



Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership
Annual Report
October 2020 – September 2021





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Foreword: Reflections on multi-agency safeguarding in Havering over the last year



The Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) has been operating in its current form for just over two years following the change in legislation which abolished Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and replaced them with increased flexibility in how local authority areas can configure their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. A key shift was that responsibility for our local arrangements became shared between Havering Council, the East Area Basic Command Unit of the Metropolitan Police and the North East London NHS Clinical Commissioning Group. I am extremely grateful to the commitment and sheer hard work of everyone involved in our partnership. It is the clarity of our engagement and quality of our professional relationships which have and continue to secure effective safeguarding arrangements and a growth mind set.

Within our arrangements, external support and challenge is provided through the role of Independent Scrutineer, which functions as a constructive critical friend to support continuous improvement in professional practice that results in positive outcomes for children, young people and families in Havering. Our scrutineers within Havering and across the BHR footprint have provided robust questioning, insightful challenge and committed support to the entire partnership over the last 12 months. Indeed, the work is actively encouraging and strengthening a culture of learning where curiosity is greatly valued as a means of better understanding the complexities and ambiguities which high quality approaches to safeguarding accept and employ to secure appropriate and timely decision making in day out.

Our partnership continued to work exceptionally hard between October 2020 and September 2021 to drive our six key objectives. The objectives have proved to be increasingly pertinent as the year has progressed given the significant rise in demand for services across the partnership as Covid-19 lockdown measures were relaxed in the community. Increases in demand relating to domestic abuse, mental health, family disruption and abuse are clearly connected to latent pandemic experience but there is also evidence that changes in these areas forms part of a longer term upward trajectory and demographic population shift. Against this backdrop, the partnership's ongoing commitment to effective and well joined up early intervention pathways across the borough are critical. Universal, universal plus and early help offers have been strengthened during the course of the year and the partnership will continue to prioritise this work in the year ahead across all areas of activity including education, health and criminal justice and community partnership innovation.

Through the year, Covid-19 has presented a profound and enduring challenge to the partnership. However, associated opportunities have been tremendous and we have identified new ways of working and made commitments to innovation and change which may not have been as quickly realised in normal times. In particular, I feel very energised by the work which we are taking forward in respect of the involvement of children, families and young people in service design and quality assurance, and pointed action to understand and address disproportionality in different communities' experiences of services.

We have a multi-agency partnership to proud of but there is no room for complacency and over the course of the next 12 months our partnership is committed to driving positive and innovative change which builds upon our strengths and increasingly involves the wider community in designing future iterations of safeguarding structures, approaches and forms of engagement.

Robert South
Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Havering
Chair of Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership



Introduction to the 2020/21 annual report

In accordance with the *Children and Social Work Act 2017*, local Safeguarding Partners are required publish a report at least once every 12-month period, and this report by the Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) will cover the second full year of our current operating arrangements, from October 2020 to September 2021.

As directed in the statutory guidance, this report will set out what has been done as a result of our current arrangements, including any safeguarding practice reviews we have undertaken, and how effective the arrangements have been in making children safer and promoting their wellbeing. The report will also show how the HSCP has implemented the key statutory requirements of local multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements as described in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*:

- 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; and
- information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

Section 1 of the report will provide the context for multi-agency safeguarding partnership activity in Havering using performance data to indicate local levels of need, risk and demand for services, as well as performance, quality and outcomes.

Section 2 will review the second year of Havering's current multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by summarising activity between October 2020 and September 2021 by the main HSCP group and four key partnership workstreams: the Adolescent Safeguarding Steering Group; the Children's Quality and Effectiveness Working Group; the Early Help Partnership Board; and the Education Strategic Partnership.

Section 3 will summarise partnership activity between October 2020 and September 2021 in relation to learning and improvement, including discussion of a Rapid Review undertaken by the HSCP in summer 2021, the delivery of multi-agency safeguarding training throughout the year, and details of Havering's Safeguarding Week held in late 2020.

Section 4 will review the progress of the multi-agency partnership against the objectives set in the summer of 2020.

Section 5 will set out the role of independent scrutiny in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Sections 6 and 7 will provide a commentary by Havering's Independent Scrutineer on the effectiveness of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements between October 2020 and September 2021, and detail plans for scrutiny of Havering's arrangements between October 2021 and September 2022, including potential risks that will be monitored.



1. Safeguarding in Havering

Spanning more than 122 square kilometres, Havering is the most north-eastern London borough. In 2020 (latest data available), Havering had a total population of 260,651, increasing by 10% (22,724) from 237,927 in 2011. 23% (59,020) of Havering's population is aged under 18. Further significant growth is predicted with the population of Havering projected to grow by 9% (22,935) from 257,810 in 2018 to 280,745 in 2032. Based on projections made in 2018, Havering's under-18 population is expected to increase by 6% (3,621) from 57,541 in 2018 to 61,162 by 2032.

In 2020 (latest data available), 18% of children in Havering were living in low-income families, compared to 19% across the United Kingdom. During 2020/21 Autumn Term (latest data available), 16% of school pupils in Havering were eligible for free school meals, compared to 21% across London and 20% across England. In 2021, Havering's rate of 16 and 17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 3.8%. This compared to 4.0% across London, and 5.5% across England.

Havering is more similar to England as a whole than London in terms of ethnic diversity: in 2021, 75% of the local population identified as White. However, there have been increases in diversity over recent years and this is predicted to continue: in 2011, 83% of the local population identified as White, and this is projected to decrease to 71% by 2030. Also, Havering's current child population is more diverse than the all-age population: data from the January 2021 Schools Census indicates 70% of Havering pupils are White.

1.1. Need, risk and demand

The following data on activity by Havering Children's Social Care demonstrates comparative local levels of need, risk and demand over time.

1.1.1. Referrals to Children's Services (for individual children)

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22*
2,023	2,410	2,616	3,277	2,759	2,843	3,213	3,178

*Figure for 2021-22 is a full-year projection based on the first two quarters (April to September 2021)



Based on volumes received during the first two quarters (April to September 2021), a projected figure for referrals to Havering’s Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for the full year 2021/22, indicates continued higher demand for Children’s Services during the different phases of the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, rates for previous full years indicates that demand has grown steadily over the last seven years and, based on current projections, is likely to continue to grow.

1.1.2. Section 47 Enquiries (for individual children)

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22*
936	1,320	1,069	818	534	703	710	1182

*Figure for 2021-22 is a full-year projection based on the first two quarters

Again using a projected figure for the full year 2021/22, at the present time more referrals to Children’s Services appear to be progressing to Section 47 enquiries. These are information-gathering enquiries undertaken under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, following a multi-agency strategy meeting to determine whether the statutory threshold has been met as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

1.1.3. Children subject to a child protection plan (individual children)

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22*
214	302	295	215	207	155	200	237

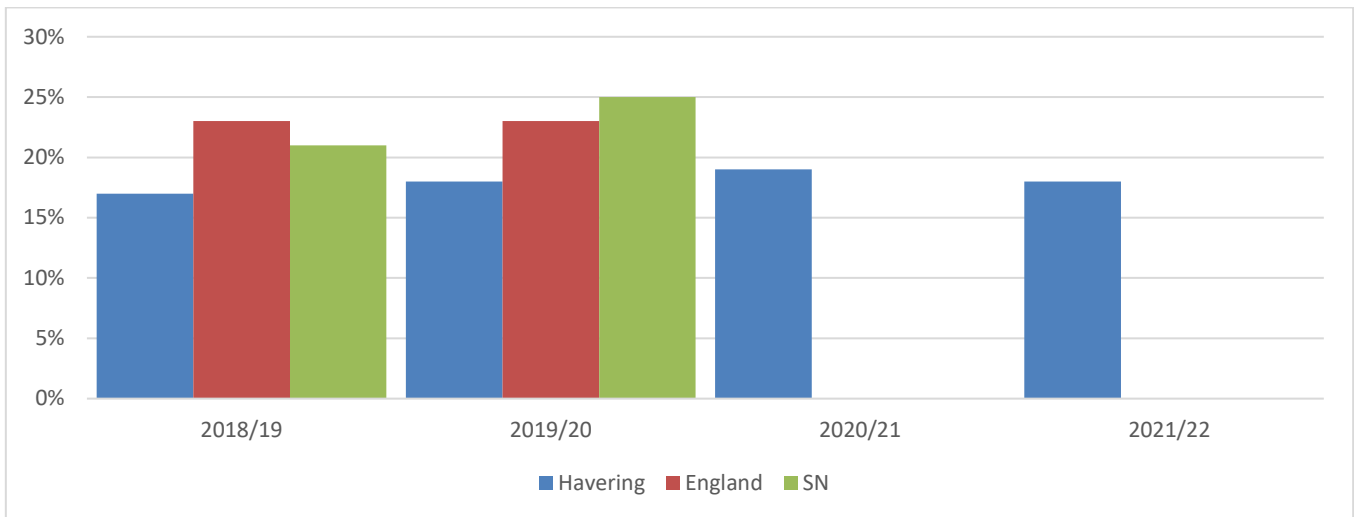
*Figure for 2021-22 is a mid-year snapshot taken at 30th September 2021, compared here to snapshots taken at 31st March for previous years

In a snapshot taken at the end of September 2021, the number of children in Havering who were the subjects of child protection (CP) plans has increased compared to the number at the end of March 2021. However, end-of-year figures dating back to 2014 indicates decreasing levels of children with CP plans year-on-year since 2016. This is in line with Havering Children’s Services’ model of practice, which aims to ensure that only the most vulnerable children are safeguarded through CP plans. It will be important to monitor whether the recent increase represents a reversal of this trend or is due to specific recent factors.

1.2. Performance, quality and outcomes

Havering Children’s Social Care has performed strongly when measured using the key performance indicators set and regularly monitored by the Department of Education, here benchmarked against both England and statistical neighbours, a designated group of Local Authorities with characteristics similar to Havering’s.

1.2.1. Referrals within 12 months of a previous referral

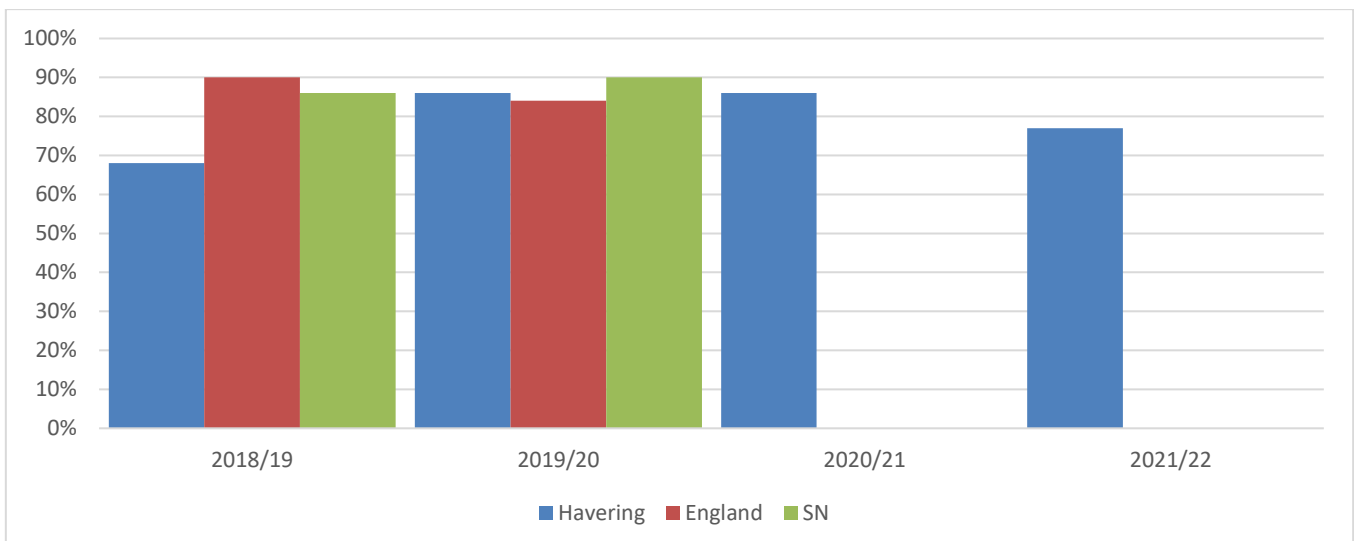


Havering 2019/20	Havering 2020/21	Havering 2021/22*	England 2018/19	England 2019/20	statistical neighbours 2018/19	statistical neighbours 2019/20
18%	19%	18%	23%	23%	21%	25%

*Figure for 2021-22 is a full-year projection based on the first two quarters (April to September 2021)

Performance measured against this key indicator shows that the rate of repeat referrals received by Havering Children's Social Care remains consistently lower than rates across England and statistical neighbours, which suggests that local responses to referrals are right first time.

1.2.2. Assessments completed within 45 working days



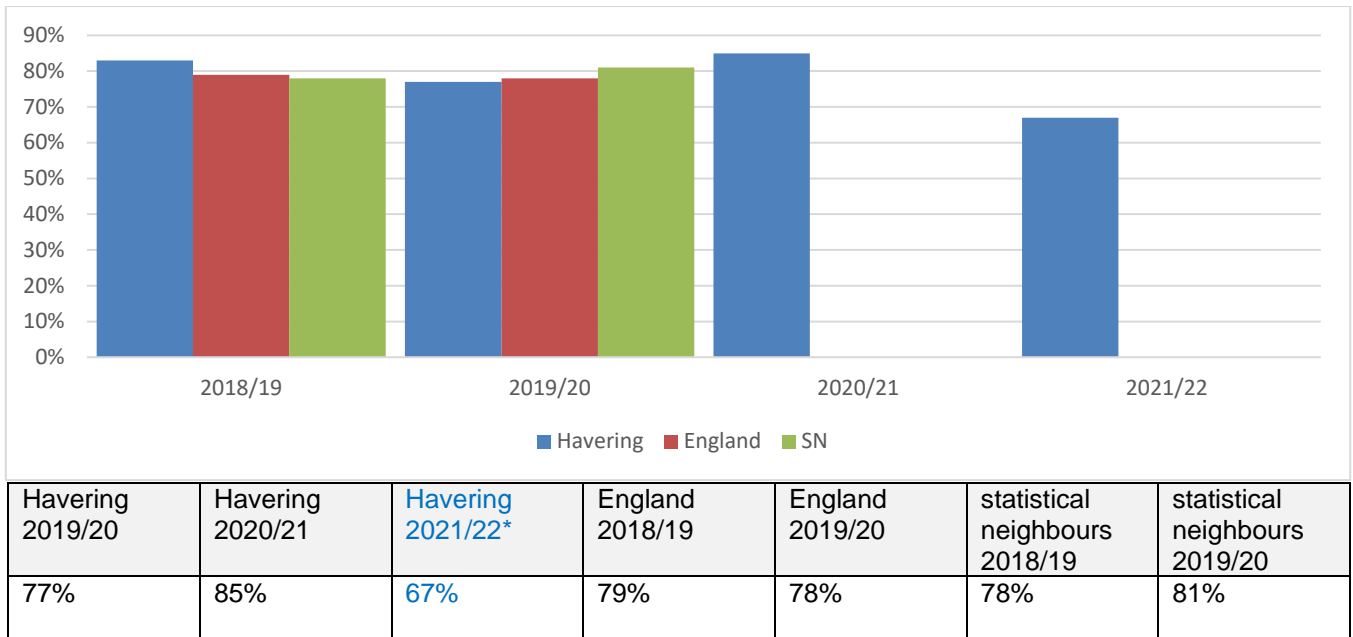
Havering 2019/20	Havering 2020/21	Havering 2021/22*	England 2018/19	England 2019/20	statistical neighbours 2018/19	statistical neighbours 2019/20
86%	86%	77%	90%	84%	86%	90%

*Figure for 2021-22 is a full-year projection based on the first two quarters (April to September 2021)

This measure shows that the recent improvement in the timeliness of assessments completed by Havering Children's Social Care has fallen back during the first half of 2021/22, and is currently below the most recent England and statistical neighbours publishes data.



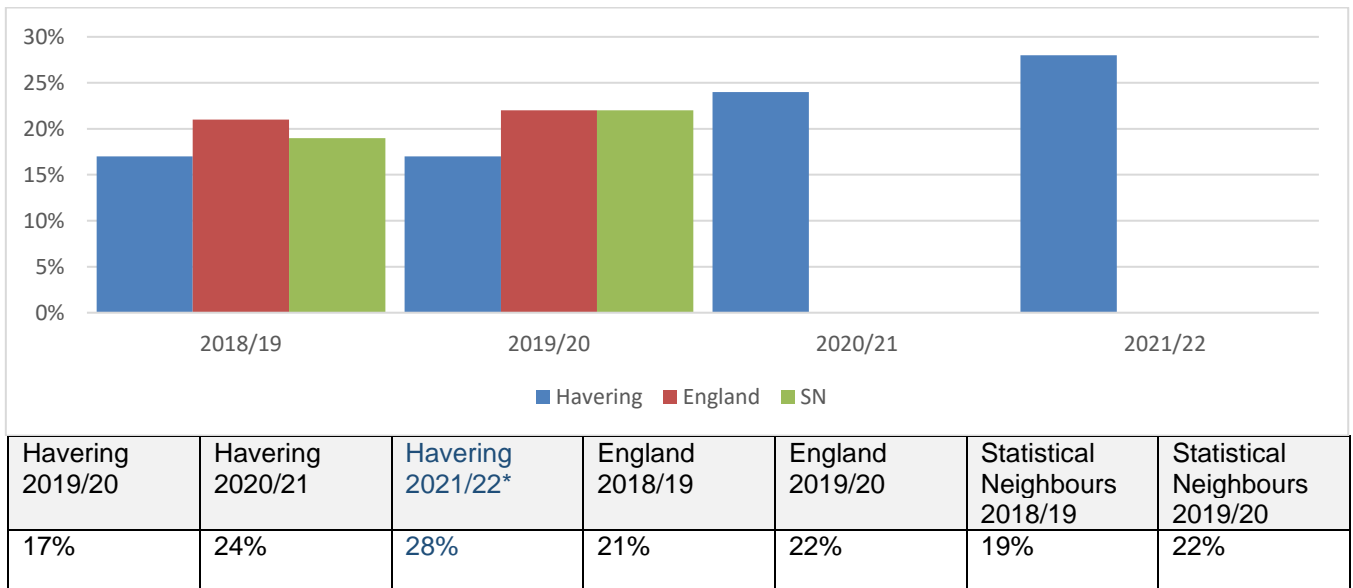
1.2.3. Initial child protection case conferences within 15 working days



*Figure for 2021-22 is a full-year projection based on the first two quarters (April to September 2021)

This measure shows that, while the timeliness of multi-agency initial protection case conferences convened by Havering Children’s Social Care has previously been closely comparable to that across England and among statistical neighbours, recent activity during 2021/22 so far, has seen us fall back against previous performance.

1.2.4. Child protection plans that were repeat plans



*Figure for 2021-22 is a full-year projection based on the first two quarters (April to September 2021)

This measure shows that the proportion of Havering’s child protection plans that were repeat plans has increased over the last two years, and the current figure is significantly above the most recent published figures across England and among statistical neighbours.

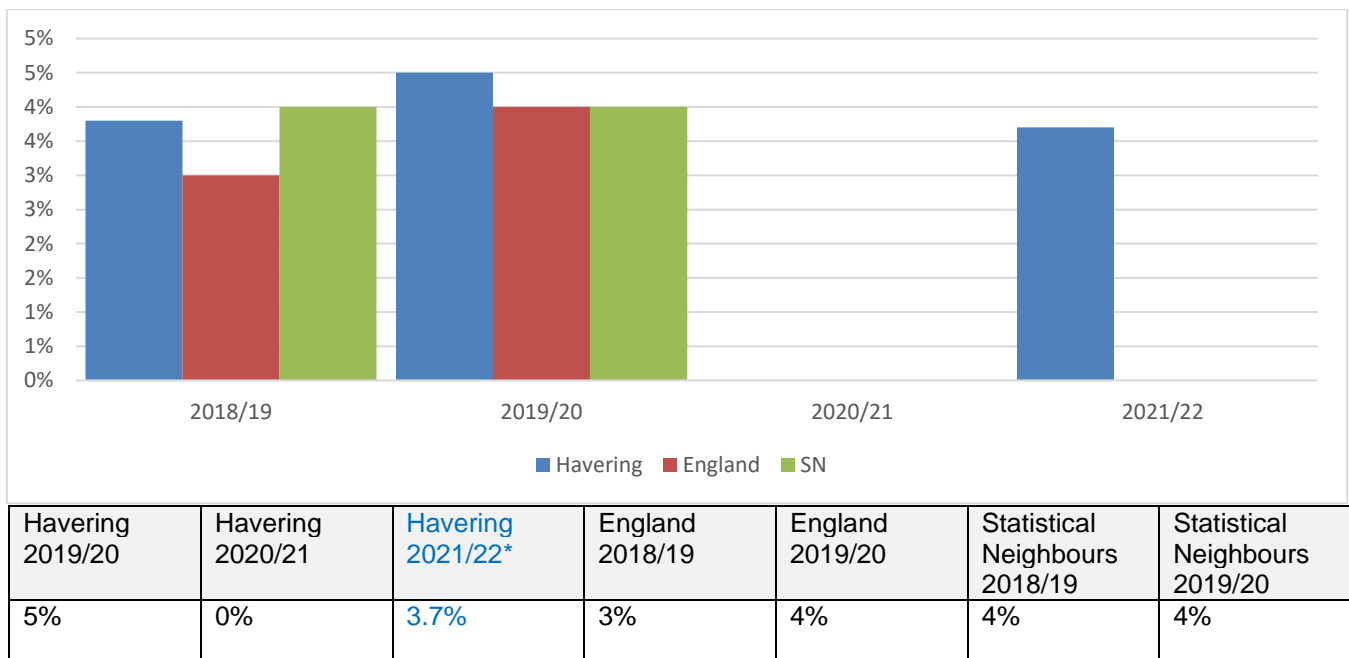
The increase in Havering’s figure over time can partly be explained by Havering’s comparatively lower numbers of child protection plans overall, which means that a small increase in the number



of individual plans can cause a larger increase in the percentage than if the overall number was higher. Also, when overall numbers are low, a small number of large sibling groups each individually becoming the subjects of a plan can cause a significant increase in the percentage.

Havering's figure of 28% of all child protection plans that were repeat plans in the year to date at September 2021 is made up of 49 of the 178 child protection plans commencing in the year to date. However, the proportion of all child protection plans that were repeated *within two years of the original plan* was 8%, below the target of 10% set for this particular measure.

1.2.5. Child protection plans ending after two or more years



*Figure for 2021-22 is a full-year projection based on the first two quarters (April to September 2021)

This measure shows that the proportion of Havering's discontinued CP plans that had been in place for two or more years has decreased slightly over the last four years. However, Havering's current figure of 3.7% remains in line with the most recent published figures across England and among statistical neighbours. To ensure robust oversight of child protection planning over long durations, Havering Children's Services has introduced a panel to monitor and scrutinise CP plans in place for 15 months or longer.

2. Review of local multi-agency safeguarding activity

Havering's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements encompass collaborative work between local agencies and services taking place within four thematic partnership workstreams: the Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy Group; the Children's Quality and Effectiveness Working Group; the Early Help Partnership Board; and the Educational Strategic Partnership.

Senior leaders and safeguarding leads representing the three local statutory safeguarding partner agencies and other relevant agencies, referred to here as the *HSCP group*, meet quarterly to receive updates from the four partnership workstreams, consider new and emerging safeguarding issues and identify opportunities for further interagency collaboration in pursuance of mutually agreed priorities.



This section will provide an overview of the operating arrangements of the HSCP group between October 2020 and September 2021, and review the work undertaken within each of the four partnership workstreams, as reported through quarterly highlight and exception reports.

Meeting in December 2020, the HSCP group received and discussed updates from the four partnership workstreams, as well as from the most recent BHR (Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge) Safeguarding Partnership meeting, where concern had been raised by the CCG about the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of young people across the entire tri-borough footprint, and by the Police about an apparent under-reporting of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation, with opportunities to exploit children having appeared to shift online, becoming harder to detect.

From a Havering perspective, the Designated Safeguarding Lead from a secondary school recently recruited to the HSCP group provided partners with a powerful account of the challenges currently affecting the local education community, although positive partnership working with Children's Social Care was noted to be helping.

The HSCP group met next in February and, as well as updates from the four partnership workstreams, received an assurance from Havering's Integrated Care Director at NELFT that the Trust was currently operating a bended model where staff supporting the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination rollout continued to spend a number of days in their substantive posts, ensuring ongoing monitoring and oversight of safeguarding concerns.

At its meeting in February 2021, the HSCP group also discussed a challenge regarding low take up of Early Help and universal plus services among Black, Asian and minority ethnic families, both at a local and national level, and how these families were sometimes over-represented in other parts of the system, for example in relation to school exclusions and youth justice. It was noted to be important for partners to explore collaborative solutions to disproportionality, and to challenge each other when required.

In April 2021, the HSCP wrote to Havering's Headteachers, School Governors and Designated Safeguarding Leads regarding the issues relating to sexual abuse in education settings brought to national prominence by media coverage of the website [Everyone's Invited](#). Schools were provided with assurances of responses by the Metropolitan Police and by the Department for Education, which had commissioned Ofsted to undertake a review in relation to these issues. Schools were also provided with advice on how to support any young person disclosing relevant information, and details of specialist support services available, including those provided by the NSPCC.

The HSCP group met next in May 2021 and, alongside updates from the four partnership workstreams, received an update on Private Fostering from Children's Social Care's Family Placement Service, which provided cases studies for partners to help promote awareness and recognition, as well as details the private fostering arrangements currently known to the local authority.

At the HSCP group's meeting in August 2021, as well as receiving updates from the four partnership workstreams and the BHR Safeguarding Partnership, partners were advised – in relation to the ongoing discussions about disproportionality within the safeguarding system – that Children's Social Care were planning a piece of work to look at Initial Child Protection Case Conferences on physical abuse and whether ethnicity had any influence on multi-agency decision making.



2.1. Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy Group

Havering Children's Services launched its [Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Support \(IASS\) Service](#) and the partnership's Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy with a digital week from 28th September to 2nd October 2020 that included 19 online workshop events, involving 800 delegates. The IASS is made up of Havering's Youth Service, Adolescent Safeguarding Team and Youth Justice Service, as well as Social Care and Health professionals. The virtual conference featured workshops delivered by local partners – including the Police, Housing and Health – and external speakers.

The 19 online events focused on issues such as social inequality, the adolescent brain, preventing school exclusions, multi-agency partnerships and communicating with young people. The theme song for the event was written and performed by China, a young person from Havering. The music provided a glimpse into the life of some young people and some of the challenges they face.

Keynote speakers included the former Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Board and the Assistant Director of Youth and Family Resilience at the London Borough of Waltham Forest, who spoke about their learning and actions following a [Serious Case Review](#) in relation to the death of Child C.

An event hosted by the Police offered insight into street gangs, County Lines and exploitation, with a focus on the different stages of exploitation and how to recognise some of the signs and symptoms of children who may have been exploited. At another event, the Chair of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and the Group Manager of Havering's IASS discussed social inequality, the disproportionate representation of young people from Black and some minority ethnic backgrounds in the youth justice system and how this is addressed as a partnership.

At the start of 2021, it was recognised that the return to a national lockdown in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic was applying significant pressure on families and increasing some risks to children and young people. Specifically, pressures associated with school closures and economic uncertainty compounded risks associated with extra-familial harm. While lockdown might helpfully separate some young people from harmful contexts, it may also separate them from protective friends, networks and spaces that offer respite from difficult home environments. Extra-familial safety concerns included those online, on social media, web-based gaming and other virtual spaces.

At this challenging time, Havering's multi-agency partnership continued its commitment to a sensitive and enabling early-intervention approach to supporting young people and there was a keen awareness of the disproportionate impact on specific groups of young people, such as those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, those in care, those with learning disabilities and those with mental ill health.

Around this time, the IASS focused on workforce development, raising awareness of contextual safeguarding issues among the wider children's workforce. IASS worked closely with the MASH to assist practitioners with screening incoming referrals for contextual safeguarding issues in order to enable a more a joined-up response for children and young people at risk and better tracking of referrals on at-risk adolescents through the system. Help was also provided to practitioners on the long-term social work teams on recognising changes in young people that could indicate risk.



In Spring 2021, the IASS recruited a data analyst, who began mapping data and information sharing work, and an updated performance framework was developed to support the development of a refreshed adolescent safeguarding strategic plan:

THEME	PROCESS INDICATORS	OUTCOMES INDICATORS	NARRATIVE
COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP	Agency representation Child-level activity dashboard (quarterly)	NEET (not in employment, education or training) numbers	Evaluation using Ofsted lines of enquiry?
DATA ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION SHARING	Population data profile (annual) Information sharing agreement	% reduction in onward referral from IASS to: Children's Social Care Youth Justice first time entrants (FTEs) National Referral Mechanism (NRM)	Team around young person and schools – evaluation work
PREVENTION	# schools engaged # school consultations	Number of CYP form of prisoner education (FPE) Reduce number of missing episodes	Deep dive with school
EARLY INTERVENTION	# CYP of concern identified via concern form with contextual risk factors # CYP with key professional and plan	# youth justice – out of court disposals % reduce reoffending	CYP-centred examples of case work Deep dive on risk and safety factors
DISRUPTION AND RECOVERY	% return home interviews offered within timescale # CYP with recovery plans?	call out for London ambulance service % unsuccessful referrals to CAMHS (10+) Out of court disposals	Thematic review of Return Home Interview output, CYP-centred examples
VOICE OF CHILD & DISPROPORTIONALITY	Case audit of IASS (YJ, YS and AST) Case audit of CIN and CP Case audit of offer to vulnerable CYP e.g. CYP in custody, CYP in AP post-Pex	Deferred prosecutions Increase numbers of young people who tell us they feel safe	Feedback from CYP about risk and safety in their lives CYP involved Audit of health and community safety cases
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	# schools engaging in training activity # voluntary sector workers engaging in training		Quality audit work around staff CPD and confidence

From April to June 2021, there were six new first time entrants (FTEs) to Havering's Youth Justice Service. Over the same period in 2020 there were 4, although it was during a period of lockdown, so the apparent increase may reflect this. From April to June 2021, 9 young people were diverted from the Youth Justice System and offered alternative support (Community Resolutions – Triage). Referrals to Group Sessions remained high. As well as young people



gaining positive soft outcomes from group work, some were referred on to other agencies for further support, including Universal Plus, Early Help, CAMHS, Social Care and other Youth Service provision. Groups include:

- Go Girls (50 referrals, 22 attendees)
- GRL Academy (63 attendees)
- Goodfellas (27 referrals, 10 attendees)
- LGBT+ workshops (100 attendances for both Junior and Senior sessions)
- Targeted SEND Sessions (reaching 104 individuals, 329 attendees)

Six sessions of detached and outreach youth work were undertaken every week, from April until June 2021. Locations in which young people could be best reached were identified through intelligence from young people, general citizen insight, the Community Safety team and the Police (information shared from MACE, SGV and CCE/CSE panels). Collaborative work between the IASS, Police and Community Safety in identifying and responding to places and people of concern, with joint activity and regular updates targeting individuals and places. A new Exploitation Identification tool was developed and reviewed by key partners before being implemented in September 2021. A new Exploitation Protocol was also drafted for consultation in September.

2.2. Children's Quality and Effectiveness Working Group

The Children's Quality and Effectiveness (Q&E) Working Group is chaired by the Detective Superintendent and Head of Public Protection at the Metropolitan Police's East Area Basic Command Unit and receives representation from many other agencies across the local multi-agency partnership, including Children's Social Care, Education Services, Health Providers, Commissioning, and the Local Authority's Performance Team. The group meets quarterly to collectively interpret and analyse data drawn from across the partnership, provide an overview of the functioning of the multi-agency safeguarding system, and identify areas of good practice and emerging risk.

Monitoring data on reasons for contacts received by Children's Social Care, the Q&E Working Group noted that neglect was the third most commonly identified reason between April and September 2021, whereas it had been only sixth most commonly identified reason in the year from April 2020 to March 2021. This increase in identification of neglect was attributed to increased professional access to children from spring 2021 onwards following the reopening of schools and the return of Health Visitors and School Nurses to their substantive posts after being redeployed to support the Covid-19 vaccination rollout. The previous reduced professional access to children, and resulting potential for neglect to go unrecognised, had been included on the Q&E Working Group's risk register. The increase of neglect as a contact reason during spring and summer 2021 was interpreted as an indicator that the risk of serious cases being undetected had reduced.

Monitoring data on re-referrals to Children's Social Care (figure 1), the Q&E Working Group noted that the percentage of re-referrals for the year to date was above target and higher than the same period the previous year. The group considered whether this increase could be related to agencies not being notified by Children's Social Care about the outcome of their referrals. A process has now been implemented to improve the response rate to referrers.

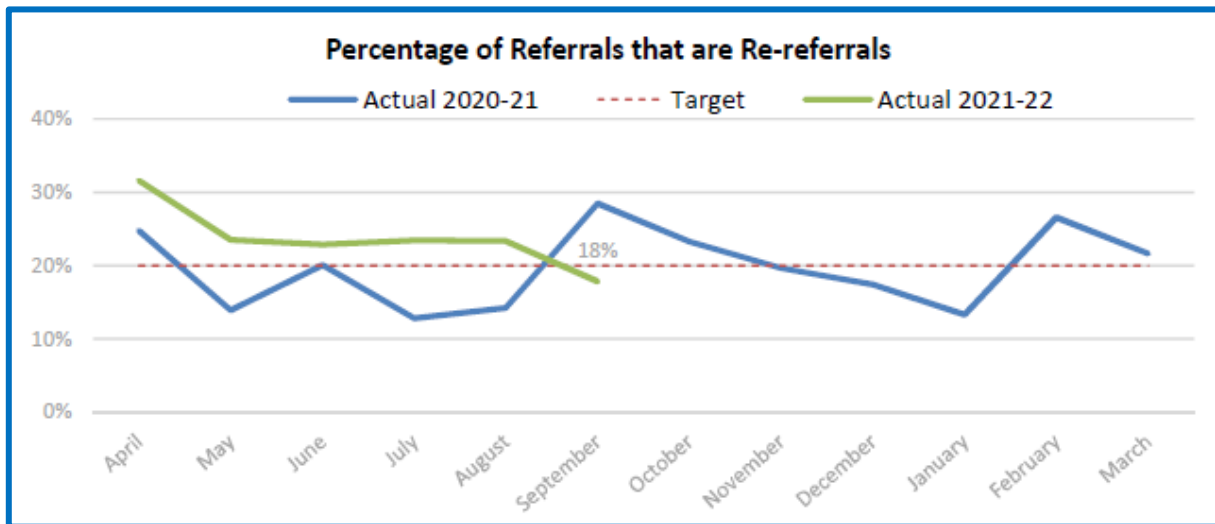


Figure 1

Monitoring data on the factors recorded at the end of assessments by Children’s Social Care in the half-year (figure 2), the Q&E Working Group noted that emotional abuse had increased to third most commonly identified factor between April and September 2021, compared to sixth most commonly identified during the full year ending in March 2021. This was considered to be linked to an increase in domestic violence, which remained the most prevalent factor. Parental drug and alcohol use had also increased as a factor recorded at the end of assessment, as had neglect, again indicating that the risks associated with limited professional access to children during the Covid-19 pandemic had reduced.

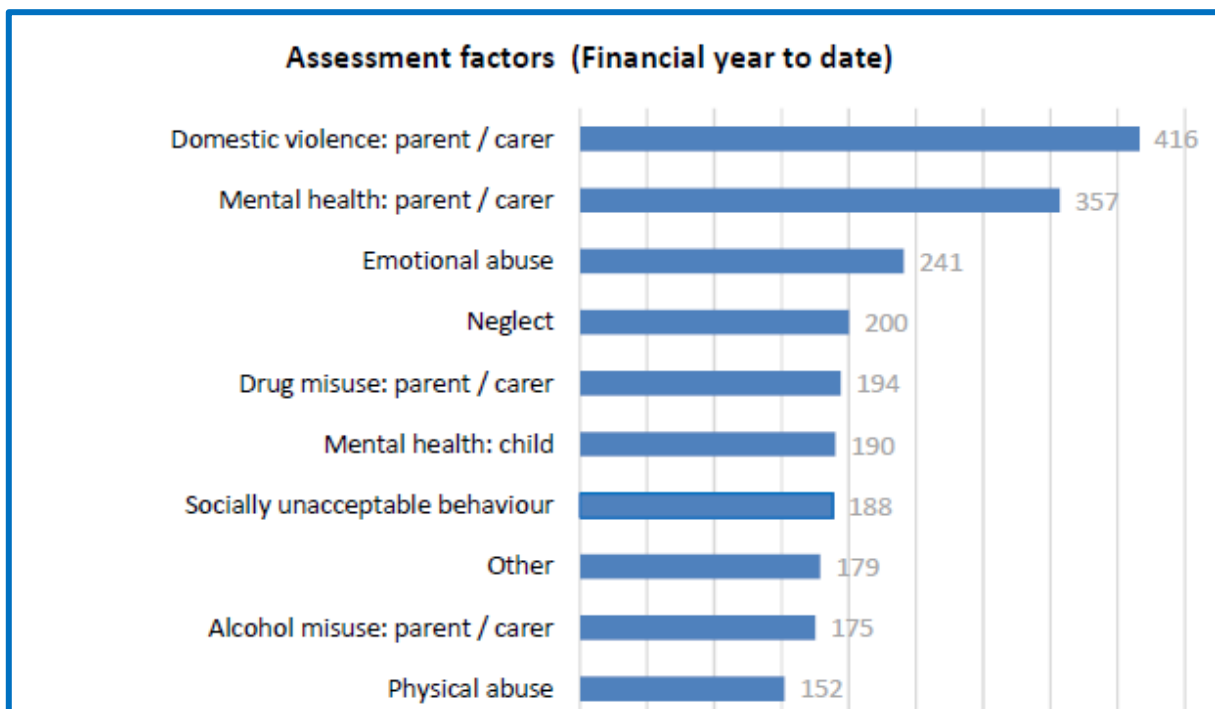


Figure 2

The Q&E Working Group noted that, at the end of September 2021, Havering’s rate of children subject to a child protection (CP) plan, at 40 per 10,000 children, was continuing a steady year-on-year increase after a historic low in 2019/20 (figure 3). This appears to be bringing Havering more in line with all comparator groups. While Havering’s rate of repeat CP plans is increasing, and at a faster rate than all comparators (figure 4), this could be related to the much higher CP numbers locally, and may also be related to sibling groups – for example, concerns tend to



increase if a mother becomes pregnant again. Also, Havering's rate of repeat CP plans *within 2 years of the previous CP plan ending* was noted to be lower and within target, at 8%.

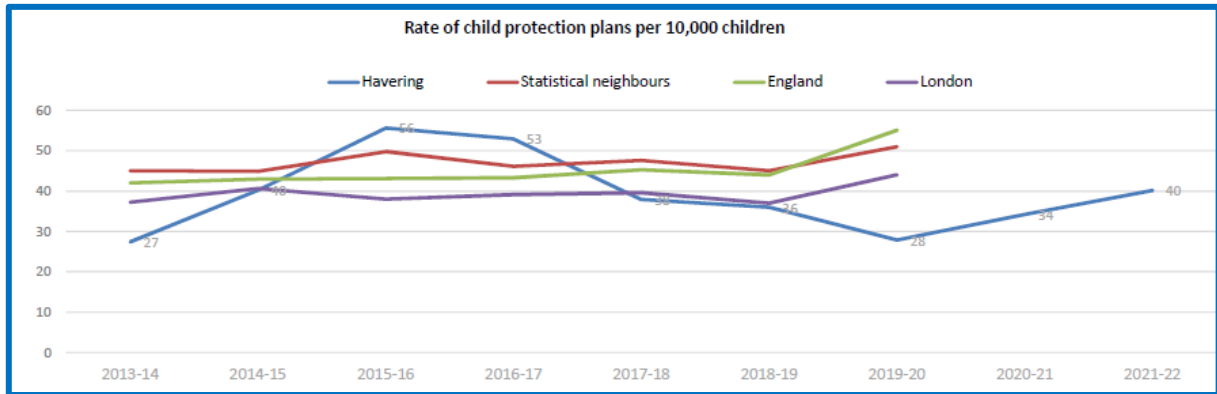


Figure 3

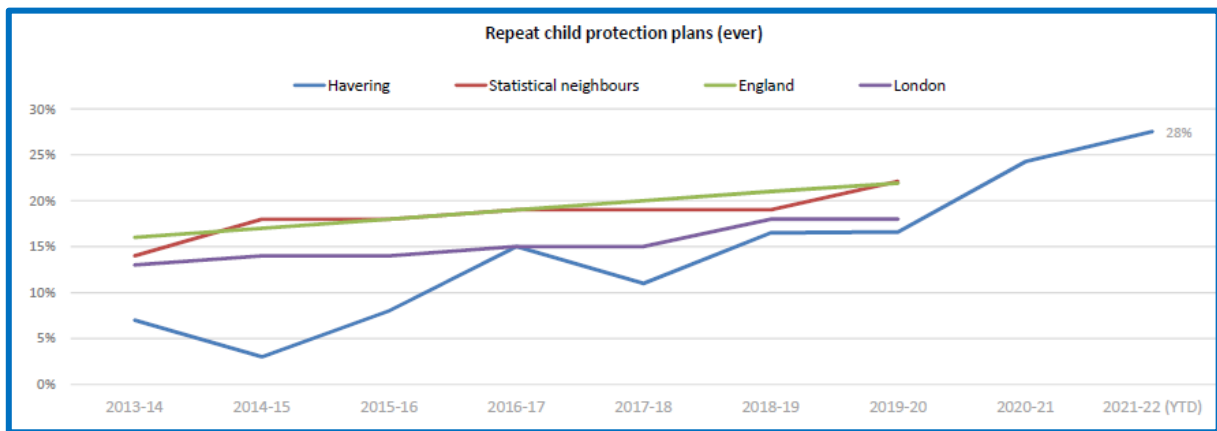


Figure 4

While Havering's number of children subject to child in need (CIN) plans was decreased between April and September 2021, this decrease was not as sharp as that over the same period last year (figure 5). Also, this reduction in CIN plans can be balanced against the increase in CP plans, in contrast to the same period last year when numbers of CIN and CP plans were decreasing simultaneously.

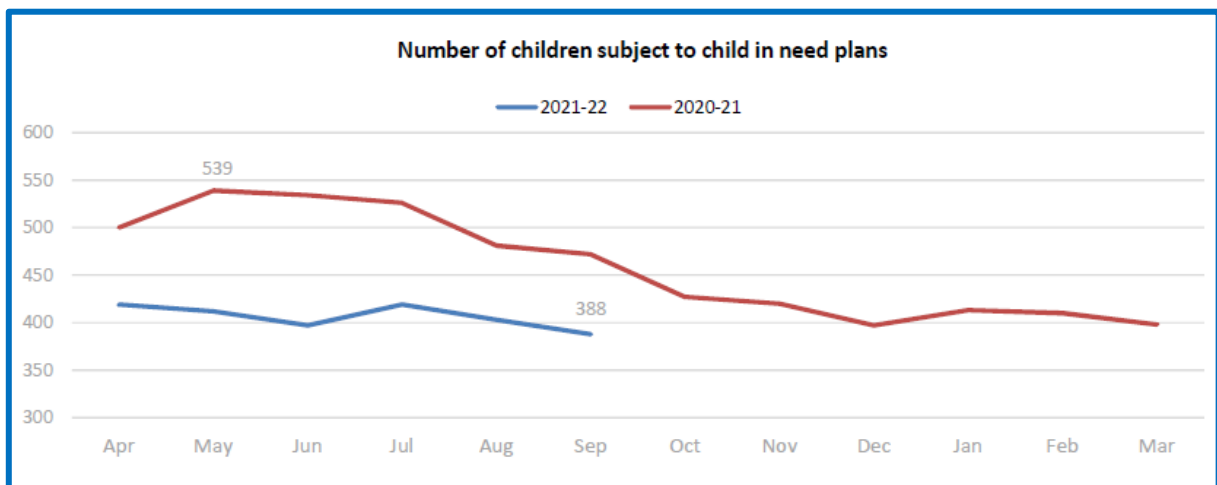


Figure 5



The group has long recognised that the quarterly multi-agency data set scrutinised at the Q&E Working Group has mostly consisted of local authority data. As a result of the plan to remedy this, in autumn 2021 the group received updates from the Police on their new performance indicators, from NELFT on plans to ensure that the health needs of children not attending school are met and from Havering Education Services on elective home education (EHE). In addition, there was agreement from partners to undertake a local multi-agency case audit on the theme of adolescent safeguarding.

2.3. Early Help Partnership Board

The Early Help Partnership Board (EHPB) has been in operation since January 2018 with the aim of providing strategic buy-in and oversight of the 0-25 Early Help offer across the partnership. This is to ensure that Havering is offering co-ordinated and effective Early Help services that meet the needs of children, young people and families. The membership of the EHPB covers Education, Health Providers, Early Hears and Schools representatives, Commissioning, Public Health, Community Safety, Social Care and Third Sector Providers.

In late 2020, the EHPB signed off the new strategy for the [Delivery of Early Help Services in Havering](#). The strategy outlined the partnership priorities for the following 18 months (December 2020 to June 2022) and the actions that would be undertaken to achieve progress in five areas:

- School Readiness
- Education Transitions
- Pregnancy and Newborn Support
- Oral Health, Diet and Nutrition for Children Under Five
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The priorities identified in the strategy are focused areas of development and implementation for the next 18 months, identified based on the following criteria:

- likely to have significant, long-term impact on outcomes for children and young people;
- an identified or upcoming issue likely to significantly impact on demand for statutory services if not responded to;
- a new trend or theme where a response has previously been under-developed; or
- requires a multi-agency strategic overview in order to respond in the most effective way.

The Action Plan within the strategy was set for review and monitoring at the Early Help Operational Forum, with task and finish groups set up and assigned lead for each priority, and reports each quarter to the EHPB, which in turn would be reported to the HSCP. An area of focus across the majority of the priorities was gaining the views of parents and young people who access and use the service about what works, what is missing and how guidance and information can best be shared.

At this time, Early Help also launched a School Readiness leaflet to promote the key milestones, skills and activities in the first five years of a child's life to ensure they are ready to learn by the time they start school. Alongside this, a page on School Readiness was added to Havering's Family Information Service website (including eBooks for [0-2 years](#) and [2-5 years](#)) to provide further information and signpost to support services. Parents workshops were also themed to link in with the top five areas identified from a School Readiness survey for further support to be provided to parents and include speech, language and communication, toileting and self-care, diet and nutrition, and oral health.



Havering's [Young People's Mentor Service](#) remained active as part of the partnership's response to the escalating need of young people experiencing mental ill health in the borough. As of May 2021, there were 14 active matches between young people and mentors. To ensure an early intervention approach, referrals were being targeted to families working with an Early Help Family Practitioner or families at the 'front door' being referred through the MASH. In line with government and local guidance, and as face-to-face contact with young people had resumed, Mentor volunteers were offered Covid-19 vaccination and careful risk-assessment was underway.

Havering's Children's Centres, working in partnership with Public Health, launched a campaign to increase the local uptake of the [NHS's Healthy Start scheme](#) for pregnant women and low-income families. The scheme provides families with free vouchers to spend on fresh, frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables, as well as fresh, dried and tinned pulses and infant formula milk. Families can also access vouchers for free vitamin drops. By May 2021, uptake of the scheme in Havering was low – around 40-45% - with the data showing that the four areas with highest levels of deprivation affecting children were the ones with high numbers of women and families eligible for Healthy Start but not registered, with targeted work being undertaken to increase uptake in these areas.

By summer 2021, the EHPB reflected on several other recent partnership achievements:

- a process whereby all families with a Social Worker where there is a child under five were routinely contacted by an Early Years Practitioner to promote the 0-5 offer;
- Early Help working closely with Health colleagues to co-deliver workshops linked to school readiness, for example Fussy Eaters, Ready Steady Talk, Toileting and Home Safety;
- videos created to share as an online resource as part of the [education transitions programme](#); and
- launch of a monthly working group focusing on perinatal mental health.

The period 2020-21 saw a steady increase in demand for Early Help support, with an increasing number of families in the community requiring support that does not meet the threshold for statutory intervention, or it has been assessed that the Early Help service is the best place to meet their needs. A number of these families have not previously been known to Children's Services. Over this period, the average caseload for an Early Help Family Practitioner increased by three families. This equated to an additional 33 families being supported by the service at any one time, and the number of families allocated during 2020-21 was 12% higher than the previous year. However, as of May 2021, there were no families on the waiting list.

2.4. Education Strategic Partnership

The membership of the Education Strategic Partnership (ESP) is drawn from senior leaders across all of Havering's schools, colleges, yearly years providers and other education settings. The group usually meets termly and is chaired by the Local Authority's Assistant Director for Education Services, Trevor Cook. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the group has met much more frequently to provide strategic direction to the local authority's response to support education and childcare settings.

In the closing months of 2020, the ESP supported activity to mitigate the significant disruption caused by many full or partial school closures that had seen attendance some days dropping to around 25%. This included supporting the implementation of a new and increased Covid-19 testing programme in schools and early years settings, as well as regular briefings jointly hosted by Havering Education Services (HES) and Public Health focusing on testing and other issues



relating to the pandemic. Support was also given to schools with their 'Remote Education' plans and preparations, including guidance on access and keeping children safe online, with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable children, whose attendance at school was promoted wherever possible. Free school meals were provided, either through weekly food packs, or access to national or local vouchers schemes.

At this time, the ESP also supported a revised communications campaign for parents and carers, focusing on realistic expectations, mental health and wellbeing. This included a 'Wellbeing for Education Return' programme, led by Havering's Children and Adults with Disabilities (CAD) service in partnership with the Anna Freud Centre, alongside a refreshed mental health and wellbeing programme for schools and early years providers. Schools were supported to update their risk assessments to reflect new and changing national restrictions and new strains or variants of Covid-19, as well as with the vaccination programme, which initially supported staff in special schools and additional resources provisions (ARPs) who were in regular contact with clinically extremely vulnerable children. Consideration was also being to medium- and longer-term recovery planning, and engaging with national 'catch-up' programmes.

During December and January, Havering had the highest rates of Covid-19 in the UK at times, which had an obvious impact on school attendance, either because children and their families were having to self-isolate, or schools had their operations so disrupted that they were unable to provide a full-time education offer. Attendance levels fluctuated on a daily basis, but the overall attendance from pupils with a Social Worker or Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) remained above local and sub-regional levels of around 30%, and the Department for Education regularly fed back that Havering was an area that performed well in this regard.

Schools were supported in preparation for the full reopening in March, including briefings for head teachers by Public Health. Later in March, [Havering Festival of Education 2021](#) was held virtually, covering themes including Leadership, Inclusion and Pedagogy, with over 800 participants across the week. By May, 92.5% of pupils had returned to school and efforts were being made to encourage parents and pupils in order to increase this even further. HES and the Corporate Communications team supported schools to develop [Lockdown Stories](#), an initiative enabling young people in the borough to share their inspirational stories – written during lockdown and after the return to school – of creativity, resilience and building up their skills.

By summer 2021, Havering's [Strategic Education Vision](#) continued to focused on three priority areas – Leadership, Inclusion and Aspiration – and workshops were being held with schools and early years leaders to refresh the vision and refocus on key priorities to support education recovery. Havering's schools were being challenged by growing numbers of Covid-19 cases in the local community, leading to increased disruption. In the last full week of the summer terms, there were 120 confirmed positive cases, which affected nearly half of primary schools and two thirds of secondary schools. There were also six outbreaks that week, one of which led to a secondary school having to move to remote learning for the whole school due to a significant number of staff having to self-isolate, either because they were identified as a close contact in school, or via NHS Test and Trace. Covid-19 asymptomatic testing continued to be promoted in schools and early years providers to support the wider testing programme, and there were plans to promote this further to support the return to school in September, with on-site testing for secondary age pupils and at-home testing for primary pupils and all staff.



3. Learning and Improvement

This section will explain how the HSCP has learnt from serious cases and applied the learning in order to improve services, and also through the delivery of training and workforce development across the local multi-agency partnership.

3.1. Rapid Review

Between October 2020 and September 2021, the HSCP completed one Rapid Review¹ to consider the circumstances surrounding the death of a child and determine whether a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) was required.

3.1.1. Rapid Review: Background (anonymised synopsis)

On the night of the incident, Havering Children's Services' Emergency Duty Team received a call from the London Ambulance Service (LAS) reporting the death of a 16-year-old male, referred to here as Child A. The LAS crew noted that Child A had a single stab wound to the neck and was pronounced dead at the scene. A 15-year-old male, referred to here as Child B, was also stabbed and taken to hospital before later being discharged. Police noted that CCTV footage showed Child A being attacked by five males. He was with a group and was attacked by another group, resulting in his death and the injury to Child B. Police believe this to have been a pre-planned incident as both children had been armed with knives.

Within five days, following consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service, Child B and two other males – aged 18 and 19, both care-experienced – were charged with Child A's murder and possession of an offensive weapon. All three were remanded in custody, with Child B thereby becoming a Looked After Child. Within 14 days of the death, a 17-year-old male, referred to here as Child C, was also charged and remanded in custody, as a result of which he became a Looked After Child. Two other males, both aged 18, have also been charged and are in custody. In summary, six people have been charged and remanded in relation to this incident: two aged under 18; and four aged over 18, two of whom were previously looked after by Havering.

3.1.2. Notification to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

A week after the death, London Borough of Havering notified the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (also known as the National Panel) of this tragic incident, in accordance with the statutory duty on Local Authorities to notify the National Panel of any incident where a child dies or is seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. In this case, there were grounds to suspect abuse or neglect regarding Child B as a recommendation to hold a child protection conference was made shortly before this incident. Although he experienced the most severe outcome in losing his life, there were no other grounds to suspect pre-existing abuse or neglect were less clear in relation to Child A, who had not been known to Havering Children's Social Care and only minimally known to the Police. Given the circumstances, both Child A and Child B were included in the notification to the National Panel.

3.1.3. Rapid Review Meeting

In response to the incident, a Rapid Review meeting was held and considered the circumstances of Child A and Child B, and briefly those of Child C, who was charged and remanded subsequent

¹ In accordance with guidance in Chapter 4 of [Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018](#) (pages 84-90).



to the notification to the National Panel. Those present at the Rapid Review were also mindful that two of the adult males charged and remanded had been well known to services, though it was not within the remit of the meeting to discuss their circumstances in detail.

At the time of the Rapid Review, clarification was still being sought by the Police on the accuracy of information in relation to Child A concerning a missing episode and being found outside of London in possession of knives, which may have been an error in Police records.

During the reflective discussion, the following 'missed opportunities' or opportunities to improve were identified for agencies:

- Significance of poor school attendance not picked up in Havering (Child A);
- Incidents not captured and shared with other agencies through Police MERLINS in Waltham Forest (Child A);
- Issues with sharing discharge summaries for non-local hospitals on Emergency Department (ED) attendance with community health agencies (Child B);
- Whether sufficient weight was given to the number of ED attendances, particularly with hand injuries consistent with punching (Child B);
- Effectiveness of work undertaken by Children's Social Care, including the Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service (Child B and Child C).

While recognising these points, the Rapid Review recommended not to undertake an LCSPR on the basis that it would be likely to replicate learning from LSCPRs on the theme of serious youth violence already completed regionally and nationally. It was recommended that, instead of undertaking a new LSCPR, the learning from those already completed would be disseminated through the local multi-agency safeguarding partnership.

The Safeguarding Partners were in agreement with the recommendations of the Rapid Review, and the Independent Scrutineers were apprised of decision making at each stage.

3.1.4. Recommendations

- **(1)** HSCP to work with the advice of its Independent Scrutineers to disseminate and embed existing learning from reviews across London which reflect the findings of this Rapid Review. This will include consideration of Waltham Forest's Serious Case Review about Child C (May 2020) and other learning on Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- **(2)** Since aspects of learning in this review relate to when Child A lived in Waltham Forest and have been covered in their Serious Case Review about Child C (May 2020), findings from this Rapid Review will be shared with the Waltham Forest LSCP along with an invitation to revisit their learning and implementation against those recommendations.
- **(3)** There may be valuable learning in relation to the networks that Child A and Child B were involved in, and the rapid escalation in Child B's behaviour as highlighted in a number of recent group incidents. Further details of this and the mapping of associates is being gathered through the police investigation of the murder (the Rapid Review panel obtained a commitment from the police to share that information) as it emerges. The Community Safety Gangs Analyst will also assist with compiling and developing this map.
- **(4)** Since the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel is carrying out a 'Phase 2' examination of child criminal exploitation cases reported to them since the publication of their previous national review report, [*It Was Hard to Escape: Safeguarding Children At*](#)



Risk From Criminal Exploitation, they may wish to consider adding the outcome of this Rapid Review to that project.

3.1.5. Mitigating actions already underway

- **(1)** It is of interest that Child B had a period with no concerning behaviour or incidents referred. An appreciative perspective to elicit what was going well will inform improvements to practice.
- **(2)** Conversely, the rapid escalation in Child B's concerning behaviour evinced by his involvement in a number of group incidents has led to a review of how high risk can be managed more proactively than reactively.
- **(3)** The Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service (IASS) will explore the Triage practice model in more depth to increase the frequency and length of support to maximise on intervention opportunities.
- **(4)** Police to clarify and correct if necessary information about a missing episode and possession of knives apparently in relation to Child a but which may be an error in Police records.
- **(5)** NELFT to review the information sharing practices for non-local hospital Emergency Departments to ensure notifications of attendance and discharge from such hospitals are shared in a timely way with community health services, in line with how this is achieved with local hospital partners.
- **(6)** BHRUT to review Child B's Emergency Department attendances to ascertain the levels of detailed discussion regarding his presentation with hand injuries consistent with punching.

3.1.6. Considering the impact of Covid-19

The Child Practice Review Panel asked the Rapid Review to consider the extent to which the response to Covid-19 had impacted either on the circumstances of the child or family or on the capacity of services to respond to their needs.

The impact of Covid-19 on the case under review is complex. On one hand, the shutdown of the night-time economy in Romford and subsequent absence of 'custom' for drug dealers on the streets led to a reduction in gang activity and an increase in the ability of the police to disrupt any gang activity that was observed. On the other hand, young people being 'locked down' at home, bored with little to do, meant they were more susceptible to being exploited online and virtually. Reductions in referrals and 'intelligence' from schools and community organisations being shared with Children's Services meant that exploitation and gang activity went undetected, and that professions were less able to map, predict and respond. This is likely to have been a feature for all three young people considered in this Rapid Review.

In relation to Child B, it is reasonable to surmise that Covid-19 lockdown restrictions had an impact on his school attendance and engagement. While he had previously been settled, there were difficulties providing him with school work and a laptop when he disengaged from education in March 2021. It is also evident that Child B was engaging in risk-taking activity and the 'pull' factors cannot be discounted. It is not clear precisely what point in the year his concerning behaviour began to escalate.



3.1.7. Response from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

Seven weeks after the initial incident, the HSCP received a response from the National Panel confirming their agreement with the local decision not to initiate an LSCPR and that they may consider this case in the 'Phase 2' examination of child criminal exploitation cases the will shortly be commencing to test whether recent cases support the findings of their [previous national review on this theme](#) and what, if any, new themes have emerged.

3.2. Multi-agency safeguarding training

The HSCP provides a comprehensive training and workforce development programme, free at the point of access, for all professionals and volunteers across the local partnership.

As well as providing comprehensive learning on specific safeguarding issues, training delivered in a multi-agency setting brings professionals and volunteers together with colleagues from different services and organisations, enabling greater understanding of different roles and responsibilities within the partnership.

Training needs are identified through learning from local, regional and national case reviews, as well a wider research and policy update, and consultation with safeguarding leads across the partnership on emerging areas of priority.

The HSCP's multi-agency training and workforce development offer is ranged across several entry points to ensure that relevant learning is available to staff at all levels of specialism and expertise:

- **Level 1:** At this level, courses are designed to raise awareness and understanding, and are generally offered as introductory courses. The target audience is staff who require basic awareness training, those who work indirectly with children, young people and families, or those who require basic refresher training.
- **Level 2:** This level focuses on knowledge and application of learning, and skills and behaviours required for effective inter-agency working. The target audience is staff and volunteers who are in regular contact, or who have periods of irregular but intense contact, with children, young people and families.
- **Level 3:** Training at this level focuses on critical thinking, analysis and management. The target audience is supervisors, managers and specialist service leads who already have knowledge of safeguarding and wish to maintain and develop their level of skill.
- **Suitable for all:** These training courses are open to all professionals working with children, young people and families.
- **Topic-specific briefings:** This learning concentrates on highly focused safeguarding topic areas and is intended for all professionals who wish to broaden their knowledge in a particular area.

The published brochure for [2020/21](#) training programmes, covering the multi-agency partnerships for both adults and children, demonstrates the wide variety of safeguarding themes and topics included.



While core elements form the basis of each annual programme, the HSCP's multi-agency training offer evolves throughout the year in response to arising service needs and emerging safeguarding priorities.

The HSCP continues to survey the evolving safeguarding landscape for opportunities to update knowledge and develop expertise across the local multi-agency partnership.

3.3. Havering Safeguarding Week 2020

Havering Safeguarding Week 2020 ran from Monday 2nd to Friday 6th November, beginning with the annual Safeguarding Conference and continuing throughout the week with learning events and briefings delivered to staff from across the local multi-agency partnership on a wide range of current and emerging issues around adult safeguarding.

Due to the new ways of working brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the entire week of events was delivered online for the first time.

2020's Safeguarding Conference included an address from each of the three local lead Safeguarding Partner agencies – the Local Authority, the Police and the CCG – alongside a presentation from one of the HSCP's Independent Scrutineers. Havering's Director of Children's Services participated in a moderated discussion with the Director of Adult Services about the different ways of working brought about by the pandemic, and Havering Mind delivered a powerful presentation on the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing of service users and professionals.

Learning events throughout the rest of Safeguarding Week, attended by practitioners from a range of agencies across the partnership, included the following topics:

- An A to Z of Private Fostering
- Mental Health: Why Youth Work Works
- Domestic Violence Awareness
- Managing Allegations Against Staff and the Role of the LADO
- Drug Awareness
- Overview of Mental Health Support and Training for Primary Schools
- Overview of Mental Health Support and Training for Secondary Schools
- Child Mental Health First Aid Training
- Working with Cultural and Ethnic Diversity and Safeguarding Children
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Infants
- Universal Credit
- Adolescent Safeguarding
- Perinatal Mental Health
- Hate Crime and Prevent
- Gambling and Gaming
- Suicide and Self-Harm

Evaluations of events during Safeguarding Week 2020 completed afterwards by participants included the following feedback.



From a Teacher who attended the briefing on Hate Crime and Prevent:

What did you dislike or feel could be improved?

Face to face would be even better, but understand the need for online at current time.

However, online does mean less direct time for me personally and it does work well in allowing me to access more events, whereas being out of school can be tricky at times. Pros and cons.

From a Housing Officer who attended the briefing on Suicide and Self-Harm:

What did you like / find most useful about the briefing

The information provided throughout the training was very good. It gave me a better understanding of suicide and self harm and how to overcome barriers in talking about it. We were given good advice to not be afraid to ask some one if they are have suicidal thoughts as this will not encourage them to do it, but shows that we understand the complexity of their pain. This was very useful information.

From a Vicar who attended the briefing on Universal Credit:

Any other comments

No, just thank you for these Safeguarding Courses, they are really helpful to my ministry in helping me understand issues of concern in my community.

4. Progress on identified safeguarding partnership objectives

Between October 2020 and September 2021, much interagency collaborative activity took place in pursuance of the six key partnership objectives collectively identified in July 2020.

4.1. Objective 1

Led by the Assistant Director for Children's Services at NELFT, the purpose of Objective 1 has been to:

Mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on the physical and psychological wellbeing of children and families by addressing known impact and seeking to prevent any further negative impact.

Between October 2020 and September 2021, partnership work by NELFT, BHRUT's Midwifery team and LB Havering's Early Help service further developed the Butterflies programme offered by Health Visitors through Havering's Children's Centres to support new mothers who may be experiencing challenges but be below the threshold for perinatal mental health services. Butterflies now includes a peer support programme, and a Perinatal Champion role has been established within NELFT's 0-19 programme.



Arrangements are now in place to enable children, young people and families to make direct contact with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) triage system or access a consultation with the Primary Mental Health Team (PMHT). Work is still being progressed to review the routes into CAMHS to reduce multiplication and to further develop NELFT's referral form.

NELFT have provided [a range of mental health support to Havering's schools](#), including Primary Mental Health Workers offering consultations to professionals and directly to children and young people, as well as brief interventions where appropriate. NELFT's Support Time and Resilience (STAR) Workers and School Nurses jointly worked with schools to provide emotional health and wellbeing drop-ins for children and young people and their families, circulating a [Havering CAMHS Wellbeing Newsletter](#) to promote this and the other services they provide.

In addition, there was a successful bid for two Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) that will be working in a number of schools from 2022, providing early support for emotional health and wellbeing. The [National Trailblazer Mental Health Support Team Programme](#), funded by NHS England, is an exciting new service aiming to develop and deliver a collaborative, system-wide approach to support the mental health of children in education settings. MHSTs complement existing support provided in schools by delivering quicker support to individuals who may not typically meet the CAMHS threshold but would benefit from accessing early support. MHSTs have the simple objective of bringing together education and mental health professionals to develop a systemic and sustainable approach to children and young people's mental health.

During summer 2021, the HSCP participated in a tri-borough multi-agency audit alongside the Barking & Dagenham and Redbridge SCPs on the theme of adolescent suicidal ideation. Five cases were selected from each of the participating local authorities, with a further five cases selected by health services. A report on the audit findings is due to be presented to the tri-borough BHR Safeguarding Partners and the three local SCPs in autumn 2021.

From summer 2021 onwards, the Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Services (IASS), including its clinical NELFT lead, are now providing systemic case consultations using a reflective team model to professional networks around young people with assessed or emerging mental health need where this overlaps with concerns in relation to adolescent safeguarding.

4.2. Objective 2

Led by the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding and Looked After Children at the North East London CCG, the purpose of Objective 2 has been to:

Maximise direct professional access to children and their families, and mitigate the impact of any continuing limitations to professional access to children (for example, due to virtual health consultations or children not returning to school) on the ability of the multi-agency partnership to recognise and respond to indicators of persistent neglect.

In autumn 2020, to mitigate the ongoing closure of schools, work began on developing a shared approach to ensure sufficient professional access to children across the multi-agency partnership in order to recognise and respond to indicators of persistent neglect. However, this was no longer required after the reopening of schools in March 2021.



Following up on the Rapid Review about Child G in summer 2020, partnership work by the CCG, NELFT and Public Health focused on reviewing the childhood obesity pathway, and NELFT developed several tools related to neglect and childhood obesity.

This work will feed into the multi-agency neglect strategy and toolkit currently in development, to be launched in autumn 2021.

4.3. Objective 3

Led by the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care at London Borough of Havering, the purpose of Objective 3 has been to:

Understand how effectively the multi-agency safeguarding system is reaching and affecting Black and minority ethnic communities in Havering, and explain or address any disproportionalities.

Between October 2020 and September 2021, Havering's Early Help and Youth Justice Services (YJS) worked together to embed a Family Group Conference (FCG) offer for all young people and families referred to the YJS. This is to improve options available to the courts as an alternative to custody, where there is a significant over-representation of BAME young people, predominantly male. FGCs undertaken in the YJS are proven to have a positive outcome.

The YJS has established a Disproportionality Working Group which has met several times, with good attendance by all partners. Its work has initially focused on learning from current cases as well as using data and research to recognise and learn from earlier intervention opportunities for Black and minority ethnic young people. An audit of current cases has been completed, involving all multi-agency partners, and including the feedback and views of the young people and their families.

While established by the YJS, the Disproportionality Working Group reviews disproportionality not only within the cohort of young people to whom the YJS provides services but also other key cohorts such as children excluded from school, persistently absent or in receipt of CAMHS.

Havering Children's Social Care has undertaken some quality assurance activity focusing on disproportionality in multi-agency decision making in child protection cases, particularly in cases involving physical abuse.

There has also been analysis of quarterly performance information which looks at the ethnicities of all Children's Social Care cohorts (Early Help through to Adoption and Leaving Care) compared to school census data to identify any areas of disproportionality. This analysis has identified an increase in the proportion of Black families with Early Help assessments (13% compared to 9% two years previously), which appears to suggest a positive increase in preventative services offered to this community, although further work is needed to understand this fully.

4.4. Objective 4

Led by the Assistant Director for Education at London Borough of Havering, the purpose of Objective 4 has been to:

Support children in Havering to return to school, including a strategy to maximise school attendance and engagement in education.



During the period of national lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Havering Education Services (HES) regularly shared information, advice and guidance with all education settings to support them in promoting attendance, particularly for vulnerable children and families. HES also regularly shared information across the partnership regarding which schools and settings were partially or fully closed due to disruption caused by high numbers of children and/or staff testing positive with COVID-19.

HES also led on co-ordination between partner agencies to avoid duplication of contact with the same families around school attendance, and on partnership work to explore and respond to any issues relating to particular local communities which may influence any reluctance to return to school.

To support the return of all children, HES embedded the DfE 'Wellbeing for Education Return' programme into the wider health and wellbeing programmes available locally, and promoted it to local schools. They also worked closely with the teams across Children's Services to ensure sufficient focus on vulnerable pupils with a Social Worker.

During this period, HES revised the previous policy of removing the Elective Home Education (EHE) cohort from school roll and facilitated work between schools and parents on an individual case-by-case basis to explore the reasons behind decision for EHE, with review periods for this work extended. HES also collaborated with NELFT on identifying any crossover in the EHE cohort and children known to health services.

Havering's Early Years Services and Nurseries collaborated on proactive strategies to encourage the attendance of under-5s, which led to resumption of almost normal levels of attendance for children aged 3 to 5, after which additional focus went on encouraging the attendance of 2-year-olds at Early Years settings.

4.5. Objective 5

Led by the Detective Chief Inspector for Public Protection at the Metropolitan Police East Area Basic Command Unit, the purpose of Objective 4 has been to:

Support staff in the three statutory partner agencies and across the multi-agency partnership to manage the change in the demand on services, in terms of both volume and complexity.

At Havering's Safeguarding Conference in November 2020, key voluntary sector partner Havering Mind delivered a presentation to the more than 100 attendees from across the local multi-agency partnership on ways to promote positive mental health and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Havering Council supported NELFT in a successful bid for funding for a new online [wellbeing hub](#), which offers Health and Social Care staff in Havering and across North East London support with occupational health, wellbeing and talking therapies. Planning for the hub included particular consideration of accessibility to Black and minority ethnic staff.

4.6. Objective 6

Led by the Principal Social Worker at London Borough of Havering, the purpose of Objective 6 has been to:



Improve the recognition, and response to, sexual abuse.

Havering's multi-agency Child Protection Professionals Implementation Group now meets quarterly to continually review safeguarding partnership systems and processes, including those relating to child sexual abuse (CSA).

As part of its multi-agency training programme, the HSCP commissioned training by the [CSA Centre](#) and much work was done to promote take up by practitioners from right across the local safeguarding partnership, and school staff in particular.

Also, in September 2021 an online multi-agency workshop on historical sexual abuse was hosted by Dr Anna Riddell, Clinical Lead for the CSA hub at Barts Health NHS Trust, and also included input from specialist support services [The Havens](#) and [Barnardos's TIGER Light](#).

5. The role of independent scrutiny in multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements

5.1. The statutory framework for independent scrutiny

The role of independent scrutiny is set out in the statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018](#). Independent scrutiny should provide an objective view of how effectively the safeguarding children partnership is operating and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people. The guidance provides flexibility as to the local scrutiny arrangements within certain parameters: '*safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement*'. In addition, '*the independent scrutineer should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership*'.

5.2. Arrangements for independent scrutiny in Havering

The [2019-20 Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report](#) described the role of independent scrutiny in the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements established in September 2019. That report covered the period September 2019 to September 2020. This report describes the scrutiny activity undertaken during the period October 2020 to September 2021.

During 2020-21, responsibility for independent scrutiny was shared by two experienced safeguarding professionals:

- **Keith Ibbetson** is an experienced independent consultant in children's social care and health provision, as well as being an author of child safeguarding practice reviews. He is a specialist advisor to the London Adolescent Safeguarding Overview Board. The focus of his scrutiny in Havering has been on the leadership and business planning of the partnership, early help services and overall quality and effectiveness.
- **Jenny Pearce** is the Professor of Young People and Public Policy at University of Bedfordshire. She has a national and international reputation for her teaching and



research in the field of child sexual exploitation. Jenny is an experienced safeguarding partnership chair who has a particular interest in the way in which young people and families can help shape services. Her focus in Havering has been on adolescent safeguarding (including exploitation) and safeguarding in secondary schools.

The scrutineers regularly review their work, with one another and with the Havering Partnerships and Learning Manager . The aim of independent scrutiny is to compliment and add value to existing quality assurance mechanisms. Each agency has its own internal quality assurance and improvement mechanisms and statutory agencies are subject to independent inspection. Of note, during the period under review Ofsted made a focused visit in May 2021 to examine the work of the local authority social care service. The scrutiny role is focused on safeguarding arrangements and outcomes in the Havering local authority area. It includes the following activities:

- Participating in discussions about the partnership's vision, priorities and strategy.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the activity of the partnership and member agencies, highlighting strengths, challenging shortcomings and offering objective advice.
- Bringing specialist knowledge and experience to discussions.
- Supporting the partnership in being open to new ideas and approaches, especially those that have worked elsewhere.
- Encourage the partnership to include the voices of children, parents, staff and the wider community in its activity.
- Evaluate the progress of the partnership through scrutiny of its annual report required by statutory guidance.

As this was the first full year of scrutiny activity, and scope for direct contacts was limited, the scrutineers have not had direct contact with users of the safeguarding service.

Following the [six steps framework](#), independent scrutiny has focused on the following objectives, as well as addressing the effectiveness of the partnership's safeguarding activity during the second phase of the Covid-19 pandemic:

- The three core partners are actively involved in strategic planning and implementation.
- The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children.
- Children, young people and families are aware of and involved with plans for safeguarding children.
- Appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing.
- There is a process for identifying and investigating learning from local and national case reviews.
- There is an active program of multi-agency safeguarding children training.



For each area, Section 6 of this report describes the scrutiny activity undertaken, findings and (where appropriate) recommendations for the partnership or further scrutiny during the period October 2021 to September 2022.

Both scrutineers are active members of the pan-London independent scrutineer and chairs group and also of the Association of Safeguarding Partners, the national body representing children's safeguarding partnerships. This enables the Havering partnership to benefit from involvement in a series of national seminars and other initiatives.

6. Independent scrutiny of Havering's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

This section, co-authored by Havering's Independent Scrutineers Keith Ibbetson and Jenny Pearce, provides a commentary on the effectiveness of Havering's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements between October 2020 and September 2021.

6.1. Overall business plan and response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Scrutiny activity

The structure of the partnership is described in the appendix of this report. The scrutineers regularly contributed to meetings of the partnership and its constituent bodies. Throughout the year, discussions were held with key leaders and senior managers. Scrutiny activity was planned and reviewed with the Havering Partnerships and Learning Manager. In this way, the scrutineers aimed to maintain a focus on the practical activity of the partnership and its member agencies to test how successfully the partnership was meeting the objectives of its business plan.

The scrutineers had participated in the development of the 2020-21 partnership business plan and in the review of progress in June 2021, which followed the publication of the findings of the Ofsted focused visit that took place on 12th and 13th May 2021. The focus of this was on renewing the vision for children's services following the Ofsted visit; understanding demand and need; and ensuring a shared approach across agencies.

Findings

Activity in the partnership has been strongly influenced for the second year in succession by the impact on families, staff and services of the Covid-19 pandemic. The second half of 2020 saw severe disruptions to children's education and a reduction in direct face-to-face contacts with vulnerable children and their families. Scrutineers were assured of regular contact between senior staff to oversee the partnership collaboration on operational arrangements before the pandemic. The priorities set by the partnership for 2020-21 (see [Annual Report 2019-20](#)) reflected the need to maintain secure safeguarding arrangements while minimising the risks of infection to staff and service users. This included restoring face-to-face contact with vulnerable service users as soon as possible and minimising the disruption to children's education.

In September 2020, schools and the local authority noted a significant increase in the number of children who did not return to school because their parents had chosen to educate them at home. During its focused visit, Ofsted noted that the local authority and schools has '*developed suitable*



tracking and monitoring systems for effective home education and children missing from education'.

In the final months of 2020, the high rates of infection and serious illness associated with the Kent and Essex (Beta) Covid-19 variant had a significant impact on Havering, posing particular challenges to health professionals and schools. Secondary school attendance fell at the end of 2020 but rose quickly in early 2021, reflecting the considerable efforts made by schools and families.

The pandemic has brought new pressures and demands. In its focused visit, Ofsted reported that the local authority had provided substantial additional support to the community through the provision of school meals, and worked with its partners in responding to increased reports of domestic violence and mental health difficulties, including increases in young people self-harming and experiencing suicidal thoughts.

The Early Help Partnership has gained a good understanding of new demands, their underlying causes, and possible future trends through work commissioned by the local authority Director of Public Health on the impact of Covid-19 on inequalities in Havering. This and a wider needs assessment support strategy for the [Delivery of Early Help Services in Havering](#) for December 2020 to June 2022. The strategy lays out five priority areas:

- School readiness
- Educational transitions
- Pregnancy and new-born support
- Oral health, diet and nutrition for children under five
- Special educational needs and disabilities

Taken together, these address important features of the lives of the borough's most disadvantaged children. Each priority area has defined targets and measures of outcomes that the Early Help Partnership reviews and updated regularly. The borough's children's centres remained open in order to provide antenatal services during the pandemic and gradually reopened a fuller range of services, restoring most face-to-face contacts with most service users. Some (where experience has shown that service users had a better experience using virtual services) have maintained that approach. In some instances, this made services available to some service users who would not otherwise have accessed them, including for example some fathers.

Following a trial period in which workers were seconded, connections between the Early Help services and the MASH have been strengthened by the inclusion on a permanent basis in the MASH of an Early Help Manager post. This enables families whose needs will be better met by Early Help services to be directed to the appropriate team at an early point. There are also strong connections between Early Help provision and behaviour support services.

With the Education Strategic Partnership, scrutineers have engaged with further thought about representation of primary school heads engaging with the partnership, specifically during the return to school attendance following the pandemic.



Recommendations

- Scrutineers to maintain a focus on oversight of the management of children's safe return to schools settings and to engage with the Education Strategic Partnership to review the use of elective home education.
- It has been agreed that scrutiny will focus on the working of the fair access panel and on the use of alternative provision in the prevention of school exclusions for 2021-2022, with a specific focus on the impact of the pandemic on school inclusion.
- Continued focus is to be placed on the relationship between Early Help and the Education Strategic Partnership.

6.2. The three core partner leads are actively involved in strategic planning and implementation

Scrutiny activity

Throughout the year, the scrutineers reviewed reports prepared by member agencies and held discussions with service leaders and senior managers. Keith Ibbetson attended the HSCP group (described in detail in Section 2 of this report). Scrutiny activity was planned and reviewed with the Partnerships and Learning Manager. In May 2021, the scrutineers met the three statutory partners to provide an interim scrutiny report on their activity and findings. This identified areas for further activity.

Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership

The statutory partners (local authority, NHS clinical commissioning group, and the police) are represented at meetings of the Havering partnership, usually by the Director of Children's Services, the Police Superintendent with responsibility for safeguarding and public protection, and the Clinical Commissioning Group Deputy Director of Nursing or Designated Nurse.

Local authority commitment to the Havering partnership is evidenced by the engagement of a large number of local authority leaders and managers in the partnership and across its constituent bodies. The elected Havering Council member with responsibility for children's services regularly attends and observes partnership meetings. The local authority provides the majority of the data for the multi-agency dataset, though relevant data from other agencies is gradually being added.

The police are strongly engaged in the Havering partnership through the attendance of the Detective Superintendent and Chief Inspectors. This brings consistency and stability, in contrast to the previous rapid turnover of police representatives. The Superintendent leads the partnership Quality and Effectiveness Working Group and the police have a strong engagement in the Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy Group.

Representatives from the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group lead the partnership case review subgroup and regularly attend partnership meetings. There is wide representation from acute and community health providers in partnership groups.



Taken together, this provides a sufficient framework within which the statutory partners can co-ordinate and monitor safeguarding activity.

Resourcing of the partnership Business Unit and the role of the Partnerships and Learning Manager

In the [2019-20 Annual Report](#), the scrutineers noted that – in comparison to other safeguarding partnerships – the Havering Business Unit has a low level of resourcing and the scope of the role of the Partnerships and Learning Manager is much broader. A temporary uplift has been made to the level of resources allocated to the children’s partnership, which will enable some additional tasks once the temporary additional post has been filled. The independent scrutineers remain of the view that in order for the partnership to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in an effective way, this additional funding needs to be made permanent and kept under regular review.

Collaboration with statutory partners in neighbouring local authorities

The three statutory partners also hold six-weekly meetings with the Directors of Children’s Services of two neighbouring local authorities (London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and London Borough of Redbridge). This collaboration mirrors the current footprint of the CCG (though this is shortly to change due to NHS reorganisation) and the police Basic Command Unit. In the published multi-agency children’s safeguarding arrangements, statutory responsibility for safeguarding is held at this level.

There is no independent scrutiny of activities of the tri-borough safeguarding partnership. In July 2020, the independent scrutineers met with the wider (tri-borough) partnership in order to discuss how liaison and co-ordination across the three local authority areas might be developed in the most effective way.

There is agreement that this activity is essential and should be promoted. It is noted that it is both relatively unusual across London and very positive for there to be such regular partnership arrangements between boroughs. Notwithstanding this, the scrutineers are concerned that the current arrangements leave some aspects of accountability unclear. At each borough level, there are clear programmes of work and priorities. Although some useful initiatives have been taken, there is currently no shared programme of inter-agency safeguarding work across the three boroughs. In July 2021, the statutory partners across the three boroughs agreed to bring forward proposals to clarify the roles and responsibilities for collaboration and joint activity so that the advantages of liaison and co-ordination can be maximised. It is proposed that the London Borough of Havering work with its partners to create a Havering LSCP and moves towards this end are underway for 2022. The independent scrutineers believe that resolution of this uncertainty is an important task.

Challenges and recommendations for future activity

Services in Havering will face a significant challenge due to population changes and in particular already built-in growth in the numbers of children and adolescents who will be growing up and educated in the borough in the coming decade.



During 2021-22, planned changes in the management and commissioning structures in the NHS will bring changes to arrangements for commissioning, oversight and monitoring of safeguarding services. This is set against the backdrop of the impact on health services of Covid-19. Health services for children are already commissioned by a number of bodies. The Havering partnership will need to ensure that – whatever specific structures are put in place – there continues to be strong and active engagement with health service commissioners and that commissioners continue to hold those who provide health services to account for the standard of safeguarding services that they deliver.

6.3. The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children

Scrutiny activity

This section of the report focuses on the involvement of Havering agencies (other than the three statutory safeguarding partners) with children’s safeguarding responsibilities in the work of the partnership. The scrutineers review reports produced by the partnership and its constituent bodies and subgroups, attend their meetings and meet with senior managers to discuss progress and challenges.

Findings

Agency engagement in the Havering partnership group meetings is strong, usually including representation from the following agencies, as well as the statutory partners: public health, housing services, probation, community rehabilitation, community safety, health providers (GPs, CAMHS, community and acute trusts), the Department of Work and Pensions, CAFCASS and the voluntary sector. Presentations have also been made by external partners, including one by Havering MIND dealing with the mental health impact of the pandemic. Following its merger with the community rehabilitation services the re-united National Probation Service has held a series of meetings with the partnership to explore how best to support the work of the partnership. At each of its meetings, the partnership receives reports from each of the four constituent bodies (see partnership structure in the appendix to this report).

The Education Strategic Partnership (ESP) is led by a local authority Assistant Director and promotes strong links and collaborative working with the borough’s schools, most of which have academy status. It reports every three months to the Havering children’s safeguarding partnership.

Each ESP meeting has regular items focused on safeguarding. Head teacher representatives attend the Havering children’s safeguarding partnership and make a strong contribution, conveying the experience and activity of the borough’s schools and pupils. This arrangement played a vital role in briefing other agencies on the impact of Covid-19 in schools, the needs of children and the work of schools and other agencies in responding. Strong links exist between behaviour support services, early help and schools. The early help partnership and the local authority have promoted links between named managers and clusters of schools with the aim of improving schools’ understanding of thresholds for early help and children’s services, and the responsiveness of the local authority. It has been noted that future further engagement with



heads of primary schools would enhance the work of the ESP and plans are underway to ensure scrutiny of this from 2022 onwards.

The Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Support Service (IASS) was launched in late 2020, supported by additional funding from the local authority. Its strategy and work are supported and overseen by a multi-agency Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy Group.

Frequent changes of leadership staff and roles have had a detrimental impact on staff moral, sometimes creating a 'disconnect' between leaders and those implementing a strategy. The appointment in May 2021 of leaders into permanent posts in the local authority had a reassuring impact on staff. This now stable and has supported the implementation of the Safeguarding Adolescents Strategy.

It is clear that there is strong and effective leadership of the IASS with engagement from a range of partners to implement activity. The implementation of the Safeguarding Adolescent strategy is underway.

The Early Help Partnership has strategic, operational and community consultation forums which involve the full range of relevant agencies including schools and early years settings, both health commissioners and providers, as well as representatives from the voluntary sector. Agencies are strongly committed to an ethos of early intervention and understand that this needs to apply regardless to the chronological age at which children and families experience difficulties (i.e. early intervention is not the same as or limited to help and support in early years). The partnership has strong links with schools and education services, for example behaviour support at both primary and secondary phases. This means that early help services are attuned to the needs of schools and can be mobilised quickly to respond to emerging difficulties of children in schools.

Recommendations for ongoing scrutiny

- Activities addressing questions of disproportionality with a focus on full leadership engagement and resource to prevent disproportionality being perceived as an additional, rather than 'core', task.
- A review of the number of Black African and Black Caribbean children in the youth justice system and going missing.
- A focus on ensuring that data regarding children in alternative school provision is cross-referenced between education, police and health on these cases.
- Ongoing activity to 'track' children who are experiencing 'managed moves' between schools and to ensure that learning is identified and fed back into strategic leadership of the partnership overall.

6.4. Children, young people and families are aware of and involved with plans for safeguarding children

Scrutiny activity

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the focus of attention has been on discussion with representatives of agencies in order to establish what channels of consultation and feedback are



open to young people and their families, what the effect of the pandemic has been on involvement of young people in the design and review of services, and how the scrutineers might help the partnership to take this work forward. This work has largely focused on the Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service, though community and parental engagement also plays an important role in the work of the Early Help Partnership.

Findings

Youth Influence and Participation Co-ordinators (YIPCs) employed by the local authority have developed a range of engagement projects with services for young people, including young people who are in care. Discussions have highlighted scope to develop better engagement with parents and carers in adolescent services, for example those of children who have difficulty with regular school attendance.

There are opportunities to develop the engagement of young people in a number of ways. These might include giving young people an audit function on LSCP strategies; engaging young people in multi-agency safeguarding training; facilitating young people in identifying new safeguarding concerns; and in addressing questions of disproportionality. Each of these is a potentially valuable, but also complex area of work which would require careful planning.

In relation to the work of the Quality and Effectiveness subgroup, it has been noted that there are currently no indicators in the multi-agency dataset that reflect the views and experiences of service users. This is an important area for the group to develop.

2021 has seen the development of an additional post within the Havering safeguarding children partnership with remit to focus on the strategic engagement of children in safeguarding activity. This is to be welcomed and will facilitate appropriate and representative means to secure the 'child's voice' in the planning and implementation of safeguarding activity. There is identified scope to explore the engagement of children and young people in safeguarding training events.

The work of the Youth Influence and Participation Co-ordinators is active, strong and thorough. For example:

- Creating the 'Period Poverty: Best Practise Guide for Schools'. This was a project that came about following the British Youth Council 'Make Your Mark 2020' ballot, where 'Period Poverty' was voted in the top 5 of concerns for young people in Havering. The Youth Council met and worked with Havering Public Health. They then did a survey and collected experiences and data from over the borough.
- Brief for workers regarding [Mind of My Own](#) to explain the tool, with a monthly newsletter sent out for workers in Havering.
- The 'Make Your Mark' Campaign: where the top issues of concern for young people were noted as knife and youth crime, littering and local environment, more youth services and more police presence.
- The 'Corporate Parenting Strategy' and the accompanying 'The Pledge', reassuring looked after children of the responsibilities held by the local authority as corporate parents.
- The Youth Violence Summit held in November 2019: Members of Youth Parliament hosted the event and young people were involved in meeting and greeting guests,



introducing guest speakers, and took part in short videos saying when they felt safe and not safe.

- Young people with care experience produced a film called 'The Children's Inquiry', which has been shown to a wide audience. About three years ago, the same company with Rose Bruford Drama College did a project with Havering's young people in care showing different stories: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker; young person involved in Youth Justice, and being in care.

There was recognition that, despite these initiatives, some engagement with parents and carers and children themselves who had difficulty with regular school attendance or who were experiencing difficulties in school occurred later than needed. Work with SEND children was noted to be better at engaging with children and parents and carers on an ongoing basis and lessons from this could be learnt by mainstream providers.

Recommendations for ongoing scrutiny

- Review the developing work on engaging with children and young people in strategic engagement with safeguarding activity.
- Review the relationship between findings of consultations with children and young people, the development of training initiatives and workforce development activity.
- Review processes for SEND child and family engagement to identify lessons for good practice.
- Further request young people have access to and have an audit function on LSCP strategies.
- Create a mechanism for children and young people to be engaged in multi-agency safeguarding training.
- Create an ongoing regular 'youth safeguarding consultation' process, where the Youth Influence and Participation Co-ordinators may take part in identifying new safeguarding concerns to the strategic leads of the LSCP and, where they can, comment on awareness of impact of current safeguarding strategies.
- Further target work linking the youth participation service with children in alternative provisions and with activities developing to address questions of disproportionality.

6.5. Appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing

Scrutiny activity

An independent scrutineer attends the partnership Quality & Effectiveness (Q&E) Working Group and has held discussions with members of the group throughout the year. The group reviews the multi-agency dataset at its meetings in order to understand trends in data better and provides a summary of highlights and suggested points for discussion at the safeguarding partnership meeting. The scrutineer met regularly with the local authority Policy and Performance Business Partner to discuss emerging trends in data analysis. These discussions have informed the analysis provided in Section 2 of this report.



Findings

Up until early 2021, the chairing of the Q&E Working Group was the responsibility of the Director of Public Health, who gave up the role due to the need to focus on the response to Covid-19. The role was taken on by the Detective Superintendent with responsibility for safeguarding and public protection. The work of the group is well supported by the local authority Police and Performance Business Partner and by the Partnerships and Learning Manager.

Over the past two years, the partnership's multi-agency dataset has been refined to focus on key areas of practice relevant to understanding trends in activity and outcomes for children. The dataset provides an accessible presentation of trends and comparisons with other comparator local authorities, London authorities and the national picture. Key members of the group convene ahead of the Q&E group meeting to understand the data and focus discussion on a small number of important items. In the main, the Q&E group is well attended, though some health representatives were unable to attend during the Covid-19 lockdowns and the group itself recognises that more consistent attendance from participating agencies would aid more in-depth discussions.

Over the course of the year, the group has flagged up issues of interest and concern for the partnership. For example, it has challenged the partnership to understand and explain changes in the numbers of children who are categorised as children in need or subject to a child protection plan. By tracking the level and source of contacts and the nature of problems referred, the subgroup has supported the partnership in understanding changes in demand during periods when lockdown made services more difficult to access. It then helped the partnership track the impact of the reopening of services.

The Q&E subgroup is aware of limitations of its work. The overwhelming majority of the multi-agency data set consists of local authority data, including performance measures collected by the local authority on multi-agency processes such as contacts and referrals made to the local authority, child protection conferences and plans, length of time on plans, re-referrals and repeat plans. The group has sought to supplement this with data describing core activities and contribution to safeguarding of health and police. There has been some limited success in relation to health services, for example data is presented on community health service new birth visits and attempts are being made to present data on Emergency Department contacts with children and young people.

The bias towards local authority data is in part a reflection of the type of data that police and health services (across London and nationally) are required to keep. The police recognise that data collected for internal police purposes does not translate easily into information that captures the police contribution to multi-agency activity. Work is underway within the police to improve data collection and it should be a priority to provide more data on the police contribution to multi-agency performance. Pressure of work on the NHS has meant that sometimes items added to the dataset have not been consistently reported.

The focus on local authority data tends to be reflected throughout the partnership subgroups, for example in the Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy Group there is a limited use of data beyond that provided by the local authority and Youth Offending Service.

The Early Help Partnership has developed an innovative set of impact measures and the most useful of these need to be incorporated into the multi-agency data set as trends become more observable.



The Q&E working group has not yet provided data and analysis about disparities in take-up of services and outcomes for different groups of children in Havering. Identification of data that helps the partnership to understand disparities is likely to come from groups – such as the Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy Group and the Early Help Partnership – that have a specific focus on practice. Further work is required in the partnership on this.

The brief of the Q&E working group includes multi-agency audits. The partnership's focus was to produce a multi-borough audit exercise. Useful initial findings were produced on adolescent mental health in July 2021. While potentially valuable in some respects, exercises held across three boroughs are more difficult to develop and deliver as they rely on the engagement and co-operation of a larger number of agencies. Further work is required across the tri-borough partnership if this approach is to produce significant findings in an efficient way.

As the IASS implements the Safeguarding Adolescents Strategy, there is evidence of an increasing onus on information sharing of data across the partnership, with important work developing regarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), on children in alternative education provision and children in the youth justice system. This is to be commended and future scrutiny activity will continue to ensure full engagement with information sharing between the local authority, health and police.

6.6. There is a process for identifying and investigating learning from local and national case reviews

Scrutiny activity

The partnership is required to carry out a rapid review when a child appears to have been killed or seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect. The partnership completed one such review in the past 12 months, following the fatal stabbing of a young person. The case review subgroup undertakes the review, making a recommendation as to the action required to the safeguarding partners. The role of the independent scrutineers is to offer advice as to how the statutory guidance should be interpreted, bringing to the attention of the partnership learning from the London region or nationally that might be relevant – either to the process or to the circumstances being considered.

Findings

The partnership carried out a thorough rapid review on this complex incident, gathering information from local agencies and another London borough where the victim had lived until the months before his death. The partnership also gathered information on a number of other young people who had been involved in the incident, including alleged perpetrators. The scrutineers made the partnership aware of the learning obtained from other reviews carried out following deaths caused by serious youth violence in the London region. The main recommendation of the rapid review was that the circumstances of the death were very similar to those of a number of other young people and that much of the learning likely to emerge from a child safeguarding practice review was already available to the partnership in the findings of reviews of other deaths. The rapid review recommended that the learning from other reviews should be disseminated in the partnership, particularly through the safeguarding week. This recommendation was subsequently accepted by the safeguarding partners and communicated to the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel, which endorsed the approach proposed.

The independent scrutineers reviewed this decision making in detail and are satisfied that this course of action is both consistent with the statutory guidance and advice provided by the



national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. The scrutineers believe that this is a proportionate and sensible approach to adopt and will lend their support to learning events on adolescent safeguarding and serious youth violence which are to be arranged by the partnership.

More widely, the multi-agency safeguarding partnership could undertake further work to disseminate learning from other case reviews across member agencies. It is noted that the strategy of the early help partnership is rooted in learning from case reviews highlighting the importance of care and development in children's early years. It is hoped that improving resourcing of the partnership business unit will enable this to happen next year.

Recommendation for ongoing scrutiny

- Focus on the development and implementation of 'learning loops' where learning from reviews is disseminated to the multi-agency workforce through training, supervision and workforce development activity.

6.7. There is an active program of multi-agency safeguarding children training and workforce development

Scrutiny activity

Scrutineers have received the training offered as part of the work programmes in early help and adolescent partnership.

Findings

There is a strong and well developed active programme of multi-agency training. Regular updates on training are given to the HSCP group and the leads from the partnership provide information about new staff training needs. There is a regularly updated training needs analysis.

Multi-agency training has continued online during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has had the advantage of some additional uptake of training and shorter sessions are delivered without time needed for travel to and from training events. The disadvantage has been in the lack of 'informal' communication between multi-agency staff that occurs when training is face-to-face.

Despite the difficulties created by the pandemic, a full programme of training has continued with review of future training needs undertaken as an ongoing process.

Recommendations for ongoing scrutiny

- There is a need for further conversations between the training co-ordinator and the LSCP to target multi-agency training on questions of racism and the criminal justice system.
- Exploration of the scope for engaging children and young people as trainers, and to further integrate feedback from children and young people with planning the aims and objectives of specific training events.
- The potential inclusion of resources developed by children and young people in the multi-agency safeguarding children training.
- Developing the scope to better address the links between training and workforce development: how issues raised in supervision and reflective practice become fed back into individual workforce development plans and longer-term training provision.



- Assessing whether the training information is actually getting to the right people: is the information about training reaching relevant agencies as well as the three core agencies?
- Assessment of the need for more joined-up thinking between leadership, training and workforce development on topics of worry, such as the use of alternative provision and questions of disproportionality and racism.
- How information from local audits and from SCR and CSPRs feed into the training programme and content.

7. Potential risks that independent scrutiny will monitor during the period October 2021 to September 2022

Based on the scrutiny activity described above, the following potential risks have been identified. These will be monitored over the coming year. The first three relate to the broader strategy of the partnership and its governance and accountability. There are also a number of operational matters.

7.1. The wider BHR (Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge) Safeguarding Children Partnership

The safeguarding partners will, during 2022, bring forward proposals about how best to take forward co-ordination and liaison across the three-borough geographical area. This will clarify the role of scrutiny and chairing of the new Havering LSCP.

7.2. Understanding and addressing disparities in service take up and outcomes

The [2019-20 Annual Report](#) identified this as a priority area of activity for the partnership. Work on this has begun in a number of specific areas. The partnership needs to continue to develop this work and report on its progress in a more systematic way, including the inclusion of key data in the multi-agency dataset.

7.3. NHS reorganisation

The scrutineers are aware that, through reorganisation of NHS management structures during 2021, the tri-borough Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (BHR CCGs) became part of the new North East London Clinical Commissioning Group (NEL CCG), which operates across a footprint that includes eight local authority areas. It is also understood that this arrangement will further evolve into Integrated Care Systems (ICS) operating across this wider footprint. Given that the CCG is one of the three statutory Safeguarding Partners for local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in accordance with the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), it is vital that their new wider operational footprint does not lead to a reduction in the seniority of their representation or leadership at a local partnership level. Experience shows that organisational change can create risks to services, for example through the loss of experienced staff or established working relationships. It is vital that, through any period of organisational change, close attention is paid to the practical steps required to maintain the safety of services and the full engagement of senior managers and leaders in partnership working.



7.3. Operational activity

- Full engagement of member agencies in the implementation of the Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy and its work.
- Representation of primary schools in the Education Strategic Partnership.
- Safeguarding issues for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and safeguarding in alternative education provision.



Appendix:

Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership organogram

