



## Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022

<b>Title</b>	<b>Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership update</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Chairman of the Committee - Cllr David Longstaff
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	Appendix A – Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership 2020/21 annual report (pgs.1-24) Appendix B – Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership independent scrutiny report (pgs. 1-17)
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### 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 the government guidance ‘*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.*’

The BSCP 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. It also works with health providers, education and the voluntary, community and faith sector.

The BSCP is required to publish an annual report about how the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements have been delivered. This report is attached at **Appendix A.**

It is also required to plan for independent scrutiny and in November 2021 a team of scrutineers conducted a virtual visit. They confirmed the Partnership is meeting all 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 notes and considers the reports and appendices 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. to review multi-agency working and what the Partnership has achieved. 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 2021. This is their second independent scrutiny visit. The report is attached for information (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 The Committee is also asked to note and comment on the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) annual report and provide feedback prior to final approval by the Partnership's Leadership Forum and subsequent publication. The Annual Report is a statutory requirement of the partnership.

### 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

#### **BSCP annual report**

- 2.1 The annual report sets out what BSCP has achieved over the period September 2020-September 2021 and how the Partnership has worked to deliver the, locally agreed, six strategic priorities:
  - Strengthening leadership and partnership
  - Tailoring our work to local specific issues
  - Driving continuous improvement to safeguarding practice
  - Responding to serious safeguarding cases effectively
  - Creating a strong feedback loop with children, families & practitioners
  - Measuring & evidencing the impact of our work
- 2.2 It sets out the impact that the Partnership has made in continually improving the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the borough and identifies areas of safeguarding practice that all Partners are focussed on tackling.
- 2.3 The Annual Report seeks to have a focus upon learning, evidence, assurance and impact. This follows much clearer guidance published this year by the "*What Works in Children's Social Care*", and the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, about effective annual reporting. Clearly, with the ongoing pandemic the Partnership's further core areas of focus have been responding to the safeguarding concerns posed by Covid-19. The Annual Report includes contributions from all Partners, with further oversight provided by the independent

scrutineers. The scrutineers noted that the Annual Report reflected the guidance published this year.

### **Independent scrutiny visit**

- 2.4 The scrutiny visit took place week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 by a team of three independent scrutineers with professional backgrounds in children's services, police and health. They reviewed a range of documents and interviewed more than 40 representatives from Barnet Council and partner agencies. The interviews were undertaken with a cross section of staff including frontline practitioners.
- 2.5 The scrutineers concluded that *“our confident judgement is 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. The last year has consolidated and strengthened the Partnership arrangements, with clear evidence that key partners have stepped up to their responsibilities in the Partnership and are involved and committed.”*
- 2.6 The scrutineers found that across the Partnership, *“there continues to be a culture of openness, respectful challenge, and a willingness to learn, which has positively impacted children and families in Barnet.”*
- 2.7 The scrutineers made four key recommendations for how Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership can continue to improve in the coming year:
- Consider the sustainability of the BSCP budget, including contingency for local child safeguarding practice reviews.
  - Establish mechanisms through the Partnership arrangements, to ensure that the Borough Commander and Chief Operating Officer for the CCG are kept informed of and held to account for safeguarding children in Barnet.
  - Although these will be case led, consideration should be given to establish an effective, proportionate Barnet model of delivering child safeguarding practice reviews (CSPRs)
  - Deliver the consolidated action plan for learning (from prior CSPRs), which has been developed to help to evidence outcomes and impact
- 2.8 These recommendations will be included in the BSCP business plan for 2022/23 and delivery will be overseen by the Partnership's Leadership Forum.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The annual report needs to be developed and published 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](#))
- 6.2.2 Financial commitments set out in the annual report and proposed by the independent scrutineers will be accounted for within current budgets.
- 6.2.3 The Council continue to support the partnership financially at a greater level than our statutory partners with police funding remaining too low. This has been raised with the Police and MOPAC.

### **6.3 Legal and Constitutional References**

- 6.3.1 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.
- 6.3.2 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.
- 6.3.3 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.

## **6.4 INSIGHT**

6.4.1 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.

## **6.5 Social Value**

6.5.1 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.

6.5.2 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.

## **6.6 Risk Management**

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

## **6.7 Equalities and Diversity**

6.7.1 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.

6.7.2 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.

## **6.8 Corporate Parenting**

6.8.1 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.

6.8.2 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.

## **6.9 Consultation and Engagement**

- 6.9.1 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 and further consultation and engagement will be driven by the forthcoming My Say Matters participation strategy.

## **7 Environmental Impact**

None

## **8 Background papers**

- 8.3.1 [The Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership - \(thebarnetscp.org.uk\)](http://thebarnetscp.org.uk)