our commissioned online counselling service), which has reported a 25% increase in demand. BICS has set up a helpline and are delivering workshops and groups as part of an extension to their offer which will continue with the additional transformation investment.

Additional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services transformation money has been invested into the Mental Health in Schools teams to provide additional support. Investment has been made into parenting assessments and £50,000 of government funding for return to school has been invested into a schools campaign.

Over 80% of childcare settings are now open and the most recent Department for Education submission showed 3,398 children are attending Early Years settings, 636 of these were children of key workers and 184 are vulnerable children. Only six settings (3%) are planning on remaining closed until September. London Borough of Barnet nurseries at Newstead and Greentops have provided childcare services throughout the lockdown period. The Early Years team have been working with the Early Years standards team to support with risk assessments for providers. Network meetings have been held with all settings.

Six children's centres have remained open for midwives to deliver face to face services with the most vulnerable families. Children's centre staff have had regular phone contact with families registered and have contacted all families on the new birth data list since lockdown. Children's centres have organised virtual sessions such as rhyme times, cooking and story time. These, together with partner services, are shared through Facebook pages. A virtual timetable was delivered during the summer, with some small face to face groups for the most vulnerable families taking place in August. This borough-wide programme offers a blend of interactive online, sessions, pre-recorded on-line materials, telephone support, as well as targeted face to face sessions. The face to face sessions include buggy walks for the most isolated parents with young children, and school-readiness workshops.

Children's centres have been working in partnership with Young Barnet Foundation, libraries and health to deliver activity packs to the most vulnerable through foodbanks, Home Start and Burnt Oak refugee service and have delivered over 750 packs.

Enhancing life chances

In July 2020 the number of working aged adults claiming work related benefits was 18,105 which has tripled since February 2020 (6,455). Young people are at significant risk of economic hardship with 18-24-year olds claiming benefits up from 2.5% in July 2019 to 9.5% in July 2020 and 17-year olds are more likely to be furloughed. Our care leavers in education, employment or training have decreased by almost 10% compared to last year. This will have

wide-ranging impacts on many outcomes including skills to enter the job market, access to good quality housing and health and wellbeing. These issues will be addressed through a refreshed Life Chances Strategy. A survey was completed to inform the strategy, with 737 young people responding. Key headlines are:

- The majority of young people consider the effect of the crisis to be harming their long-term education (53%), followed by doing much less physical activity (52%) and their mental health and well-being being affected (40%).
- Young people say they were most worried about their education and exams (58%) during lockdown, followed by staying safe from the coronavirus (34%) and their mental health and well-being (33%).
- The majority of young people think more support should be provided for dealing with stress and isolation (53%), followed by activities and exercises for children while at home (45%) and close and regular contact with teachers (44%).

Governance and accountability arrangements

We developed our recovery plan in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee is responsible for all matters relating to children. It receives regular reports on safeguarding for oversight, scrutiny and decision-making. The forward plan for member development and induction programme is regularly reviewed for effectiveness.

Senior representatives from partner organisations make up the Children's Partnership Board which keeps strategic oversight of the Barnet Children and Young People's Partnership Plan. Each organisation has agreed to be responsible for implementing this plan which will be monitored by the Board. The Children's Partnership Board reports into the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee.

A clear written line of accountability for safeguarding is published in the Continuum of Help and Support which supports effective understanding and increasingly consistent application of key thresholds across the partnership.

Safeguarding is also included in the Corporate Plan, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan. Strategic and operational oversight of safeguarding in policies and procedures is evident in the annual Ofsted self-evaluation, our range of policies (Tri-X) and Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee reports.

Divisional Plans were developed in October 2019 based on actions identified through the Children Young People's Plan, Ofsted recommendations for improvement in the May 2019 inspection report, and the self-evaluation. These plans are monitored via the Family Services Senior Management Team and the Children and Young People's Partnership Board. These plans are currently on hold due to the changes in service delivery as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent government actions. A Covid-19 Recovery Plan and Policy was developed and implemented by senior leaders to ensure continuity of statutory safeguarding within new legal frameworks introduced during the pandemic.

Monitoring and evaluation/quality assurance activity

We have maintained a focus on practice during the improvement journey. Practice Development Workers are embedded across the service supporting individual, team and organisational learning. The integration of quality assurance and practice development is assured by linking each social work team with a Practice Development Worker, a Quality Assurance Officer, an Independent Reviewing Officer and a Child Protection Chair. This

enables our appreciative enquiry audit approach, building on self-identified strengths and strengthening capacity to reflect, share best practice and innovation and to build the future around what works for children and their families.

The directors hold regular stocktake meetings to monitor progress in the quality of practice and the most recent was held in early August. The critical issue that were identified are:

- The need to implement plans in a timely fashion when some services have not been operational.
- Maintain good practice during the coming months when we expect to see a surge in demand into the service once children are fully back at school.
- Increase the input from partners into children's plans so that they reflect the multi-agency and joint approach required to provide effective help and protection.

There is a monthly review of performance with the Lead Member and Chief Executive.

Upcoming priorities

We will deliver our recovery plans ensuring effective child-centred provision during the ongoing pandemic with a focus on:

- Supporting children to return to school safely and catch up on lost learning
- Keeping safeguarding children as our highest priority
- Supporting corporate parenting
- Improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing
- Enhancing life chances.

We will continue to improve our core social work practice utilising our performance and quality assurance framework and priorities identified in our self-evaluation. We will work to improve multi-agency collaboration in children's planning to ensure timely interventions for children and young people.

London Community Rehabilitation Company

Achievements

- The London Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) Learning and Development Team have delivered further Safeguarding Assessment Training. Learning and Development plan to include the teaching and development of assessment and planning skills for both all new staff and ongoing staff development. Feedback and review of the training has supported the London CRC to help evaluate and develop this area of work.
- The CRC Performance Management Information for Safeguarding has been updated and will support the operational management of safeguarding risks and will support us towards the assurance of and the quality of our safeguarding practice. This helps to manage our resources and prioritise the right service users within the communities particularly if they are very vulnerable with a high level of safeguarding concerns.
- CRC are now able to undertake regular quality audits on a monthly and quarterly basis, and hope to develop multi-agency audits going forward.
- Omnia, an integrated case management and risk and needs assessment tool, has been implemented. This enables:
 - Action planning objectives to be developed which are directly linked to the service user's risk and needs

- A strengths-based approach to risk assessment, which leads to risk management and action plans that support desistance
- An ongoing review of the risk and needs and of the delivery of the action plan.
- Development of London CRC Public Protection Boards at a local and pan-London level that have a focus on various Safeguarding themes. This allows a two-prong approach whereby frontline issues can be escalated and important strategic messages and processes cascaded and shared.

Upcoming priorities

Our priorities are staff safety and re-opening offices which can adhere to social distancing measures. We will continue to prioritise the work of our complex, higher risk cases through face to face supervision and partnership working, and reintroduce Community Payback placements and the increased delivery of interventions whether that be over the phone or another medium or in small group settings. All our cases where there is an identified safeguarding concern currently fall have been seen consistently during the Covid-19 pandemic and will remain priority cases in our recovery.

There are upcoming transforms and organisational restructures due to the announcement of the re-nationalisation of the offender management section of probation. This is scheduled to be implemented in June 2021. This may have some negative impact but the North London CRC Manager and the National Probation Service Managers have a good relationship and continue to work very closely together to manage this.

Metropolitan Police Service

Overview

When the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)'s safeguarding arrangements were inspected by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in 2016, a number of areas for development were identified. A post-inspection review was carried out towards the end of 2018 and the Partnership sought updates on progress throughout 2019.

Major changes took place to strengthen strategic oversight and this included a complete restructure of the MPS into the new Basic Command Units. For Barnet this meant local police services were joined with Brent and Harrow. We have maintained an active interest in identifying benefits and challenges that impact on local children and young people in Barnet.

Achievements 2019/20

- The MPS introduced a new Safeguarding Framework which clarifies roles and responsibilities and outlines its approach to partnership arrangements.
- A new internal dedicated inspection team was set up to inform senior officers of performance.

In response to requirements from safeguarding partnership across London the MPS have developed a Safeguarding Dashboard. This provides them and partnerships with performance data in relation to a wide range of safeguarding issues, such as child protection investigations, children who go missing, child exploitation, knife crime and children in custody.

The Dashboard is recognised as a good step forward by the Quality Assurance subgroup and requests have been made by Barnet to receive pan-London and local data broken down and interpreted for our own area, so that we can examine local performance and activity more effectively. This will strengthen the Partnership's oversight of local performance.

Upcoming priorities

- Translate audits identifying where performance is in need of improvement to timely changes.
- Further improve our response to online offences and the management of sexual offenders.

North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group

Overview

On 1 April 2020 NHS Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) became part of the wider North Central London (NCL) CCG, which comprises Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Islington and Camden.

NCL CCG is a commissioning organisation responsible for the commissioning of health services across the five-borough footprint.

Achievements 2019/20

The unification of the commissioning arrangements across the five boroughs has already within the short period of the inception of NCL CCG strengthened safeguarding across pathways in health which often cross borough boundaries.

There is now a team of five Designated Nurses across the five boroughs, who provide support and cover arrangements within the wider CCG.

We however acknowledge that each borough has its own Safeguarding Partnership arrangements that continue to focus on borough-defined priorities.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the NCL CCG has continued to work in partnership with our local borough authorities, police, education and commissioned health providers to ensure that children and young people remain protected within what has been a rapidly changing situation. The Safeguarding team are now in the process of reviewing the approach for the next phase of safeguarding in Covid-19.

The actions for safeguarding children in response to Covid 19 included:

- Exempting safeguarding designated professionals from redeployment to enable them to focus on supporting provider organisations and identifying risks.
- Provider safeguarding business continuity plans regarding the response to Covid-19 were scrutinised and the Barnet Director of Children's Services was kept aware of any significant risks that might arise.
- Strengthening our communications mechanism with our GP Safeguarding Practice Leads.
- Additional support for General Practice across Barnet was offered with Teams training sessions in which over 300 GPs participated and representatives from the adult and children's MASH were present.
- The NCL CCG also increased health safeguarding forum dates during the lockdown period and was supported by both the adult and children's MASH and domestic abuse agency.
- An NCL CCG safeguarding adult and children's designated leads workstream was developed to address safeguarding issues posed by Covid-19. This included

development of a strategic risk register which identified issues pertaining to hidden harm and other current concerns.

- In Barnet the list of vulnerable unborns was sent out to maternity and public health nursing services so that they could identify the most vulnerable children on their caseloads.

The Designated Doctor Safeguarding Children and Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children in Barnet are members of the BSCP Learning and Thematic Review Group and are responsible for coordinating health agency responses to cases reviewed within the group.

Work done by the designate leads in conjunction with their Named GP colleague include bringing together health component reports for the Partnership and ensuring that actions are embedded across health agencies.

This is in addition to a GP conference held in Nov 2019 at which expert speakers delivered presentations on child exploitation online, factitious illness and perplexing presentations. The Local Authority Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Workforce Development and Designated Doctor Safeguarding also presented learning from case reviews in the form of a seven-minute briefing.

The CCG have also supported the appointment of a Learning and Thematic Review Group chair and Partnership Manager for BSCP.

Upcoming priorities

The focus for 2020/21 is to ensure that appropriate health provision from a safeguarding perspective is in place for when children return to school in November. We are also planning for anticipated surges in mental health needs.

Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

Overview

The Royal Free London (RFL) NHS Foundation Trust provides services to children, young people and their families across Barnet hospital, Chase Farm hospital, the Royal Free hospital and Edgware community hospital. The Trust is committed to ensuring that it delivers services that are well led and which meet the requirement to keep children and young people, including the unborn, safe from harm. The Trust is a key member of BSCP and works together with all partners to improve the safety of children and young people in Barnet.

Achievements 2019/20

- We have implemented the changes required to discharge our responsibilities when responding to a child death to make sure that families are supported and lessons learned.
- We continued to implement the better births programme to provide women with continuity of carer throughout their pregnancy. Through this project we were able to appoint two midwives to support the safeguarding needs of the most vulnerable women and their babies. Feedback from mothers who have continuity of midwife is very positive.
- We worked jointly with Barnet children's services at the start of lockdown to make sure that robust birth plans were in place for all women and babies who were vulnerable.
- Following learning from local case reviews that we contributed to, we rolled out ICON, a coping with crying programme to support new parents and to reduce the prevalence of abusive head trauma in babies and small children. Initially we embedded it on the

neonatal unit at Barnet hospital. Following direction from NHS England who were concerned about increased parental stress during lockdown we provided all new parents with information about ICON. Midwives would then talk to both parents about how to manage crying during a face to face visit on day five after delivery. We have now introduced ICON as part of antenatal education.

- Responding to the Royal College of Midwives research and our own local survey we held a number of awareness raising sessions aimed at supporting staff who experience domestic abuse, promoting the service of hospital-based domestic abuse advisors, the support in place from managers and the domestic abuse policy. The number of staff seeking support has increased.
- We have commissioned safeguarding supervision skills training so that we have more staff able to deliver safeguarding supervision.
- We continually review our safeguarding training throughout the year, and as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic we have developed more training that we can deliver virtually or blend with elearning.

Upcoming priorities

As health services for children across North Central London are reconfigured in planning for pressures over the Winter period, we will make sure that our safeguarding processes are robust and adaptive and that we can liaise with other hospitals when children may be redirected.