

HAVERING SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP



Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements 2023

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Introduction

This Plan has been produced by the four statutory Safeguarding Partners (SPs) as identified within 'Working Together 2018' and very clearly sets out how the safeguarding children arrangements will be provided in the London Borough of Havering. In September 2022, the Statutory Partners agreed to include "Education" as the fourth Statutory Partner.

As Safeguarding Partners for Havering, we are pleased to publish our amended multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Our Plan places the well-being and safety of our children and young people at the very heart of our arrangements and all our future work will be dictated by what will best meet their needs. Above all else, our Plan and subsequent activities will be driven by listening and responding to the needs of children, young people and their families in our borough.

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Vision

As Safeguarding Partners, we have set out our vision for this Plan:

Firstly, above all else the work encapsulated in this Plan has to **reduce the harm and risk** faced by children and young people in our communities. In order to do this, we will ensure that their needs and their voices are centre stage in all we do.

Secondly, as Safeguarding Partners we know we are reliant on the skills and expertise of our workforce so we are making a commitment to **invest in the workforce** and specifically to build a culture that values reflection, analysis and learning.

This plan builds on the arrangements we published in October 2019 and contributes to our detailed Partnership Business Plan.

1. Safeguarding Principles

This vision for the Plan leads us to define a number of core principles that will guide our work:

As Safeguarding Partners, and delegated Senior Officers, we positively and proactively accept our lead responsibility for these arrangements. We will ensure that our relevant agencies are asked to contribute proportionately and in a focussed way – we will consciously move away from the need to have every agency around every table and instead ensure their contribution is made where it is most relevant:

- The core focus of this Plan is on our quality assurance and scrutiny functions – we will develop an approach that is characterised by reflective learning and appreciative inquiry;
- We will use this Plan and future iterations of it to reduce duplication and repeated demands on local agencies;
- The learning from our work set out in this Plan will where relevant be captured into our commissioning strategies, most especially through the ‘Children’s Transformation’ work described below;
- The structure designed to support our arrangements will flex and respond to meet need and circumstances – form will very clearly be driven by function;
- Decision-making will be clear and specific with each component part of the arrangements having clarity about role and purpose.

Staff and volunteers in all agencies across Havering will continue to follow the Pan-London Child Protection Procedures and Multi-agency Threshold document, and that guidance will continue to govern the operational delivery of safeguarding services to children and young people.

2. Safeguarding is Everyone’s Business

The Statutory Partners recognise that they are a part of a much wider system that keeps children and young people safe. Therefore, it is recognised that our arrangements will need to engage all partners who have a contribution to make to safeguarding – statutory agencies, voluntary sector, community and faith groups, families, the public and children

themselves.

Children, young people and their families live in local neighbourhoods and communities. The prime reference point for us is firstly our local communities. The core part of our Plan therefore is designed to reflect those realities and ensure we build arrangements that best meet local needs, being mindful of issues of disproportionality and areas of deprivation.

As Safeguarding Partners, we will continue to construct a set of arrangements designed to meet the needs of the children and families living in Havering.

We retain an **Independent Chair** who will continue to provide a scrutiny function as required; this Chair also chairs the Safeguarding Adults' Board (SAB) in Havering which brings a unity of vision for both children and adults. An **Independent Scrutineer** is also commissioned to provide annual assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people. The Independent Scrutineer would be expected to give a particular focus to the views of children, young people and families when undertaking their role.

Our six guiding principles are to simplify, to align and to improve.

(i) **Rapid Reviews**

What Will We Achieve: Compliance with the national requirement to complete rapid reviews within 15 working days; reviews that offer the necessary narrative and analysis that enables local partners and the National Safeguarding Panel to make informed choices about the way(s) forward and the quick and effective dissemination of learning back into the system.

(ii) **Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

What Will We Achieve: the completion of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews that are short, focussed and reflective, enabling effective dissemination of learning across the system and that meet the standards set out in Working Together 2018 and are responsive to any future guidance from the National Panel;

Again, these are child specific and will need to be commissioned and delivered within the relevant authority boundary. In particular, the Safeguarding Partners will want to maintain an oversight on emerging themes and risks. Working Together requires reviewers to be independent of the case under review but not necessarily completely independent of the local safeguarding system. We will therefore develop a pool of reviewers, as required.

(iii) **Quality Assurance**

What Will We Achieve: quality assuring safeguarding systems require regular and challenging reviews of existing practice and service delivery. Our core focus is to enable reflective learning with a strong focus on 'what works'.

In addition to the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews as required by Working Together, as Safeguarding Partners we are committed to developing a culture of learning and improvement.

(i) **Agency Challenge**

What Will We Achieve: an assurance that all agencies are making their appropriate contribution to the safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people and are contributing as required to the local safeguarding system;

Working Together 2018 is clear in setting out the crucial contribution of ‘relevant agencies’. The duties placed on those agencies under the 2004 Children Act still stand and it is important that there is an assurance about the effectiveness of their contributions. We will continue to develop a model of assurance with all our relevant agencies using a Section 11 Framework, that is proportionate, challenging, informative and ultimately which adds value to our collective safeguarding work.

(ii) **Data Analysis and Challenge**

What Will We Achieve: we will continue to develop our short, focussed dataset designed to highlight the outcomes for children and young people across the system and that add value to our overall scrutiny work;

As with our commitments around independent scrutiny, so our approach to the construction and purpose of a multi-agency dataset is driven by the need to add value to work already underway across all partner agencies.

(iii) **Workforce Development**

What We Will Achieve: we will build on the best of our current workforce development programmes to ensure a consistency of approach.

We have a training programme that is designed to focus on those issues that most benefit from multi-agency training and that make the biggest impact on children and young people’s safeguarding; this will be closely linked to our safeguarding adults’ training through the virtue of one post in the Partnership Team; helping local professionals to work closely together using Think Family principles, especially across intersecting issues such as Domestic Abuse, Transitions, Forced Marriage, Sexual Abuse or Neglect. Learning from our collective quality assurance work, being responsive to local need and ensuring a relentless focus on practice essentials are our key drivers.

3. Partnership Structure

As stated in our principles, the formation of our structure is clearly secondary to what it is we are seeking to achieve. The Plan is clear in setting out the required outcomes from these structural arrangements and Partners stand ready to amend the structure if those outcomes are not being realised. That said, it is important that relevant agencies and those we need to engage with are able to see how our work is captured and the governance under which it takes place.

The four Statutory Partners have delegated Senior Officers, who will meet as an Executive on a bi-monthly basis with the Chair and Independent Scrutineer. The HSCP Partnership itself will meet quarterly.

4. Relevant Agencies

It is a matter of fact that the safeguarding of children and young people can only be delivered by all those agencies with a part to play working together in a coherent and integrated manner. As Safeguarding Partners, we recognise and embrace our leadership role but we know we can only deliver what is required of us through highly effective whole system work. One of our core principles is that of ensuring that our partners are asked to contribute to our safeguarding work in ways that are proportionate and appropriate to their core responsibilities. Agencies will be expected to contribute significantly where it is clearly their role so to do but not where their contribution would be marginal.

The local arrangements set out above will clearly engage many of our relevant agencies –but again with a specific focus on ensuring there are enabled to make the ‘right’ contribution in the ‘right’ setting.

Our free, independent and state maintained schools, supplementary schools, and early years’ settings are of course crucial partners in all our work with children and young people and in maximising their safeguarding. As with all other agencies we want to ensure that their contribution is purposeful and proportionate in keeping children safe in Education.

1. Independent Scrutiny.

We are committed to the value independent scrutiny can bring to all of our safeguarding work. Holding a mirror up to that work is crucial if there is to be confidence our practices are as safe and effective as possible. We are committed to seeking challenge that is informed, expert (including expert by experience) and focussed on our overall commitment towards continual improvement. As Safeguarding Partners, we are all particularly committed to ensuring that our independent scrutiny processes enable us to better hear the views and experiences of children, young people and their families and enable them to have a more active and powerful voice in how our services are designed and delivered.

In health, there is a well-developed and robust system of contract management and supervision of safeguarding professionals that drives the work of the providers, all of whom have to meet a considerable set of safeguarding objectives within their contracts. The ICB has internal governance arrangements that Safeguarding Partners can utilise for assurance on the safeguarding arrangements across health providers. This includes the management of safeguarding risks.

Within the Metropolitan Police, an Assistant Commissioner is designated strategic

safeguarding responsibilities and a Commander heads an organisation-wide accountability framework within which BCU Command is held to account. Value is added through regular, themed HMICFRS inspections at both force and a national level as well as the challenge offered by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime - MOPAC.

The Local Authority is active in the Regional Improvement Alliance – this is a network of nine regional groupings across England, supported by the ADCS and DfE. In London this work is overseen by ALDCS and supported by London Councils. London is divided into four sub-regions, with LB Havering falling into the East London sub-region. The aim is to create a self-improving system, with a series of self-evaluations, peer reviews and peer challenges, together with a data benchmarking approach. There is an annual London summit involving lead members and Chief Executives, to share learning and agree priorities.

Finally, of course, Safeguarding Partners and relevant agencies are subject to external inspection from their own inspectorates - Ofsted, CQC and HMICFRS - and jointly through the JTAI arrangements.

Our plans for independent scrutiny are therefore carefully crafted to add value to an already crowded and complex landscape of challenge. Safeguarding children is an enormously complex and multi-faceted task that requires complex and multi-faceted delivery arrangements. Scrutiny of those arrangements needs to be well-informed and well-focused if it is to add value to what is already in place.

1. Thresholds

Havering has published multi-agency Threshold guidance available on the HSCP website [here](#)

1. Funding and Support Capacity

HSCP is funded by Partners.

2. Review and Annual Report

The Independent Scrutineer and Statutory Partners will be reviewing the efficacy of this Plan from the outset and be ready to amend and refocus work as required – safeguarding children is a complex task. Areas of improvement in safeguarding, any stubborn areas or areas of concern will be analysed transparently in the Annual Report, which will itself be scrutinised by the Independent Scrutineer.

