



**Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership**

# **Annual Report 2020–2021**

# Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership



Barnet  
Safeguarding  
Children Partnership



## Annual Report

September 2020-September 2021

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**Introduction** Welcome to the 2020 -21 Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) Annual Report. We hope our Annual Report provides you with an update against our 6 key strategic priorities and evidences the impact of our work across BSCP to safeguard children effectively and improve outcomes for them. As ever, we remain steadfast across the Partnership in our vision to create a Family Friendly Barnet where children, young people and families thrive and achieve.

BSCP brings together statutory partners from the Local Authority, Health and Police alongside a wider broad spectrum of organisations in Barnet who work with children and young people including education, Probation, and our local voluntary community and faith sector (VCFS). We shall refer to all throughout this report as 'Partners' and 'the Partnership', recognising the strength of our collaborative approaches. We believe our partnership structure and governance arrangements allow us to collaborate effectively to safeguard children. We strive to work closely with children and young people, their families as well as practitioners to hear their views and experiences and use this to shape our priorities.

The ongoing Covid19 pandemic has impacted upon children in a significant way. Their lived experiences have included schools closing, disruption to their extracurricular support and enrichment, family dynamics altering, their emotional and mental health worsening and for some this has been exacerbated by managing the consequences of loss and bereavement. For the most vulnerable children in society the loss of a line of sight to trusted adults and professionals within education, social care and health settings has heightened concerns upon their safety. The recent Ofsted Annual Report for 2020/21 notes that, '*nearly all children have been affected by Covid19 to some degree*'. For us within BSCP we

must not look away from this and we must remain vigilant to the challenge it presents and the pressures it places upon the system.

Locally, we are seeing an increase in anxiety related presentations to the Barnet Integrated Clinical Service (BICS) and our KOOTH online counselling service. Families have faced increasing pressures due to a strain on finances, the stress of isolation and managing childcare demands alongside work commitments. For these reasons the Partnership has been planning and implementing plans for recovery with a focus upon children continuing to receive support and provision. We continue to deliver our Covid-19 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.

In respect of child protection work we have seen the rate of referrals decrease in comparison to the year prior. For the period up to and including the end of September 2021 our rate of referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) has been lower this year than in 2019-20, with a reduction of 11.7% from 300 to 265 per 10,000 of the 0-17 population. This follows a pan-London trend. The largest reduction in referrals was from schools, and data shows a clear pattern in a concerted and sustained increase in education referrals when school closures ceased in March 2021. Partners are working closely to analyse MASH referrals into the 'front-door' and at the time of writing there is a

coordinated multi agency audit of MASH referrals by the Partnership to analyse and ascertain causal factors driving the increase. Learning will be disseminated through the Partnership in early 2022.

We have seen a rise in the number of children open to our Early Help services during this time, showing that the system has supported those families experiencing lower-level difficulties during lockdowns. The reduction in referrals to statutory services has led to a reduction in the rate of section 47 child protection enquiries, which have reduced by 19.5%, amongst the highest reduction across London, but at a rate consistent with historical patterns for Barnet and in line with the reduction in referrals. The rate of initial child protection conferences is also down, by 9.1%, illustrating a corresponding fall alongside referrals and section 47s.

Child protection plans have remained at a steady rate compared to previous years. There has been a 7.8% decrease in the rate of new child protection plans, corresponding with the reduction in child protection activity at the front door. Data on children looked after by the local authority shows fewer changes in rates than front door data. The Partnership has seen an increase of 17% in the rate of new looked after children, which is due in part to an upward trend in supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASCs) over the last couple of years.

In light of the pressures upon families as a consequence of the pandemic, Barnet is further investing in Early Years parenting approaches, having launched a new Parenting Hub in June 2021. The Parenting Hub will provide support to parents affected by poor mental health, relationship difficulties and addictions using evidenced-informed approaches to help them develop secure and healthy relationships with their children and in

turn lead to better outcomes for children. The Parenting Hub will enhance the current parenting support offer available to children and families in the borough and will work with children at risk of entry into care, as well as delivering additional support to families accessing Early Help Services to minimise the need for escalation into Children's Social Care Services when parenting groups available in Universal Plus and Early Help provision are not achieving change for the child.

We have concluded 2 Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) which have brought into sharp focus for us as a partnership important safeguarding issues upon Elective Home Education, child sexual abuse, bereavement support and inter-agency information sharing. This Report will outline the actions we have taken to address these matters and how learning has been shared across the Partnership. We are also currently undertaking a further CSPR which has been commissioned with Brent Safeguarding Partnership. This CSPR features issues such as neglect and domestic violence and we hope to publish its findings and recommendations in early 2022.

Our multi-agency children's workforce development programme has had to pivot to a virtual training platform owing to the challenges of Covid-19. The resulting virtual learning offer reflected the changing and emerging safeguarding needs seen in the challenges young people were, and continue, to experience including; bereavement, mental health and isolation, lack of physical activity, neglect and domestic violence at home. Feedback from participants across the Partnership shows an emerging preference to retain virtual learning longer term and this will inform the development of a hybrid approach to learning blending online workshops and seminars, self-directed (e-learning) and face to face learning.

Partners in Health and Police have demonstrated their crucial roles within the Partnership. This has included pro-actively participating in CSPRs and Rapid Reviews and in turn evidencing auditing, review, and dissemination of learning to colleagues. They have also pro-actively raised awareness across their respective fields of stubborn themes such as Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI) and strengthened their own internal safeguarding processes, protocols and projects – more of which is discussed within this Report.

Our Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) safeguarding strategy sets outreach as a key priority for the Partnership. We have a new Chair of the VCFS safeguarding forum who is a highly regarded leader of a community embedded organisation which is seeking to tackle violence against women and girls. It has been a hugely challenging year for our VCFS with many forward-facing youth led organisations placed in technical ‘hibernation’, leaning on furlough and government support to continue as a consequence of the pandemic. In the coming year we hope that if the public health situation permits, and with more face-to-face work in the community we will be able to work with more VCFS organisations to improve safeguarding practice and respond to the challenges faced in Barnet.

As part of our independent scrutiny arrangements, we are pleased to report that following a thorough independent scrutiny visit in Autumn 2021 it was found by the scrutineers 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 scrutineers placed a robust focus upon

the delivery of our Business Plan and sought to speak with senior leaders and front-line practitioners from across the Partnership.

As we go forward, we will continue to work collectively to tackle the significant safeguarding challenges posed by Covid-19 upon the lives of children. We must remain vigilant and determined to tackle abuse, neglect or exploitation wherever it affects the lives of children. Everyone involved in promoting the welfare, protection and care of children have worked extremely hard in the face of unprecedented challenges to support the most vulnerable during this period. We look forward to continuing to work with you all to safeguard and improve the wellbeing of children and young people in Barnet.

*John Hooton, Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet*

*Jenny Goodridge, Director of Quality & Chief Nurse, North London CCG*

*Barry Loader, Detective Superintendent, North West Basic Command Unit,*

## About BSCP

**How we work:** Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership 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 Partnership structure draws on our wide multi-agency membership to deliver scrutiny, drive practice improvements and quality assure the work and impact of BSCP.



**Leadership Forum:** The Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership is overseen by a small Leadership Forum with membership from the three statutory partners and a rotating chair. The Chair is Jenny Goodridge, Director of Quality and Chief Nurse, NCL CCG.

The Chair serves as the single point of contact for the BSCP over the length of a term, which is one year. The Leadership Forum is also comprised of Barry Loader, Detective Superintendent and Head of Public Protection for Harrow, Barnet & Brent Metropolitan Police and John Hooton, Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet. Further leadership is afforded by Chris Munday, Executive Director for Children and Young People and Tina

McElligott, Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care. Councillor David Longstaff, Elected Member for Children, Education and Safeguarding also sits upon the Leadership Forum.

A primary Term of Reference for the Leadership Forum is to oversee the delivery of the BSCP business plan, receive quarterly updates from the Performance and Quality Assurance Panel and Learning and Thematic Review Group to address stubborn or pertinent issues within the system as well as scrutinising and actioning system-wide reports such as Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

**Performance and Quality Assurance Panel:** The Performance and Quality Assurance 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 CCG, 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 including from the MASH, LADO, Vulnerable Adolescents Community Partnership, 0-19 Strategic Partnership and Education.

PQA takes an active role in monitoring and advising many of the BSCP activities, including development and scrutiny of the multi-agency data dashboard, multi-agency audits, the workforce development training programme, scrutiny of service level reports including MASH, private fostering and LADO, Section 11 audits, Professional and Young People Forums and thematic deep dives. This also includes receives regular reports from the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector subgroup.

**Learning and Thematic Review Group:** The Learning and Thematic Review Group is chaired independently by Bridget Griffin, a hugely experienced multi-agency safeguarding professional, and has a membership from

across the council, police, health, community safety, public health and a legal adviser. It undertakes Rapid Reviews, oversees local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and other bespoke learning activities, and monitors the implementation of recommendations. It also reviews national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and other relevant learning and good practice to implement in Barnet.

**Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Sub-group:** Our VCFS subgroup aims to bring the voice and knowledge of VCFS organisations to the Partnership, as well as to improve safeguarding practice across the sector and increase engagement with Partnership activities and training. It has been a hugely challenging year for our Partners within the VCFS as they have tackled increased demand, funding challenges and loss of income as a result of the pandemic. Despite this, examples such as the Barnet Together Network, a multi-organisational umbrella support group for the local VCFS, have supported tackling food poverty and providing access for organisations to Holiday Activity Funding in order to keep children healthy and safe over school holidays. We stand in steadfast admiration and awe for the unflinching commitment our VCFS has shown within the heart of our communities keeping children and families safe. We maintain our VCFS strategy which we will take forward to engage and support the voluntary, community and faith sector with improving their safeguarding practices and involving them more in Partnership activities. The VCFS forum has a new Chair, who has considerable experience in leading a grass roots, community embedded organisation tackling violence against women and girls and we look forward to taking our shared ambitions forward.

**BSCP associated budget – partner contributions / expenditure:** The funding for the Safeguarding Partnership is agreed each year by the Leadership Forum and forms part of the annual Business Plan cycle. The graphs below outline revenue expenditure for the financial years 2020/21 & 2021/22 which cover the core period of this Annual Report (September 20 – Sept 21).

<b>Revenue expenditure – 2021/22</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Staff pay and on-costs:	133,294
Independent Review (independent Chair, CSPR, independent scrutiny)	29,448
Training programme	20,000
Website, annual report design and communication/publicity	1500
Catering of events/meetings and speaker costs	250
IT and staff expenses/travel	2000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>186,532</b>
<b>Draw down from Reserves</b>	<b>(20,482)</b>

<b>Revenue expenditure – Final outturn position 2020/21</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Staff pay and on-costs	114,348
Independent Review (independent Chair, CSPR , independent scrutiny)	50,341
Training programme	20000
Website, annual report design and communication/publicity	792
Catering of events/meetings and speaker costs	0
IT and staff expenses/travel	3418
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>188,899</b>
<b>Draw down from Reserves</b>	<b>(22,849)</b>

<b>PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS 19/20 &amp; 20/21</b>	
London Borough of Barnet	93,000
Barnet NCL-CCG	50,000
CLCH	5,000
BEHMHT	5,000
Royal Free NHS FT	5,000
Metropolitan Police (MOPAC)	5,000
National Probation Service	1,000
London Community Rehabilitation	1,000
East London Foundation Trusts NHS	550
London Fire Brigade	500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166,050</b>



**BSCP 2020/21 Business Plan:** Our annual business plan sets 6 key priorities for the Partnership to work towards. They are not listed in order of any priority:

1. Strengthening leadership and partnership
2. Tailoring our work to local themes
3. Driving continuous safeguarding practice improvement
4. Responding to serious child safeguarding cases effectively
5. Creating a strong feedback loop with children, families and practitioners
6. Measuring and evidencing the impact of our work

It is important to note that the following sections of this report outline our achievements in the past year in respect of these priorities, as well as looking at stubborn challenges that we wish to tackle in 2022 and beyond. However, so much of what is reported upon within this report must be viewed through the lens of Covid19. Although the global pandemic was declared early 2020, when setting our business plan for 2020/21, no-one could have foreseen that an autumn lockdown in 2020 was to be imposed and then, following concerns over the impact of new variants into the UK and a rise in cases and deaths, a long and arduous winter lockdown was imposed at the end of 2020 and into 2021.

In line with a range of published articles by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, including their [Annual Report](#) and reports by What Works for Children's Social Care and the Wood Review into the effectiveness of safeguarding children partnerships, much of our reporting has been aligned with common themes running through the aforementioned publications. These themes stress that Safeguarding Partnerships must place a lens of scrutiny upon evidence of learning,

impact of learning and assurances given to, and from the Partnership, that safeguarding arrangements are meeting the needs of children locally.

Clear evidence of positive strategic travel of the BSCP can be seen through the production and implementation of a well-received Business Plan and its priorities all with the commitment to keeping children and young people safe and promoting their welfare. Linked to this, there is clear evidence of the work of BSCP beginning to make a difference with practice change across the Partnership clearly linked to dissemination of learning from safeguarding incidents. Further, 2020-21 has seen BSCP be pro-active and undertake thematic reviews and multi-agency audits in which we have sought to shine a light on some of the emerging and stubborn challenges we see locally.

We have overseen 3 local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR), all of which have led to clear evidence of learning affecting systems change. It is positive that 2 of these reviews have led to funding from the Department of Education seeking to raise awareness of the issue of Elective Home Education and to strengthen safeguarding arrangements for children who are educated at home. One other CSPR has seen close cross borough working across a multi-agency setting, demonstrating a commitment to learning and improving our safeguarding processes regardless of complexity. In line with national guidance, we have reviewed our Rapid Review processes following Serious Incident Notifications meaning that we are well placed to take swift action to enact change from lessons learnt.

# Priority 1: Strengthening Leadership and Partnership.

**Impact & Evidence:** The Partnership has this year committed to strengthening our collaborative leadership and partnership approaches and we feel we have clear evidence that this has secured improved outcomes for children. In June 2021 we welcomed Ofsted to inspect the quality of provision afforded to children in care and care leavers through the pandemic. We are pleased to report a positive outcome for some of the most vulnerable children in our community with the report outlining that:

*“Senior leaders and partner agencies in Barnet have worked together to deliver a well-coordinated and effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the ongoing pressures, leaders have continued to prioritise children’s services, underpinned by strong corporate and political support.”*

In respect of serious safeguarding incidents we have commissioned a cross-borough Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) with Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership involving senior leaders and Partners all committed to identifying key findings, sadly, from harm committed towards a child and we will be taking forward cross borough multi-agency recommendations when the CSPR is published in early 2022. This is a complex review, but one which has already shown clear evidence of strong collaborative partnership work across two boroughs to ensure that the learnings are embedded within practice. More on this is laid out further on in this Report.

We know that Covid19 has impacted upon children’s learning and their access to trusted adults. Referrals to MASH by educational settings decreased significantly through lockdowns as schools were shut. Severing the line of sight for professionals to children, particularly those at risk of harm, through lockdowns and ongoing closures of schools to prevent Covid19 outbreaks has meant that we have had to work harder than ever to keep children safe. This is particularly true when it came to ensuring children were safeguarded at home or at school over the pandemic and new ways of working such as using Teams or Zoom became the norm for teachers. Professionals worked hard to ensure children stayed safe online. That is why our Partnership ensured that weekly safeguarding advice was shared with schools and our breakfast briefings have seen significant increase in attendance from school’s designated safeguarding leads.

*“Continuous support for schools and DSLs through Covid to reflect new and emerging safeguarding guidance They make sure we don't miss anything that's important and keep us on the right track. Great support. We're very grateful.”* Barnet Primary School Headteacher

To support our Covid19 recovery plans Barnet schools worked alongside the Partnership with BELS and other services such as Family Services, Barnet Public Health, NCL CCG, SHaW and Barnet Integrated Clinical Service (BICS) in order to minimise disruption and to ensure children were safe and learning. One year later the impact of our Covid19 recovery plans are clear:

- Attendance of pupils in school remained in line with national averages
- Attendance of vulnerable children in line with national statistics
- Audit and monitoring of remote learning indicated the majority (approx. 92%) of Barnet schools offered a good quality remote learning offer.

- The small minority (approx. 8%) of schools that needed to improve their offer had plans for support in place and regular contact with the Learning Network Inspector (LNI) team.
- Over 2500 laptops funded by the DfE were distributed to Barnet schools

Police partners have demonstrated commitment to continually reviewing their approach to Partnership safeguarding work and following changes that took place to restructure the Metropolitan Police Service into new Basic Command Units, local child abuse investigation now comes under the umbrella of Public Protection (PP). PP is made up of local specialist investigators who investigate a wide range of criminality from rape and serious sexual offending to domestic abuse. PP also has a partnership strand that includes MASH and Child Abuse Investigation Teams working together.

Within the arena of acute mental health services for our most vulnerable children, we have worked to ensure our Leadership Forum was placing appropriate levels of leadership and scrutiny upon the Beacon Centre following reports that not all children as inpatients were receiving sufficient provision of care. The Beacon Centre is an inpatient child and adolescent mental health ward at Edgware Hospital. We welcomed from our Partners Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health Trust (BEH-MHT) a CQC inspection report finding that the level of provision was now Good, having previously been inadequate. CQC found that:

*“Staff had a good awareness of safeguarding and maintained clear documentation in relation to safeguarding. Leaders used a safeguarding tracking system to ensure they had oversight of all cases”*

The impact of Covid19 upon child poverty has led to fears that it could heighten risks involved in associating with street-based youth violence and gang activity. The Department for Education announced in November

2020 that every local authority will have access to the £220 million Holiday Activities Food (HAF) Programme fund which aims to build upon the initial delivery funded since 2018. The HAF programme aims to support families who are on reduced incomes that face increased costs with childcare and food pressure points during the school holiday period. It has been evidenced that free holiday club offers with additional access to breakfast or lunch have a positive impact on young people. The London Borough of Barnet was allocated £1,163,420 DfE funding, and the 0 – 19 Early Help Service has worked collaboratively with schools, stakeholders, partners and Young Barnet Foundation to support the community in ensuring the most vulnerable are offered access to the HAF Programme. In Barnet we have delivered this work under the Barnet Active, Creative and Engaging holidays (BACE) programme. Our BACE Summer Camps ran for 4 weeks over the school holidays and we have had excellent feedback from the children and young people, parents, and the providers. The impact of the programme has seen over 3000 children participate, with over 15,000 hot meals having been served.

**Assurance & Learning:** For children’s social care care over the course of the the pandemic a weekly dataset of key indicators was scrutinised by senior managers to ensure capacity was well understood, supplemented by regular monthly reporting to Committee using the CHaT tool and included an analysis of trends compared to London wide data provided through the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance. A regular monthly meeting is in place for the Leader, the Lead Member for Children’s Services and the Chief Executive to meet with Senior Leaders and discuss data and improvement activity. This commitment to securing safeguarding data has helped the Partnership develop its own multiagency data dashboard which looks at key data indices from across Health, Police and Children’s Social Care. This approach has already helped us track the number of children who are EHE and provide a good

platform for the scrutiny of A&E admission data for children and young people. Recently we have held concern upon an increase in the use of Powers of Police Protection being imposed upon children. Following scrutiny and audit we learnt that these were driven by an increase in out of hours use of this power, and we will continue to track this and its impact upon the experiences of children.

Following an expression of interest Barnet was asked to participate in a local area SEND interim visit on 13 and 14 October 2020. The visit was designed to give Ofsted, CQC and the government insights into how well the SEND system is working through the pandemic. Inspectors noted that:

*“Leaders and practitioners from education, health and social care have a deep understanding of the issues that children and young people with SEND and their families have faced. They have changed and adapted important ways of working in recent months. Regular communication and contact with trusted practitioners has been a ‘lifeline’ for families at a time when they have felt anxious about their children’s health and well-being.”*

The assurance and learning from this consequently supported planning for the coming year. We expanded our successful Open Spaces project, designed to give the most vulnerable of families access to leisure provision, explored the benefits and drawbacks of working ‘virtually’ both as a professional network and with families of SEND children, and used the findings and recommendations of the ‘Lost Learning’ report commissioned by local authorities in North London, to help early years settings and schools support the learning and development of children who have difficulties accessing online learning, including those with significant and complex needs.

**Stubborn challenges – Priority 1:** It is critical that as a Partnership we continue to use the appropriate platforms to raise the stubborn challenge of inequitable funding for the core BSCP business team, which drives the central work of the Partnership forward. This inequitable funding for Safeguarding Children Partnerships is an issue recognised pan-London.

Continuing an effective response to safeguarding children, because of Covid-19, will need strong leadership and partnership work. Understanding the lived experiences of children what is happening to them within their homes and their community will require robust challenge and scrutiny of one another which we cannot shy away from.

Looking ahead to organisational transformation of the safeguarding system, it will be crucial that the Partnership works together with Health colleagues to ensure that the move to Integrated Care Systems uphold safeguarding responsibilities towards all children, including the most vulnerable.

## Priority 2 – Tailoring our work to local safeguarding themes:

**Impact & Evidence:** Much has been reported upon the pressures families with children who have special educational needs and disability (SEND) have experienced through the pandemic. The weekly Complex Needs Panel has been run virtually throughout the pandemic, along with Placement meetings with special schools and ARPs. We know that children with SEND who are not receiving the appropriate levels of support face increased risk and we are committed to them and their families. The clear impact of this approach is that over 95% of new EHC Plans have been finalised within the statutory timescales during 2020 – 21, and the quality of EHCPs has remained good throughout this time (as shown by findings of an EHCP audit).

As has been already been noted in this Annual Report, and is pertinent as a local theme, strengthening arrangements upon Elective Home Education (EHE) has been a priority for the Partnership as a result of learning from local CSPRs. We are supporting as many children and families as possible who are EHE and continue to expand our network. The Partnership securing Dept. of Education funding under their *'Implementing Safeguarding Reforms'* programme has enabled the expansion of the EHE team project team, led by BELS. Key pillars of the project are: engagement with the EHE community, providing additional support, creating new resources, such as a comprehensive website to be launched in November 2021, and sharing of knowledge and building of networks to connect with more families. Our data tracking evidences enhanced number of children known to the EHE team and is thus already

showing impact. Our revised EHE policy places more robust engagement requirements for children subject to Child Protection Plans or who are Children in Need (CiN).

The publication of our thematic deep-dive review into Transitional Safeguarding, delivered collaboratively with the Barnet Safeguarding Adults Board, has begun to display early evidence of impact. Partners in Probation and within our Leaving Care Service are reviewing their information sharing protocols to ensure a child centred approach is taken to the transitions vulnerable young people face within this domain. In addition, a Serious Incident Response protocol has been implemented which seeks to provide wrap around holistic support for adolescents and young adults affected by serious youth violence in the days and weeks after incidents that may occur. Although the prevalence of these incidents within Barnet are low, we know that communities and networks of young people are deeply affected when tragic incidents occur, and our joined-up approach here ensures that appropriate levels of support and risk management are in place across agencies in a holistic fashion for families and children across transitions. Further, we are pleased to see that Partners have actively considered their approaches to Transitional Safeguarding with colleagues at BEH MHT weaving this topic into their training programme.

Our Partners within Police have been placing a stringent focus on tackling perpetrators who share indecent images of children (IIOC) with the development of the Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (OCSAE) teams. Within these teams 9 officers have been trained resulting in nearly 300 addresses being attended where individuals suspected of sharing IIOC have resided. There has been impact here and a significant increase in speed of IIOC investigations, with medium risk investigations now dealt with within two-week guidelines. Furthermore, following an analysis of Police IIOC referrals, it was noted that 46% of them related to members of a specific minority ethnic community, evidencing a clear disproportionality.

It was also evident that many of the people Police were speaking to from this minority ethnic community were often related to or were known associates of each other, which further confirmed that viral videos were simply being shared around a tight knit community unknowingly. The viral nature of the offending, coupled with feedback from OCSAE officers conducting PACE interviews confirmed that there appeared to be a general lack of understanding within the community in relation to sharing viral videos, and an educative approach needed to be considered that would use the same social media platforms that were being used to commit the offending. A targeted Facebook campaign was created in association with the community and their police representatives. Since the campaign there has been a 32% drop in offenders from the specific ethnic minority community coming to notice for this offence.

Within the domain of domestic abuse, police led Operation Encompass has been developed and seeks to support young victims of domestic abuse. This innovative programme informs schools of referrals into the MASH where their pupils have experienced domestic abuse – thus ensuring wrap around support available to them. A nearly full subscription of schools has signed up to the project with relationships with Designated Safeguarding Leads further developed.

From our Covid19 survey of young people intended to better understand their lived experiences through Covid19, which reached nearly 800 respondents, we have learnt around two fifths indicated they felt their long-term mental health and wellbeing had been affected (43%), and felt less secure than before the pandemic (38%). Half of young people indicated they have been doing less physical activity compared to prior the pandemic (51%) and half indicated that they felt the pandemic is harming their long-term education (50%). That is why the Partnership has worked tirelessly to ensure that educational outcomes and support for emotional wellbeing have been addressed throughout and will continue beyond the pandemic. We have worked with Education Partners to ensure children

and young people have been supported with the provision of a laptop or tablet to ensure they have been able to participate in their education despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Barnet Education, Employment and Training Support (BEETS) has continued to provide careers guidance, information, and advice for young people in Barnet after leaving Year 11 until the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with statements/EHCP). Bridging the Gap and Thrive programs have continued to run throughout the pandemic and 75% of 17–18-year-olds have remained in Education, Employment or Training.

For the emotional wellbeing of young people, the Partnership has placed a Youth Engagement Officer based in BICS in order to empower and support the voices of young people receiving mental health support and develop projects resulting from needs identified. Key priorities have placed a focus upon schools group sessions with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) within BICS offering consultations, workshops, and support groups services to schools. These are aimed at students, parents/ carers and sometimes teachers. Commissioners have attended secondary schools to gain feedback from young people on mental health support and use this to inform commissioning decisions and forums with parents and young people are held to assist with designing the new autism respite centre.

Children leaving their family homes and coming into the care of Barnet Family Services do so for many different reasons, however for the majority of these young people, it continues to be on the account of abuse and neglect. At the end of September 2021, 332 children and young people were in the care of Barnet Family Services. In the year April 2020 - March 2021, Barnet Family Services entered care proceedings in respect of 82 children, a significant difference from the 138 children who were subject to care proceedings the previous year. Once more as consequence of the pandemic this reduction was attributed to a significant reduction in referrals with schools closed and families living in lockdown, and children not coming to the attention of professionals. As the pandemic stretched



through 2021 colleagues in children's social care regularly re-assessed plans and risk assessments for all children in care to ensure that safeguarding was the top priority and that their lives were not affected adversely, but as a Partnership we remain vigilant to changing needs, risk, and evidence in which to inform assessments. This was noted within the June 2021 Ofsted inspection by way of:

*"At the beginning of the pandemic, all children's cases were risk assessed to establish visiting schedules to children in accordance with their vulnerability. Social workers have continued to keep these arrangements under regular review."*

Going further, children who are looked after by the Local Authority have continued to be supported in safe and secure home environments through child-centred planning for care arrangements that take into consideration children and young peoples' views and wishes, including their cultural background and relationships, lived experiences and connections in the local area. During their June 2021 visit, Ofsted inspectors noted that:

*"The vast majority of children in care benefit from living in placement arrangements which meet their individual needs. Children told inspectors that they valued their carers and felt well supported. The rationale for placement matching and for decisions to move older children into unregulated provision is understood by staff."*

For these vulnerable young people The Virtual School (the local authority embedded group of educational specialists in place to support and promote looked after children's education attainment) ensured that school attendance for children in care over the pandemic remained comparably similar then beforehand. Furthermore, they developed the Transition Hub, offering additional support to young people in care when they move into their home from a new area. During 2020 this hub worked flexibly to

support young people who were unable to attend school and extended their remit to respond to the impact of the pandemic. 15 students were supported, 4 with in-reach support and 11 with outreach support.

**Assurance & Learning:** Our PQA and LTRG sub-groups have sought to ensure that assurances are secured and scrutinised from Partners and that learning embedded from local safeguarding challenges are disseminated. The PQA sub-group receives a range of annual reports from partners to afford further challenge and scrutiny. This year there has been nationally a sharp focus upon listening to the experiences of sexual abuse and harassment of girls and boys within schools and colleges. Starting with the 'Everyone's Invited' platform and culminating in an Ofsted review, which concluded that it has become 'normalised' for these experiences to occur, the Partnership has sought assurances from educational Partners that appropriate measures are in place and in line with necessary policy and procedure to tackle these unacceptable behaviours. With this focus by Partners, 2020/21 saw a rise in the number of schools returning their completed Section 175 self-assessment audits facilitating a rise from 58% to 72% for the prior period. A Peer-on-Peer audit tool was devised and circulated to all schools to explore issues of sexual harassment with core themes captured within the audits and which will lend to wider support from the Partnership, led in this case by BELS. BELS have also met regularly with headteachers, deputy headteachers, DSLs and Governors to highlight learning from the Ofsted report, remind and signpost to the DfE September statutory guidance and they have highlighted the need for schools Behaviour Policies to be clearly communicated to pupils and parents and to challenge all low level derogatory or abuse, behaviour and language.

For Partners in Health, the NCL CCG Designated Professionals have continued to monitor, and quality assure the NCL Safeguarding Health

Providers Recovery and Restoration Plans for COVID-19. This has demonstrated that there is adequate assurance of the safeguarding elements of all health providers across NCL. Where gaps are identified, further assurance has been sought and is monitored at a local level by the relevant borough Safeguarding Leads. There are no plans that required escalation.

The pandemic changed how the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (The Royal Free) delivered services to children, young people, and their families, including the unborn over the last year. Early in 2020 paediatric inpatient and emergency care was diverted to other hospital across North Central London only returning to Barnet hospital in September 2020 and the Royal Free hospital in April 2021. Initially Children's outpatient consultations were conducted virtually or by phone, as was the bulk of early pregnancy midwifery care. Both services have now reverted to a blend of face to face or virtual appointments based on clinical indicators and personal preference. From the beginning the impact on safeguarding was recognised and plans and assurances put in place to mitigate risk which were shared with the local safeguarding partnerships.

For Partner colleagues at CLCH they have sought to take assurances and embed learning every step of the way through the pandemic as seen through their *Re-imagining Health Visiting Programme*. In August 2020 the Trust began an innovative programme of work to develop a sustainable and consistent model for health visiting across all 9 boroughs where CLCH delivers the service. The programme included a safeguarding working group chaired by the ADS and including frontline practitioners, as well as members of the safeguarding team. The group has met monthly to undertake work on revising the safeguarding supervision policy, making safeguarding resources more accessible on the CLCH Hub and embedding learning from local and national statutory reviews in frontline practice. The

group has used quality improvement methodology to deliver the work, which has made a significant difference to how the 0-5 teams are supported. The work is on target and the focus going forward is to develop safeguarding children's champions programme from September 2021 and graduating the members of the working group as safeguarding champions at the Safeguarding Conference in October 2021.

Over 2021 up till the end of September, the Partnership have been informed of the tragic assumed suicides of 4 teenagers in our borough. One young person taking their own life is too much, and our thoughts and condolences are firmly with the families of those affected and the school communities in which they lived. Although none of these tragic incidents triggered formal serious incident notifications under arrangements set out in *Working Together 2018*, the formal Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) processes, overseen by NCL CCG, will seek to share lessons learnt at the appropriate time. However, the local response by the Partnership has been swift with schools receiving additional support which has included resources, materials, access to BICS support for staff and pupils and additional awareness raising sessions to inform upon suicide prevention. Our Suicide Prevention Strategy 2021- 2025 has been updated to reflect current best practice and recent learning from studies conducted by the National Child Mortality Database.

## Stubborn challenges – Priority 2:

All of Barnet's Academy or Local Authority supported secondary schools are judged 'Outstanding' or 'Good' by Ofsted and it has been recognised that the rates of permanent or fixed term exclusions are in the lowest percentiles nationally. However, In November 2020 a multi-agency Preventing Exclusion working party was established to work collaboratively in addressing Barnet's disproportionality index regarding exclusion from school for black school aged boys. To address this, a working group of



eight headteachers, early years specialists, YOT, vulnerable adolescents staff and more seek to ensure the delivery of a project which will seek to: focus on intervening early before problems become entrenched, provide some pupils with ‘targeted’ mentoring support that can be tailored to the needs of pupils vulnerable to exclusion, foster strong, collaborative relationships between school staff and pupils so that every child has a trusted adult in school who they can talk to and so that schools and services work together - so that every child’s underlying needs are met.

## *Priority 3 – Driving continuous safeguarding practice improvement:*

**Impact & Evidence:** The Partnership delivers a extensive multi-agency safeguarding workforce development programme which, despite moving to almost a completely virtual offer through the pandemic, has shown a sharp increase in participation with 724 practitioners attending our multi-agency offer over the period April 2020 – March 2021; up from 509 the year previously. We embed evidence-based practice approaches (i.e. strengths-based, resilience, systemic) through all we do in order to develop practitioners’ understanding of the approaches and interventions experienced by children, young people and families and we believe that this is having an impact upon the standard of safeguarding practice across the partnership. Audit data consequently evidences a positive increase in the domain of high-quality assessment and planning, suggesting that there is evidence of learning transfer and positive impact.

For our educational Partners an example of co-produced learning in context this year is ‘*practice conversations*’. Designed for designated

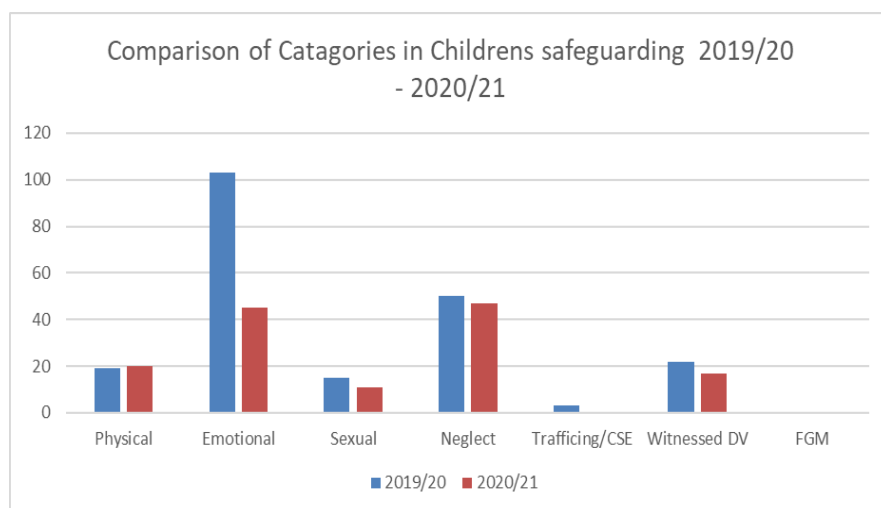
Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in schools and intended to develop understanding of the journey of the child and the key role that schools play in safeguarding and supporting points of transition for children the programme has received positive feedback from attendees, specifically in relation to increasing awareness. These practice conversations have also been a useful tool for the Partnership to have insight on the challenges schools face, and to work in collaboration to support schools. This has been seen through MASH reporting referral outcomes back to DSLs, reflecting learning points from multi agency Risk Assessment Conferences and sharing learning. Specialist safeguarding workshop for DSLs led by the Principle Social Worker receive on average 50 DSLs attend each briefing:

*“Just to say a huge thank you for all your [safeguarding] updates. You have absolutely achieved the right balance and I feel very lucky to be working in Barnet!” – Primary Headteacher*

For Partnership colleagues in health, NCL CCG have placed a focus upon raising awareness of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI) leading to a large multi-agency conference attended by over 130 colleagues from the Partnership. 98% of attendees outlined improved knowledge upon an area of safeguarding that remains a national focus. NCL CCG also increased the number of health safeguarding forum dates within the lockdown periods and were supported in their delivery by the Partnership through the Children and Adults MASH and Domestic abuse agency. The focus of these sessions was on hidden harm, in particular Domestic Violence and Abuse with a focus upon making every contact count. There has also been collaboration with Rise Mutual on their work with perpetrators of abuse. Designated safeguarding teams at NCL CCG have provided support through safeguarding training to GPs in sessions delivered throughout the year which included working with sexually active children and Domestic Violence Training July 2021. These were

very well received by GP colleagues particularly in relation to case discussions and awareness of the different services available to refer to and provide support.

BEH-MHT have developed their network of Safeguarding Champions and placed a focus upon upskilling knowledge upon: cuckooing, Modern Slavery and human trafficking, Parental Mental Health, Gangs and county lines, domestic abuse, PREVENT and radicalisation. As a consequence there is evidence that their referrals onwards to MASH have begun to return to pre-pandemic levels as displayed in the graph below:



Within CLCH, Partners have undertaken an ambitious programme of audit activity having embarked upon: Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse audits and audits which have placed a focus upon the quality of safeguarding supervision. The findings were positive, with policies and processes reviewed based on further feedback. An area of focus for colleagues in this domain is upon a further audit of approaches to tackle FGM. Findings outlined that staff were not always following CLCH

processes for FGM alerts in health records and tracking of impact from further training in this area is underway.

Partners at the Royal Free NHS Foundation Trust have placed a strong focus upon ensuring a high-quality approach to supervision for community midwives. Following the introduction of safeguarding supervision for the community midwives an audit was completed to understand the impact and benefit. 100% scored at least 3/5 for improvement in confidence in safeguarding and 93% outlined that it had helped develop their knowledge of safeguarding at least somewhat. This audit will be developed and repeated in 2022 but does show positive impact from supporting a large group of midwives who had not previously had the opportunity for reflection about possible vulnerabilities of women in their caseloads.

Partnership colleagues in Police have strengthened their practice regarding missing children through tri-borough weekly meeting between Barnet, Harrow and Brent and have introduced mandatory missing people training to new Trainee Detective Constable in July 2021. With regards to Human Trafficking, training under the banner of Operation Innerste has been delivered which seeks embed protocols for supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). The MPS have recently overhauled their Public Protection performance data and the Partnership is looking forward to reviewing progress on important Police led safeguarding data indices.

Our local VCFS often support some of the most vulnerable children in our community. We have rolled out a new safeguarding checklist, designed to ensure that their policies and processes are aligned to best practice and current guidance. We have provided feedback and further challenge for local organisations on the basis of their submissions, providing a further pillar of support for them. We know that this approach has begun

to make a difference as we have seen a large increase in subscribers to our monthly BSCP newsletter with feedback including that the topics raised lead them to review their policies and processes.

**Assurance & Learning** Our LTRG subgroup is the key driver of the dissemination of learning from critical national and local safeguarding matters. This year, the Partnership has taken a collective response to disseminating learning from national thematic reviews including exploring learning from the national child safeguarding practice review panel's report *'The Myth of Invisible Men'*. This report explored the high prevalence of serious safeguarding incidents nationally which involved harm perpetrated to children under the age of 18 by males. Nearly 150 practitioners across the Partnership attended BSCP run webinars to share this learning and to explore more local thematic topics which we have seen within our system including harm children have experienced through religious practices. The Partnership also delivered a successful Transitional Safeguarding conference in March 2021 supported by keynote speakers. 72 colleagues from the Partnership attended the virtual event with 71% of attendees recognising that their knowledge had been significantly improved.

The local authority continues to drive a diverse range of audit activity to scrutinise the quality and effectiveness of practice. The programme of audit activity includes standard audits across predefined areas of practice, which form regular audit activity, and themed audits which are decided quarterly and based on strategic priorities or identified areas for learning. Quality Assurance Officers complete one audit each month from their linked Social Work Team case list; the Team Manager completes one every two months. The PQA sub-group to the Barnet Safeguarding Partnership agree the programme of multi-agency audits to be

undertaken over the year and culminate in a joint examination of partnership practices and the dissemination of learning through 5-7 minute briefings which are shared with partners and published on the safeguarding website. We feel that this gives assurance that children receive the right interventions, at the right time by the right agency yet we remain focussed upon a continual cycle of learning and improvement as we navigate the impacts of the pandemic on the lives of children.

**Stubborn challenges – Priority 3** An area of stubborn challenge identified through audit activity within Family Services is within the domain of diversity, suggesting that impact of the large number of diversity workshops delivered in 2019 did not result in sustained change. These workshops will be reinstated alongside commissioned equality, diversity and inclusion training and 'live learning' or 'action learning sets' and will be utilised to support learning and training translating in to plans and meaningful work with children and families.

Looking ahead the Partnership, led by NCL CCG have, through the network of designated safeguarding professionals, written to NHS England raising their concerns about the rising number of children in care for whom carers are not able to access routine dental reviews and have requested there are discussions when the urgency of the pandemic situation eases, as to whether a designated dental pathway for looked after children could be designed and implemented, ideally with national delivery in order to achieve equality of access for all looked after children. This is an area of stubborn challenge that Health Partners will lead on through 2022.

At a local level recent reviews by the LTRG subgroup have found that, as was outlined in the national panel's *'Myth of Invisible Men'*, we must do

more to ensure that we are involving father's and male care givers within ante-natal and post-natal care, and that of wider children's social care assessments. Doing this will ensure that risk of harm to children is reduced. Finally, with a rich repository of learning secured by the Partnership this year, as we look ahead, we wish to do even more to ensure that our workforce development programme incorporates key learning and training from local safeguarding issues such as Elective Home Education.

## *Priority 4 – Responding to serious safeguarding issues effectively:*

**Impact & Evidence:** Over the past year the Partnership has concluded two separate Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) following incidents of harm experienced by two separate sets of siblings. All the children involved in these reviews are now safe and either looked after by the local authority or by family members. Underpinning both cases were incidents of sexual abuse, physical abuse and the fact that the children were Electively Home Educated (EHE) – that is to say that they were not attending school but were receiving an education at home. The impact of the recommendations and the learnings provided for the Partnership, by the independent lead reviewing author, have seen that, at pace, a robust multi-agency response has been delivered. This has included the securing of funding from the Department of Education to scale up the EHE team and to commence a project that seeks to widen the network of known EHE children and families, provide additional support and resources to them and produce a range of awareness raising materials including a new EHE website. We have been liaising with the national child safeguarding practice review panel and the Dept. of

Education to seek a further national wide review of EHE and this is being actively considered. Further to this, we have placed additional scrutiny upon the EHE data and evidence shows that the numbers of EHE children is growing. There has been a notable increase in the number of children who are electively home educated in the past 3 years (2019/20 figure did not change much after March 2020 due to the pandemic as most children were being educated remotely at home). With students returning to school in September 2020, and following the winter 20/21 lockdown, this trend accelerated with currently over 400 families electing to home educate their children.

Children with an EHCP or SEN support make up 14% of the EHE community compared to 5% the year before. This was mostly due to concerns around COVID and the vulnerability of the EHCP/SEN cohort. To support the families and children the EHE Advisory Teacher post was increased from 0.4 to full-time and a new EHE policy has been consulted on with EHE parents and ratified by Council Members. The consultation process enabled greater contact and communication with EHE parents/carers facilitating the building of positive relationships with BELS EHE Advisory Teacher. Barnet were recently awarded a KIT Award by the EHE community. This award is based on nominations from home educating families who have direct experience of their own education officer's work practice.

Beyond the topic of EHE the CSPRs highlighted further recommendations for the Partnership. These included recommendations for Health partners to review bereavement pathway counselling for children and for Police partners to review their processes of interviewing children under the framework of Achieving Best Evidence. Audits have been undertaken by Police colleagues in this respect with assurance sought by the PQA arm of the Partnership.

At the time of writing there is a further CSPR underway and in review. This is a review conducted jointly with Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership and centres upon harm experienced by a 3-year-old boy known to multi-agency services, who is now safe in the care of the local authority.

**Assurance & Learning:** The LTRG is overseeing the embedding of recommendations from the two concluded CSPRs, seeking to ensure that evidence of systems and practice change are secured and that outcomes are improved for children. The dissemination of learning from serious safeguarding incidents is a crucial role that Partnerships play. There has been x1 Rapid Review that has brought the Partnership together to review. In this case, harm experienced by a baby did not move to a more rigorous CSPR, however learning was swiftly captured and converted into a dedicated programme led upon by our partners at the Royal Free. More is outlined further in this report upon the ICON programme of support for parents with crying babies, however it is an example of how learning has converted to assurance.

We are pleased to report that a series of Partnership led webinar briefings sought to share learnings from these CSPRs and Rapid Reviews. These webinars received extremely positive feedback with 90% of attendees, totalling nearly 150, were polled indicating that their knowledge and understanding of EHE and child sexual abuse had increased. Our Partnership actively involves itself in leading upon the delivery of learning and dissemination, with Police partners leading upon raising awareness of Powers of Police Protection, to Health leads sharing learning through webinars upon harmful religious practices.

**Stubborn challenges – Priority 4** The Partnership will seek to ensure that recommendations outlined within the two concluded

CSPRs will be taken forward at pace. We wish to be able to display further impact and evidence of practice change across key shared priority areas which include ensuring themes of EHE, bereavement support, awareness raising, information sharing and professional supervision, across all Partnership agencies, is clear and linked to research evidence of best practice.

## *Priority 5 – Create a strong feedback loop for children, families and practitioners.*

**Impact & Evidence:** As we have highlighted, our commitment to ensuring that children with SEND received a high level of support and provision over the pandemic and beyond has been strong. Our SEND self-evaluation looked at EHCP plans and the quality of service over the pandemic to April 2021. The impact of our work evidences that over 95% of new EHC Plans had been finalised within the statutory timescales during 2020 – 21, and the quality of EHCPs has remained good throughout. 42 parent or carers gave feedback on their experiences of the EHCP process, and opportunities for them and their child to give their views. 93% said that they had been able to express their views throughout the process. 96% said that their child's views had been obtained and included in the EHCP. 90% said that overall, they had had a positive experience of the process with 90% commenting that the EHCP contained meaningful outcomes for their child.

The Partnership take a concerted approach to ensuring that as many young people as possible have their say. Our Covid19 survey in January

2021 received over 800 responses. Two fifths of respondents indicated they felt their long-term mental health and wellbeing had been affected (43%) as a consequence of Covid19 and that they felt less secure than before the pandemic (38%). Just over half (51%) of young people indicated they have been doing less physical activity compared to prior the pandemic and half indicated that they felt the pandemic is harming their long-term education (50%). In response to this feedback there has been the implementation of a 24-7 crisis line across NCL CCG resulting in approximately 80 acute crisis calls a month. In addition, BICS set up support lines operating 9am to 8pm (including out-of-hours 5pm to 8pm) for young people, parents/carers, schools, GPs and other professionals. There has been an increased online output e.g. podcasts, resources made available, pre-recorded workshops and provision for a telephone line for professionals such as teachers and school staff and parent/carers to call if in need of psychological and emotional support.

For Partners in Probation, following learning from a current CSPR, they are reviewing working practices with the Leaving Care Team in order to ensure a timely and efficient transfer of information and effective relationship building with young people. Work is underway to improve the feedback loop in with young adults transitioning from YOS to Probation to take account of systemic and trauma informed approaches. This is with a focus on managing the journey from childhood into adulthood and aligns with the Partnership's work upon Transitional Safeguarding. The Probation Service recognises that this is a particularly challenging time for young people and as such there needs to be strong engagement with families and support networks.

Across the field of education pupil voice is strong within Section 175 audits with schools increasingly trying to find different ways of promoting their views. Following national scrutiny upon the issues of sexual abuse within schools and colleges, BELS have led the school's network in

supporting the creation of pupil driven equalities committees which seek to ensure the EDI is considered within school culture and policies.

In respect of the CSPR currently in progress, a learning event was held over Summer 2021 that involved over 30 practitioners from both Brent and Barnet whom all contributed to sharing their reflections upon how provision could have been improved for the child and family involved. The learnings will directly inform the CSPRs finding and recommendations.

Within the field of children's social care understanding the lived experience of children in care through the pandemic was identified within the recent Ofsted inspection which found that

*"Senior leaders, managers and social workers demonstrate a clear focus on hearing the voices of children and young people to develop and further improve services. The Barnet children in care council, 'Barnet on Point' (BOP), has continued to support children and young people in having their views heard throughout the pandemic. Children have been engaged through a range of activities, including virtual cookalongs, consultations, celebration events and the recently commissioned Bright Spots survey. The corporate parenting panel has continued to provide scrutiny to the service throughout the pandemic, obtaining children's feedback to focus improvements for children and young people in Barnet"*

**Assurance & Learning:** The Partnership seeks to secure assurance that the views of children, families and practitioners are acted upon through the PQA. In respect of the CSPRs which have concluded or are ongoing this year, all family members and the children involved have had opportunity to meet with the reviewing authors to discuss their views.

Beyond serious safeguarding reviews, our Partners in Police sit within their Public Protection Delivery Group which leads the work in the MET to



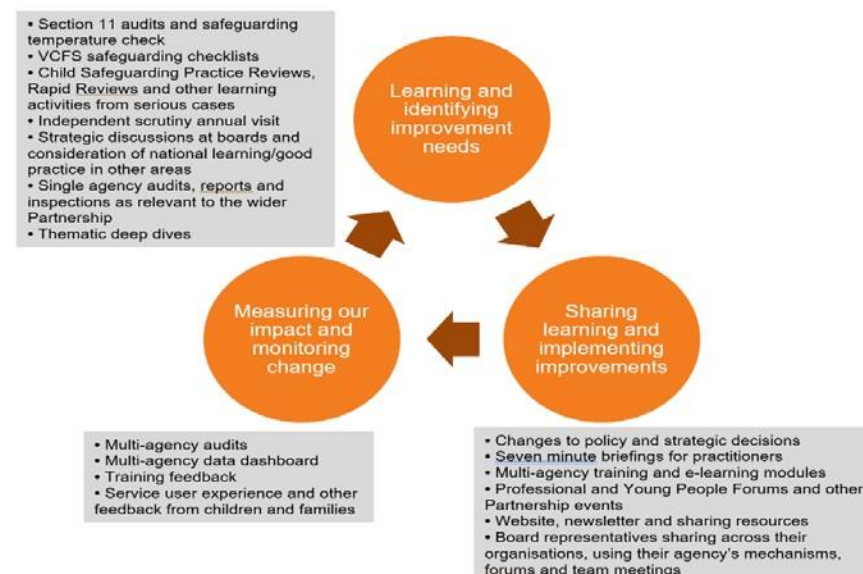
improve policing practice in safeguarding children and young people. They are a small team who work with colleagues in areas including how effectively offences involving children are investigated, responses to missing children; training; and managing those who offend against children. They work with an independent advisory panel comprising representatives from academia, health, charities, and other experts in their field. The team look at ways to involve young people and listen to the voice of the child to inform ongoing professional practice, training and communication.

A commitment to involving children and their families in service planning and delivery is growing stronger across the Partnership. Partner colleagues at CLCH involve young people within interviews and NCL CCG Commissioning team ensure that children and young people have a voice in planning and cross agency working. The Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) for SEND ensures that co-production with young people is central in all service redesign. Parents are represented on boards and workstreams such as the children and young people's Mental Health Transformation Board and transitions workstream.

**Stubborn challenges – Priority 5** A cross cutting Engagement and Participation strategy will be published which will outline how we embed our service user feedback and child participation into service delivery and development across the Partnership. Three new roles have been created to support consultation and engagement activity and we will continue to place a focus on ensuring that shaping our safeguarding priorities are led by children and young people. For colleagues at the Royal Free Trust their self-reflections outline that a stronger focus will be placed upon capturing the views of children, young people and their families in relation to safeguarding processes as well as identifying ways to measure and evidence the impact of their involvement.

## Priority 6 – measuring and evidencing the impact of our work

**Impact & Evidence:** We have placed a clear focus on evidencing our impact across this report thus far, but we have also been working to ensure that we are building and continually improving our approaches to capturing impact under a defined strategic priority. The development of our Learning and Improvement cycle, below, is a key starting point for this approach as we hope to build a further evidence base and menu of practice change as a result of learning from safeguarding activity:



For our Partners in education, following an Independent school receiving an inadequate Ofsted judgement for its safeguarding, a period of rigorous support ensued. A further inspection in March 2021 found that:

*“The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and reflects the most recent government guidance. Leaders have appropriate systems in place to ensure that potential safeguarding concerns are identified and managed effectively. Staff receive suitable safeguarding training and clear guidance on how to report any concerns about pupils’ welfare. The designated safeguarding leaders have undertaken additional training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.”*

Within the domain of assessment and planning for children, evidencing improved outcomes takes place through the triangulation of learning activity within Family Services against audit outcomes. Evidence suggests the audit domain of ensuring the voice of the child is heard remains consistently strong across the service. Audit data show a positive increase in the domain of assessment and planning, suggesting that learning activity aimed at these domains are having a positive impact. Audits demonstrate evidence of training transfer from programmes such as Signs of Safety, which are designed to assess families’ strengths, and systemic ideas directly influencing practice via interactions with children and families and partner agencies. Observation, qualitative and anecdotal feedback from the workforce and training providers indicate that practice leaders and practitioners have made good use of peer support opportunities, service days and team seminars to support learning and development and generally adapted well to the absence of face-to-face training in order to make impact upon the lives of children and young people

In May 2021 our Partners, CLCH, commissioned an external audit to review the arrangements in place by which safeguarding is managed

within the Trust, identify positive impact and to consider management and recording of alerts and escalation processes by CLCH staff. The auditors reviewed the CLCH systems, policies, processes and internal audits; the auditors also interviewed staff, including the Barnet NNCS and Barnet health visitors and school nurses. The auditor’s assessment was that CLCH had significant assurance of safeguarding children processes in CLCH during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Colleagues at Royal Free Trust have implemented the ICON ‘Coping with Crying’ programme to support new parents, particularly fathers. The programme is delivered mainly by midwives and neonatal nurse as well as by others during opportunistic points of care. The Trust has had some very positive feedback from parents, such as that found below, who have found it helpful.

*“When I discussed ICON with a family, they commented that their friend who had recently had a child, had also been told about ICON by a midwife and the dad remembered her words when very stressed one night with a crying baby and said that he put the baby down and walked away to calm down. He said how easy it could have been to shake the baby without thinking in the moment and it had made an impact.”*

**Assurance & Learning:** Assurance and further learning was obtained by colleagues at The Royal Free Trust in June 2021 by way of a CQC inspection of maternity services. This concluded that staff understood how to protect women from abuse and the service worked well with other agencies to do so. Staff had training on how to recognise and report abuse and they knew how to apply it. The additional FGM audit provided to the CQC assured them that *“the service had a clear*



*pathway for women with FGM, or whose unborn baby girl might be at risk of FGM.”* Furthermore, in April 2021 an audit completed by community midwives demonstrated that their safeguarding knowledge and practice had improved after the introduction of safeguarding supervision.

**Stubborn challenges – Priority 6:** Although the shift to online/hybrid learning has seen increased levels of participation the transition from classroom to virtual learning has presented new challenges in measuring the transfer of knowledge and the impact of learning across the Partnership through limited use of feedback forms. New methods of impact measurement for both qualitative and quantitative feedback are being developed and supported by the new learning management system, POD, which automates participant feedback. Multi-agency partners utilise the system which gives greater access to a range of safeguarding learning opportunities, e.g., e-learning modules, easier access to the multi-agency training offer and personalised individual learning logs. Over the last quarter Family Services has co-produced training workshops with some of our partners which increases co-delivered training opportunities and utilises the expertise in multi-agency partners. e.g., a peri-natal mental health and pre-birth assessment workshop with health, a legal processes workshop with CAFCASS, domestic abuse training offer with specialist agencies and child protection chairs have delivered training to the substance misuse agency. This approach supports improved communication between agencies, having a shared understanding the lived experience of children and young people and creates a difference for children through stronger partnership working.