



Harrow Strategic  
Safeguarding  
Partnership



HARROW  
SAFEGUARDING  
CHILDREN  
BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 – 2020

*Think Whole Family*

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## Foreword

This is the first annual report that we have produced as the Safeguarding Partners for Harrow. It explains what we have achieved and how we have gone about our work under the Safeguarding Arrangements which we published in June 2019 and which you can see if you visit our website.<sup>1</sup>

Although the legal framework for our partnership changed last year we have in fact been co-operating in the vital work of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare for many years now. We believe that in the past year the transition from one set of partnership arrangements to another has been achieved successfully and that we have been strong in delivering child centred services.

In this report, you will be able to get a picture of Harrow as a place to live and you will see how most children here thrive in their homes, schools and communities. You will also be able to see the steps that we take to ensure that children are kept safe from harm and are allowed to develop happily and healthily.

We want to see our safeguarding work with children and adults at risk as far as we can as an integrated system. Our motto is “Think Whole Family” and we have chosen specifically to prioritise our work in the fields of domestic abuse, mental health and well-being and contextual safeguarding<sup>2</sup>, because they cross over into a field of work that is equally pertinent to safeguarding adult arrangements. You will see here what we have done in these areas over the past 12 months.

You will also see the assessment of our arrangements from the person we have appointed as an independent scrutineer. We seek to be a learning partnership, whose work is improved by the rigours of assessment, review and peer challenge.

Harrow has a mature safeguarding partnership. We are grateful to all the organisations that contribute to our work and we want particularly to acknowledge the excellent work that voluntary and third sector agencies do in our borough. We are confident that the achievements of the past 12 months will act as a foundation for continued improvements in the year that follows.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.harrowscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Harrow-Safeguarding-Children-Arrangements-May-2019.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> **Contextual Safeguarding** seeks to understand, and respond to people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form among their peers, in their neighbourhoods, in their schools and online can involve or lead to violence and abuse.

## Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Harrow Safeguarding Partners' Child Safeguarding and Welfare Arrangements

- ✓ = Good: The Harrow Safeguarding Partners have demonstrated that this is a strength
- # = Some Work to Do: There are some strengths but there are also weaknesses which need working on
- ✗ = Much Work to Do: This is a weakness in the arrangements and should be given priority attention

### Introduction

The Harrow Safeguarding Partners<sup>1</sup> as part of their arrangements to safeguard children and promote their welfare are required to demonstrate that they are open to independent oversight<sup>2</sup>.

I have been appointed to offer independent scrutiny of these local arrangements and this is my assessment of how those arrangements have performed over the past year.<sup>3</sup> The Partnership has also decided to retain the role of lay representative in their arrangements. This was based on our experience of the value, that committed independent individuals are good at questioning and challenging performance at all levels. The current lay representative has also contributed her evaluation to this report.

### Engagement of Other Relevant Agencies

The Safeguarding Partners must, not only make their own arrangements to co-ordinate their activities to safeguard children and protect them from harm, but also include other agencies in these arrangements<sup>4</sup>. These other agencies, called Relevant Agencies, should then act in a mutually co-operative way to ensure the effectiveness of the local arrangements. The Harrow Safeguarding Partners have identified a significant range of relevant agencies<sup>5</sup> and have included organisations in the voluntary and third sector, whose valued contributions are described later on in this report. These agencies have been effectively engaged in the arrangements since their inception. They have demonstrated this through their contribution across a range of meetings and activities and involvement both as attendees and leaders of various sub-groups. The engagement of schools and colleges at all levels is particularly effective. ✓

### Learning from Reviews and Incidents

It is a responsibility of the Safeguarding Partners<sup>6</sup> to identify serious child safeguarding incidents, to review them as appropriate so

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<sup>1</sup> These are Harrow Council, The Metropolitan Police and The Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group

<sup>2</sup> Section 16 G (3) Children Act 2004

<sup>3</sup> These safeguarding arrangements replaced the Harrow Safeguarding Children Board as of June 2019.

<sup>4</sup> 16 E (2) Children Act 2004

<sup>5</sup> Accessed at Appendix 1; <http://www.harrowscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Harrow-Safeguarding-Children-Arrangements-May-2019.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Section 16 F Children Act 2004

that improvements can be made by such agencies as needed, in the way that they safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This report includes the details of a range of such reviews. The Harrow Safeguarding Partners have a good system for identifying incidents, a well organised group of multi-agency professionals that move these cases forward and a strong learning ethos which ensures that lessons learned go on to improve practice. Furthermore, the strong audit regime established by the Partners ensure that learning is revisited and embedded. One issue that occurs more often than the Partners would want, is the insufficiency of agency checks that inform assessments and placement decisions. Arrangements ✓; Embedding Learning #

### Enquiry and Challenge

This is one of the key activities that Safeguarding Partners need to have in place and this area is a strength of the arrangements. The Quality Assurance section of this report illustrates the energy multi-agencies put into ensuring that practice is scrutinised and improved. ✓

### Understanding Performance Information

This is an improving picture. We have a rich data set provided by Harrow Council. The Metropolitan Police, following its restructure, continues to work on its data provision to the partnership. Health Provider data has improved and developed over the past 12 months. Compounding all the data that is available will further improve the picture of what is happening. There is a real determination among the partners to get this right. ✓

### Understanding The Impact of Early Help and Child Protection Thresholds

Data on Child In Need, Child Protection Plans and Child Looked After, provide information on trend and need. This data is subject to review and analysis along with children centre registration and attendance data. The Quality Assurance Sub-Group regularly looks at the application of thresholds and what Early Help was offered or available. Through this, there has arisen a picture of which children are accessing Early Help services and how they progress thereafter. ✓

### Working Strategically With Other Partnership Boards

Partnership work is a strength of these arrangements and there is a real commitment to working together with other partners and boards wherever there is mutual advantage to be had. The Annual Conference this year was conducted jointly with HSAB and Safer Harrow. I Chair the HSAB as well as Chairing and scrutinising the work of the children's safeguarding arrangements. I am also a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board and take part in the Joint Strategic Need Analysis working groups. ✓

### Resourcing Commitment of Partners

Safeguarding is a complex business and these arrangements require administrative resources to function. The law and guidance that impacts the establishment of Safeguarding Partnerships invites partners to make financial contributions<sup>7</sup> but do not require them to do so. There is an expectation, that funding should be agreed, proportionate, equitable and transparent<sup>8</sup> and the burden should not fall disproportionately on one member more than another. How the funding arrangements work are described on page 39 and show clearly how they fall disproportionately on Harrow Council. They lack equity and transparency. This is not fair to Harrow Council and is unsatisfactory. X

### Conclusion

These arrangements have many areas of strength and there is evidence of striving for improvement. The enquiry and challenge function continues to be the driver of change and improvement. Senior staff across the partnership set a good example in the way that they engage with problems, accept the need for change and put in place ways of making better practice. There is strong mutual co-operation and leaders are open and transparent in facing up to issues that need service improvement.



Chris Miller  
Independent Chair and Scrutineer  
Harrow Safeguarding Partnership



<sup>7</sup> Section 16 I Children Act 2004

<sup>8</sup> Working Together 2018 Ch 3 para 36 and 37



## LAY PERSON'S EVALUATION

I became a lay member of the Safeguarding Children Board in Harrow in 2012. Over that time there have been many changes to safeguarding practices, guidance and legislation, personnel involved with the Board and the remit of the work that the Board carries out.

The role of an independent member was a relatively new one when I joined and I had a lot to learn about the wider context of safeguarding and how it played its part across various agencies that worked with children and families needing support and services. Since 2007 I have been involved in education in both the primary and secondary sector as a School Governor with responsibility for safeguarding, I have also been a Magistrate since 2001 and have sat in both the criminal and family court. These roles gave me an understanding of the complexities often faced by children and their families due to deprivation, health, addiction, criminality, abuse and other factors.

I have sat on the panel for various multi-agency audits where the Board have identified areas where we need to carry out a more in-depth review to find out the story behind what the data is telling us.

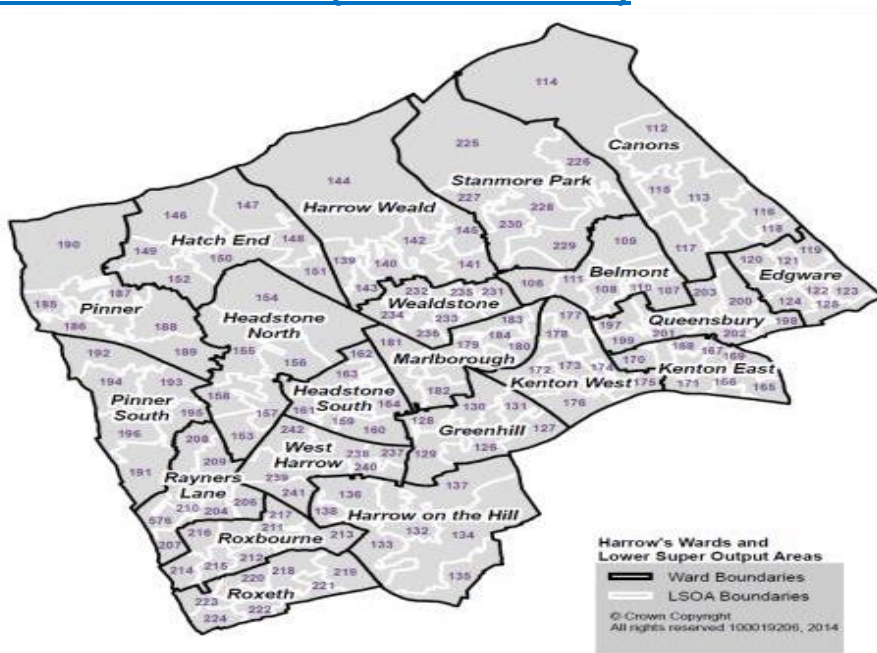
I have been involved in Serious Case and Learning Lesson Reviews, where we have looked at the circumstances surrounding an incident involving a child known to Harrow services and tried to understand where there are areas of learning or change that will improve practice for the future. Communication between agencies is a common area for practice improvement and it is crucial for effective safeguarding to take place.

Over time, I have seen agencies engage in and accept 'respectful challenge' in a much more open way, understanding that through this process they can improve their practice and the way in which they offer services, ensuring that they do this in the safest way for those children and families that work with them. This can only be a positive way forward and I value highly the opportunity to provide an independent voice as well as the collective work of my fellow colleagues on the Board who always strive for continuous improvement.



**Michelle Weerasekera**  
Lay Person  
Harrow Safeguarding Partnership

## Harrow at a Glance (31<sup>st</sup> March 2020)



Overall Population (ONS midyear estimate, 2019) (an increase of 1000 in 12 months)	252,100
Deprivation (Where 1 is most deprived Local Authority Area in England). This index is updated every few years. In 2015 Harrow was more or less in the same place.	207/ 317(England) 27/33 (London)
Deprivation Affecting Children (Where 1 is the Local Authority Area which has the most deprivation affecting children) This has improved markedly since 2015. That year Harrow was 140/326 <sup>1</sup> in England and 25/33 in London.	199/317 (England) 30/33 (London)
Number of Primary Schools	41
Through Schools (Ages 5-18)	1
Independent Schools and Colleges	13
Number of Secondary Schools / Sixth form colleges/ Tertiary Education Colleges	15
Special Schools	3
Alternative Education Provision	2

<sup>1</sup> Since 2015 a number of England Local Authorities have merged.



Children in Borough	61,480
Children from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Background	45,495 (74%)
Number of Contacts in MASH (1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020)	9,406
Number of Children in Need (31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020)	1,133
Number of Children on Child Protection Plans (31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020)	260
Number of Children Looked After (LAC) (31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020)	181
Number of Children Looked After who are unaccompanied asylum seekers 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020)	38
Number of children fostered privately by someone who is not closely related to the child	4
Number of Children Adopted (1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020)	4
Number of victims of crime under 18 years old	1,188
Number of children with Education Healthcare Plans	1,840

### **Commentary**

Harrow is on the whole a prosperous borough. Most of Harrow's resident children thrive in their families and achieve excellent educational results in our schools, which are among the best in the country. Harrow is blessed with a diverse population who generally get on very well and the many communities who live here make Harrow a rich and stimulating place in which to live, learn, work and take leisure – and in relation to crime Harrow is placed amongst the least crime impacted boroughs.

Compared with London, the UK as a whole and other local areas which share our characteristics (our statistical neighbours) the number of Children In Need, on Child Protection Plans and Child Looked After by the Council is relatively low. In terms of volume it places Harrow amongst the least crime impacted boroughs.

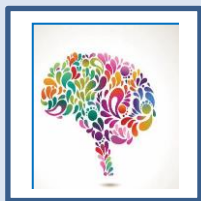
Where children, for whatever reason, fail to thrive in their family homes, they will be referred to our multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH) where the best intervention from a menu of possibilities is offered to the family. Whatever concerns there are, these can be mostly helped through a range of what are called “universal services” i.e. they are available to everyone and it's just a matter of the family accessing them. If, however, the child or family needs additional help which goes beyond what universal services can provide, then as a Child In Need, with the family's consent, we provide additional support and help.

Sometimes a child's needs extend to situations where professionals assess a child as being at risk of some harm. In those instances, we place the child on a Child Protection Plan and we work with families to reduce the risk. When the risk is considered too high, the child has to leave the family home (often temporarily) to live in an environment where we know that the child's safety is assured.

In addition to looking after children whose Harrow homes are not safe for them, we also look after children who have arrived in the UK as unaccompanied asylum seekers. They just do not have any home to live in at all.

Some children cannot ever return to their family homes and in those cases, we seek to place them with an adoption family.

## PROGRESS ON PRIORITIES



### Preventing harmful behaviours

#### 1. MENTAL WELLBEING

- Promote an early intervention and prevention approach to mental ill health with a focus on harmful behaviours, including self-harm and suicide
- Promote collaboration between services and agencies at all stages of assessment and intervention
- Consider how multiple vulnerabilities impact mental ill health such as substance misuse and domestic abuse

#### What was achieved?

- **Annual Conference:** The Partnership chose the topic of Self Harm and Suicide Prevention as its topic for its annual conference. The event attracted huge interest from both children and adult's services. As with all of the Partnership's conferences, evidence is sought from delegates 3 months after the conference to gather information about how the learning has been embedded to bring about improvements for children and vulnerable adults across Harrow (please see page 31 for further detail)
- **Evaluation of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS):** The Quality Assurance Sub-group scrutinise data from Central North West London Healthcare Trust (CNWL) on a quarterly basis – with a particular focus on waiting times for a mental health assessment in CAMHS. Improvement in waiting times have been achieved by CAMHS and new systems are in place to flag up children on Child Protection plans, with alerts for non-attendance at appointments (please see page 32 for further detail)
  - **Monitoring access to in-patient care:** The Quality Assurance Sub-group has also monitored CNWL's capacity to respond to young people who require admission to specialist care. Of particular concern has been the placement of children on adult wards. The expansion of provision through a new adolescent inpatient unit, Lavender Walk, increased capacity – with no children admitted to adult wards
  - **New Adolescent Community Treatment Team:** CNWL introduced a new pathway to help divert young people away from hospital admission and enable those already in hospital to be discharged to support within the community
- **Promoting mental health awareness in schools:** The HSCB have given the topic of mental health, self-harm and suicide prevention priority attention in its termly Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum for schools. This was driven by feedback from young people themselves in the survey undertaken by the **Young Harrow Foundation** in the previous year. A wide range of services have been signposted – with many providing presentations on the identification and response to mental health needs in children and young people. Links between mental health, contextual safeguarding and substance misuse feature in the HSCB's multi-agency training programme too
- **Scrutiny of A&E Attendances for Self-harm:** To meet the Partnership's priority, NWLUHT now presents data on A&E attendances by young people for self-harm for scrutiny by the Quality Assurance Sub group (please see page 32 for further detail)

## PROGRESS ON PRIORITIES



Through a welfare lens



### 2. CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

- Target the contexts in which that abuse occurs, from assessment through to intervention
- Develop partnerships with agencies who have a reach into extra-familial contexts e.g. transport providers, retailers, residents associations, parks and recreation services
- Monitor outcomes of success in relation to contextual, as well as individual, change

#### What was achieved?

- **Widening the scope of focus:** The pre-existing Child Sexual Exploitation Panel was replaced by a new Multi-agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE). This was a response to local intelligence that many young children affected by sexual exploitation were also affected by other forms of exploitative criminal activity, such as 'County Lines'. This panel is informed by both case analysis and of the Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Operational group (please see page 35 for further detail)
- **Rescue and Response Project:** Although Harrow has a relatively small number of children known to be involved in 'County Lines across London boroughs', it is one of the higher users of the new Rescue and Response Project – evidencing Harrow agencies' commitment to the early identification of young people at risk and ensuring appropriate intervention
- **Promoting awareness of Contextual Safeguarding:** The HSCB has incorporated an updated Contextual Safeguarding course into its annual training programme – based on the research undertaken by the University of Bedfordshire. To ensure good engagement with this approach, presentations and learning events have also been provided by Voluntary Action Harrow's Safeguarding Forum and through the HSCB's Designated Safeguarding Forum for schools
- **Serious Incident Group (SIG):** The SIG is attended by the HSCB's member agencies. This is an initiative developed by schools and the Metropolitan Police Services Community Safety Unit which shares intelligence on serious incidents and emerging concerns affecting school age children. It also engages the voluntary sector and business sector to help combat youth crime and disorder by identifying young people at risk and offering them diversion opportunities. The achievements of this group have been praised in both Ofsted and peer group evaluations.

## PROGRESS ON PRIORITIES



Early identification  
of risk

### 3. DOMESTIC ABUSE

- Ensure all relevant sectors have access to training and awareness training
- Promote vigilance to the fact that age, gender, ethnicity and ability do not discriminate in terms of who can become a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse
- Ensure early intervention and appropriate support for victims
- Promote access to specialist intervention programmes for perpetrators

#### What has been achieved?

- **Operation Encompass:** The HSCB promoted the take up of the MPS' information sharing arrangement with schools across Harrow. This allows for early notification to schools of any domestic abuse 'call outs' by the police within the previous 24 hours – thereby enabling schools to respond to the needs of affected children. After promotion via the HSCB's Designated Safeguarding Lead's Forum the number of schools signed up to this arrangement significantly increased  
The HSCB undertook a survey of the experience schools had with Operation Encompass. This led to the identification of some issues that required addressing in order to ensure the project's effectiveness. This led to the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub reinforcing its role in conducting risk and need assessments jointly with schools. Additionally, the MPS agreed to notify schools of a wider range of domestic abuse incidents than had previously been the case
- **Impact of Hospital IDVA Service:** The Partnership's QA Sub-group regularly scrutinises domestic abuse data. A drop in referrals from Northwick Park Hospital led scrutiny of its IDVA arrangements (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors who provide support to victims) and the drop in referrals coincided with a vacant IDVA position for the Hospital's IDVA post. The Hospital's assumption that other health staff compensate for IDVA's absence by taking responsibility for identifying domestic abuse cases was not supported by the data. The reintroduction of the hospital IDVA has led to an increase of referrals to the expected levels
- **Perpetrator Programmes:** The Partnership continues to support the set-up of a targeted perpetrator programme and contributes to the identification and evaluation of proposed commissions for later in 2020
- **Domestic Abuse Training:** The HSCB's training programme keeps its Domestic Abuse course as a fixed offer open to all agencies and it is also a key component in the voluntary sector's course programme delivered by Voluntary Action Harrow (commissioned by the HSCB to embed its priorities)

(see page 34 for further details)

## LEARNING FROM CASE REVIEWS



### Working across borders and checking for information

Following a serious case review (SCR) it is important that lessons that are learned lead to a change in practice. So, in 2019 the HSCB sought to embed learning from a recent SCR which highlighted the need to obtain a full history about prospective carers to assess their suitability to look after a child, particularly who is related to them.

In the SCR it was found that the child was placed with an aunt under a Special Guardianship Order, but full information about previous child abuse perpetrated by her had not been obtained prior to the placement - and the child subsequently suffered serious physical and emotional abuse in the care of his aunt.

Following the review, the HSCB was alerted to another case where two children had been placed into another borough with a relative. The relative had a history of severe mental ill health and was living in unsuitable accommodation with her own children. Sadly, the relative took her own life soon after. Insufficient relevant enquiries had been made about the relative's health and circumstances, thereby weakening the assessment of risk to the children and the need for support for the relative.

In response, the Partnership has instigated audits to monitor how agencies have embedded the use of full agency checks before placing children. This work continues.

### New Reviews - underway

#### Working in Collaboration with Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB)

The HSAB instigated a Safeguarding Adults Review in early 2020. The case involves the tragic death of a woman who had behavioural issues of concern and neglected her own care over a long period, resisting all help from local agencies. The powers to intervene in such cases has become the subject of a review, but the case has also highlighted the impact that her lifestyle and behaviour may have had on her own children's care. Consequently, the review will seek insight into how well agencies tried to intervene in order to assess the children's needs too.

#### Child Safeguarding Practice Review

The system concerning reviews changed during the past year and SCRs are now called Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Local partnerships have greater leeway in the conduct of these reviews than before but they do need to liaise first the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. Following contact with the Panel, Harrow's Partnership has instigated a review into the tragic death of a disabled child, where there are indications of missed medical appointments not followed up and a lack of recognition by various agencies of the national guidance on the use of restraint.

**Learning from both new reviews will be disseminated later in 2020.**

#### Changes to our Child Death Overview Process

Following new requirements introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the review of all child deaths in the area is now taking place jointly with 8 other North West London boroughs. This will ensure that patterns and themes from a larger cohort of child deaths will result in more meaningful learning for Safeguarding Partnerships. Key learning from such themes as child suicide, self-harm, illness/infection and accidents will help to inform the development of local and regional initiatives to reduce risks.



## LEARNING FROM CASE REVIEWS

### Embedding Learning from a Cross-Border Serious Case Review

Harrow Safeguarding Children Board undertook a joint Serious Case Review with another London Borough from 2018 to 2019. The case involved the tragic death of an 18 year old woman who had been in the care of her local authority for much of her teenage years in various parts of the UK. At one point the young person was placed by her local authority in a residential placement on the borders of Harrow and a neighbouring London borough.

The young person's placement address had a "HA" postcode leading the placing authority local services wrongly to believe that she was living in Harrow.

To add to the error, local services provided support to the young person without seeking a full history, and without fully consulting her placing authority regarding the work they were undertaking with her.

A number of learning points emerged for the placing authority that are still under review, but key learning points were extracted for services in Harrow:

- To check which borough an address sits within – especially when it is close to borders – i.e. don't make assumptions
- The need to proactively liaise with a placing authority to ensure that all relevant background information is taken into account for assessment and planning – and not to wait for this to arrive if there is a delay in the placing authority providing it
- To notify and, where appropriate, consult, the placing authority when offering a service to a child in their care



### Local Learning Review

The Case Review Group carried out a review into a case where the multi-agency response to a child's disclosure of sexual exploitation fell short of agreed procedures and expected standards of practice.

The case involved a child disclosing a sexual assault which had been recorded and was being circulated as an indecent image. The review examined why the practitioners dealing with the incident had not understood the law regarding the downloading of such images – placing themselves, as well as evidence for the child, at risk.

In addition, some of the language used in agency records implied that the child had consented to the exploitation.

Key learning points from the review:

- All services should ensure that staff are aware of government guidance on how to respond to indecent/criminal images
- Any information that suggests a person working in the children's workforce has downloaded or viewed criminal/indecent images of a child must be referred to the LADO without delay;
- Staff must be mindful of using the correct language/terminology when referring to children/young people who are sexually exploited i.e. to avoid language that implies they are consenting

## AUDITS

### AUDIT OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Quality Assurance Sub-group (QA) identified that referrals for concerns about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Harrow were low compared to the rest of London, taking into account the diverse make-up of our local communities. The partnership want to identify girls and women at risk of FGM at the earliest point, so that families can be educated about the law and assisted in taking preventative action to protect their female relatives from this harmful abuse.

Across the UK most referrals come from health services but this was not the case in Harrow. The Partnership wanted to know why this was, so the QA Sub-group in conjunction with the maternity department at London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNUH) carried out an audit of cases from this sector (maternity) to examine the quality of risk assessments being undertaken. LNUH does not represent the health sector in its entirety but is one organisation within the health sector.

The audit involved the National FGM Centre, so that we could draw upon their expertise and advice. Their representation also involved a specialist social worker in Brent, so that cross border implications could be considered too.



Developing excellence  
in response to FGM and  
other harmful practices



Key learning points were identified and improvements were made by London North West University Healthcare Trust to their existing risk assessment tool. These improvements will ensure that a wider range of risk factors and indicators will be taken into account.

A repeat audit was planned for spring 2020 to check on progress but this has been delayed due to the Covid-19 Lockdown. The QA Sub-group has instead kept a keen focus on referral data and there are early indications that the changes made are making the desired impact on referrals from the health sector.

### CONTINUED SCRUTINY OF THEMES IN HARROW

#### Categories of Child Protection Plans

The Quality Assurance Sub-group noted that the proportion of Child Protection Plans with a categorisation of sexual or physical abuse has for some years been consistently lower than for similar boroughs across London. In addition to targeted activity to explore the reasons for this, we ensure that all relevant audits include this line of enquiry. We will maintain professional curiosity, to satisfy the Partnership that systems and practice issues are appropriately responsive to these types of abuse.



#### Agency checks – gathering information to inform assessments

Learning from case reviews, especially cases involving more than one Local Authority, has revealed that assessments of risk and need have sometimes been carried out without obtaining all the information held by agencies within the Partnership or agencies in another partnership area where a family had been known previously.

We have seen some improvements have been evidenced following action to improve systems and practice. The Quality Assurance Sub-group's programme of work includes a new audit which measures the thoroughness of agency checks in order to ensure that children are not put at risk by decision makers.

## AUDITS

### Effective engagement of parents with additional needs in Child Protection Conferences

The Harrow Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) contributed to a Serious Case Review led by Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board which concerned a young child placed by Harrow Children's Social Care with an aunt in Lewisham. The child was placed due to longstanding concerns of neglect which were linked to the birth mother's learning difficulties.

The birth mother raised concerns about the suitability of the new placement for her child but her concerns were not given sufficient weight. A number of practice issues were identified which can be accessed via:

<http://www.harrowscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Child-LHLewishamHarrow-Overview-Report-for-Publication-4.7.19pdf>

One of the actions from the Review was for HSCB to carry out an audit of how Child Protection Conferences are convened in Harrow in cases involving parents who have additional needs.

The audit was carried out jointly between the Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Board.

#### Good practice was found in a number of cases:

- Several agencies obtained relevant information about parental learning/cognitive difficulties and used this to adapt their internal practices and processes to help parents participate in assessments and planning
- Several agencies had shown creativity and flexibility in finding ways to assist parents in understanding their own strengths and the risks perceived by professionals

### Strengthening Practice across the Partnership

The audit identified a number of actions to strengthen our work with parents who have additional needs:

- Agencies should share their knowledge and assessments of parental learning needs with other agencies to inform arrangements for Child Protection Conferences
- To seek specialist advice on the format of Child Protection Conferences to ensure that the tools used are accessible to parents with learning difficulties
- To ensure that specialist assessments from adult services are sought to inform assessments and planning in child protection processes
- All agencies to share with parents, in advance, their reports for Child Protection Conferences – using adult services and intermediaries where appropriate to promote better understanding



## SCRUTINY OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

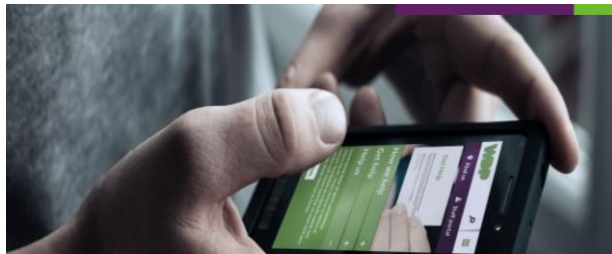
### Drug and Alcohol Services - Adults

#### Westminster Drugs Project (WDP)

WDP is a drug and alcohol charity commissioned in Harrow to provide help to adults who are affected by substance misuse.

WDP presented evidence for their compliance with safeguarding requirements to the Quality Assurance Group in January 2020. Their evidence confirmed a thorough approach to safeguarding the children of their service users. Key strengths identified were:

- Clear leadership for overseeing safeguarding responsibilities
- Regular review and updates for policy and procedure
- Priority given to 'Hidden Harm' – resources to identify and support families affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse
- A strong commitment to learning and development – both internally and across the partnerships
- A robust internal auditing and review programme



**WDP**

### Drug and Alcohol Services – Children and Young People

#### Compass

Compass is a service commissioned in Harrow to provide support to children and young people regarding substance misuse. They are co-located with other support services which can often be beneficial where there are linked issues e.g. domestic abuse, sexual health and unemployment.

Compass presented evidence for their compliance with safeguarding requirements for scrutiny in August 2019. Key strengths identified were:

- Embedding learning from case reviews – which has led them to strengthening cross border communications
- Extended service for young people moving into adulthood – now provided to existing service users up to the age of 24 to promote smooth transition
- Supporting the multi-agency approach to contextual safeguarding
- Introduction of a more child friendly complaints process
- Provision of service user leaflets in different local languages



## SCRUTINY OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

### Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and progress since HMIC Inspection

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

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

#### Achievements:

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

#### Areas in development:

- Audits identifying where performance is in need of improvement have not been translated into timely changes
- The MPS' response to on-line offences and the management of sexual offenders was found to need further improvement

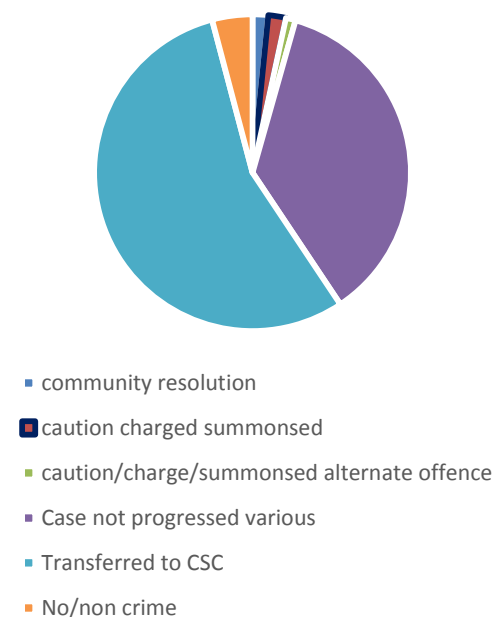


### MPS Safeguarding Data

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

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

Police outcomes child abuse  
Sept18-Aug19  
[rolling 12 months]





## SCRUTINY OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

### Harrow – 0 to 19 Health Visitor and School Nurse Service

This service is provided by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and has been commissioned by Public Health since 2018. The Safeguarding Partnership have kept the service under scrutiny since the new commission to assess the impact the new arrangements have on children and young people in the borough.

The Health Visiting Service is a specialist team that provides advice, support and intervention to families with children in the first years of life and helps empower parents to make decisions that affect their family's future health and wellbeing.

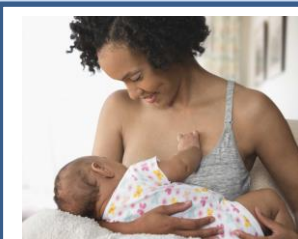
The School Health Service is made up of specially trained nurses who identify and deliver the health needs of children of school age.

#### Achievements

- The service has developed vision screening for the first time
- 98% has been achieved for the national child measurement programme
- UNICEF accreditation has been achieved for breast feeding targets and support is offered via a Baby Buddy App for parents – available in different languages

#### Areas for further development

- Speech and Language services are working to improve local outcomes for children and focus is being given to preparing children for school readiness
- New performance indicators are being introduced to help measure health outcomes for children with Child Protection Plans



### Harrow Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Service

Since 2017 this service has been provided by London North West University Healthcare Trust at the Caryl Thomas Clinic and its partners Brook and Terence Higgins Trust in community settings. It provides an open integrated service for contraception, prevention of and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (except HIV treatment):

For young people the service also provides:

- Dedicated clinics and outreach support
- Relationships and sex education in school; and
- Training for professionals on sexual behaviours, sexual exploitation and on-line safety
- Group work for Children Looked After and those excluded from mainstream education
- Dedicated support for young people with special needs
- Providing young people with C Cards to access free condoms from any outlet in the scheme

#### Achievements

- A proforma for identifying safeguarding and exploitation risks has been effectively applied – resulting in appropriate referrals to MASH
- The service contributes intelligence and data to support the Partnership's strategic oversight of sexual and criminal exploitation of young people in the area

## SCRUTINY OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

### Peer Review of Local Authority's Adolescent Safeguarding Arrangements

In 2019 Harrow's Children's Social Care stepped forward to be amongst the first to undertake a peer review across London. While its primary focus was on Children's Social Care, the review also examined how the partnership worked together to address the needs of adolescents within the context of Contextual Safeguarding.



#### What the review found:

##### 1. Effective Practice

- Practitioners know their children well
- Effective work with parents to keep families together
- Social workers felt supported by their managers
- Management oversight was good
- Strong multi-agency working at Front Door and MASH
- Admissions to care of high-risk teenagers are carefully planned

##### 2. Service Delivery

- Diversity & richness of provision allows tailored support
- Effective daily Violence, Vulnerability & Exploitation meetings allow detailed mapping of concerns and good partnership working
- Early Support Staff reflect & understand local communities
- A robust approach to children who go missing
- Good partnership working with schools and voluntary services
- The Significant Incident Group led by Schools helps the partnership identify and respond to emerging risks

### 3. Experience & Participation

- There is a local commitment to seeking and listening to what young people have to say
- A clear ambition to 'work with' rather than 'to do' young people and their families
- A good proportion of children in the Children in Care council said they felt involved in decision-making affecting them
- Many examples of children and families engaged in and co-producing goals and outcomes
- A substantial investment in advocacy services

### 4. Outcomes, Impact & Performance Management

- Performance indicators are effectively used to support improvement and management
- There is good compliance with recording and meeting timescales
- There is dynamic use of performance information in the MASH facilitating timely decision-making and intervention
- A developing 'data bank' relating to adolescent safeguarding to help target intervention in specific areas



## SCRUTINY OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

### Peer Review of Local Authority's Adolescent Safeguarding Arrangements – continued

#### 5. Effective Partnerships

- Evidence of strong & constructive working relationships – with a shared mission
- Co-location of staff has strengthened working relationships that benefit children
- Good knowledge of pathways and a range of service options
- New serious youth violence panel helps identify adolescents of most concern
- A good multi-agency grip on tracking and monitoring follow up actions



#### 6. Capacity & Resources

- Many good examples of needs led decision making & resource allocation
- Contextual safeguarding has been commissioned
- The Horizon Service exemplifies benefits from joint commissioning
- Resources for early intervention continue to be secured, enabling a diverse range of voluntary sector providers

#### 7. Vision, Strategy & Leadership

- Senior Leaders are very visible, engaged and encourage a learning culture
- Cross party leadership & support is strong
- The authority has a well-articulated commitment to developing policy and practice
- Work with schools is an evident strength

### Recommendations of the Peer Review

1. To develop an Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy across the Partnership to which include:
  - expectations about approaches to contextual harm, clarity about governance and
  - accountability and intended outcomes of the strategy
2. Agree a clear practice framework for safeguarding adolescents in Harrow; this could include consideration of a young people's safety planning approach
3. Strengthen a collaborative commissioning approach to ensure robust evaluation of services and knowledge of impact on children, young people, families and communities
4. Maximise Harrow's very considerable expertise and talent in working effectively with adolescents, through sharing and bringing together practitioners and managers from across the Partnership and communities





## SCRUTINY OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

### Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital (RNOH)

#### Safeguarding Children Process

As part of learning from a previous case review, RNOH have evidenced a thorough approach to embedding the lessons learned and presented their audits to the Partnership's Quality Assurance Sub-group for external scrutiny. An audit was undertaken in 2019 to examine how well the hospital follows its Child Protection Policy. This involved looking at:

- Recording of safeguarding children cases
- Identification 'flagging' of vulnerable children
- Referrals to Local Authority Social Care
- Discharge arrangements for children with child protection concerns

#### Findings:

- All relevant children had been flagged appropriately and safeguarding processes had been followed
- Some areas were identified for further improvement in relation to record keeping and ensuring that the 'voice of the child' was obtained

#### Further action:

RNOH set up a robust action plan and within the same year reported back to the Quality Assurance Sub-group the findings of another audit that relates to how well the hospital seek consent from and engage young people. Good practice was found amongst nursing staff and the hospital set up training for doctors to help embed good practice across all teams.

### The Firs Residential Home

#### The Firs Residential Short Break Service Celebrating 10 years of achieving an "outstanding" rating by Ofsted!



Part of Harrow Council provision, the Firs is a 4-bedded house which provides flexible short breaks and is available (following a social worker's assessment) to families where there is a child/young person between the ages of 5 and 18 who has a learning disability and other complex needs.

The aim is to provide children/young people with a variety of experiences and relationships outside of their own home whilst also providing families with a break from meeting the additional support needs of the children/young people. The manager of the Firs presented their key achievements to the Quality Assurance Sub-group in 2019:

- Managers are visible in the home, heavily involved in day-to-day activities, approachable and they communicate a clear vision
- There is a culture of continuous improvement/learning and consistency in systems and practice, which is achieved by engaging, supporting and holding staff to account
- There is an open and honest leadership style which applies theory to practice
- There is a rigorous quality assurance processes
- High expectations on staff which is backed up with management support in development

**The Firs is in the top 1% of Outstanding Children's Homes!**

## Child Protection Conferences

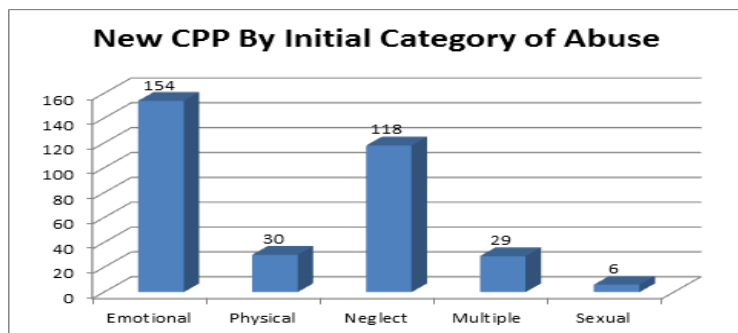
The Quality Assurance Sub-group annually evaluates how effective Child Protection Conferences are at keeping children safe. We also want to know how good they are at ensuring that children participate in planning their care, while fully engaging their care, fully engaging parents/carers and the agencies involved in supporting them.

These conferences consider information about risk to children. They need to reach a conclusion on whether a child has suffered significant harm or is likely to – and then decide what action is required to promote their welfare and prevent harm.

In March 2019 there were **279** children with Child Protection Plans in Harrow. The number of children entering the Child Protection process has been increasing recently and so in 2019-20 extra resources have been allocated to meet growing need. This year **838** Initial Child Protection Conferences were held throughout the year and in March 2020, of the Initial conferences undertaken, **82.8%** resulted in a Child Protection Plan and **10.8%** resulted in a Child In Need Plan.

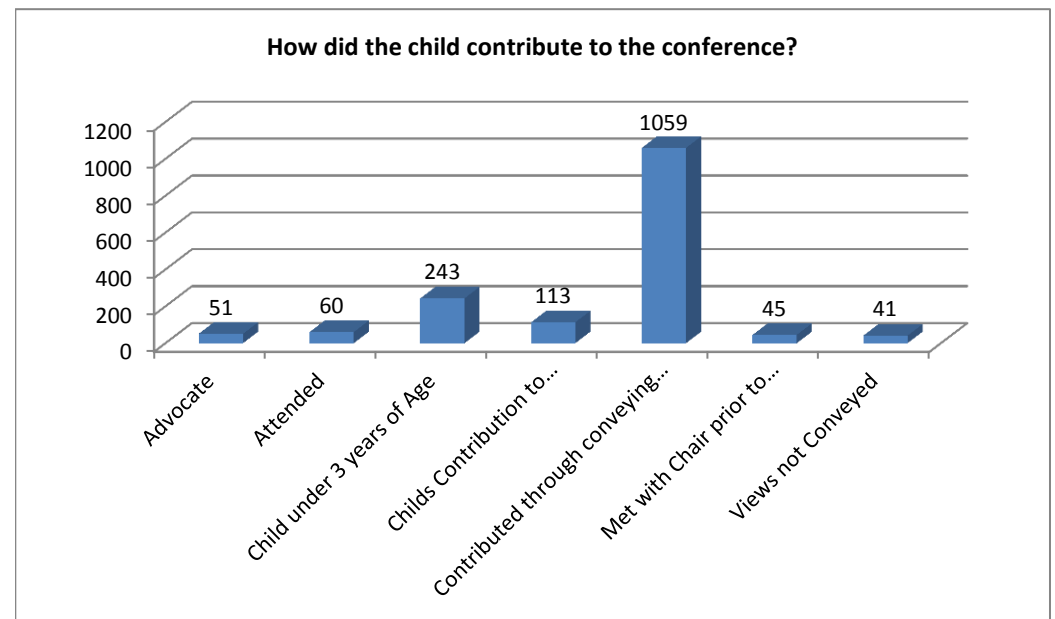
The **Strengthening Families** Model is used with the **Signs of Safety** to help professionals and the family understand what the risks are and how best to utilise the family's identified strengths.

The majority of concerns in Harrow relate to emotional abuse and neglect:



## Achievements

- The majority of Child Protection Conferences have been held within target timescales – this has been supported by a new consultation process to assist managers with decision-making
- **100%** of parents received reports from the social worker for the conference
- **96%** of conferences were quorate (attended by an adequate number of professionals)
- **90%** of the required social work visits were met
- **97%** of social work reports were evaluated as satisfactory, good or excellent
- Chairs effectively challenged and escalated concerns about practice issues in **19%** of cases
- A good range of arrangements are made available to children and young people to express their views at the conference:





## SCRUTINY OF COMPLIANCE

### Child Protection Conferences – continued.

#### What children and young people say:

*People are worried about us because our parents might hit us again*

*Family life would be better if my parents stopped arguing*

*Spending time with my family helps to make family life better*

#### Engaging Parents and carers:

- A large majority of parents felt the Child Protection Plan had helped the family achieve positive changes
- Parental engagement in cases of domestic abuse has been achieved through 'split' conferences so that parents can attend at different times
- Parental participation is offered to parents by phone or via separate advanced meetings if they are unable to attend the conference
- Interpreters are used where the family's first language is not English

#### Areas for further development:

- Learning from a Serious Case Review has prompted the development of new methods of ensuring parents with learning or cognitive difficulties can fully engage in decision making and planning.
- To further engage fathers in the conference and planning processes

### Independent Reviewing Officer Service – for Children Looked After

The Independent Review Officers (IRO) service maintains an overview of the care of children and young people who are in the care of the local authority. The service has a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for CLA and for challenging any drift and delay in taking forward the agreed plans.

#### Achievements:

- All CLA Reviews were held within timescale
- IROs have analysed data and monitored dispute resolutions to help inform key issues in practice, which is shared with managers to share areas of good practice, and areas for development and improvement
- IRO caseloads compare well with the nationally recommended caseload and they have held a total of 525 reviews
- The quality of IRO reports have become SMARTER (more Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely)
- IROs have continued to monitor Health Assessments to ensure that children and young people are supported with their physical and emotional health outcomes
- IROs have also monitored the quality of Personal Education Plans to help ensure that children and young people attend and attain in their education
- The IRO's link with the Participation Officer, Complaints and Advocacy services to ensure that there is continuous learning from the feedback obtained from children, young people, parents, carers and professionals
- 86% of disputes were resolved at Stage 1 and the remaining 14% resolved at Stage 2



## CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER BY HARROW

### Our Looked After Children (Information relating to 2018 to 2019)

#### Population:

- The number of Children Looked After ranged from 162 to 170
- In terms of permanency outcomes: 28.8% of children returned home to live with their parents; 13.6% moved to independent living; 5.9% went to live with another person with parental responsibility; and a smaller number, 4.2% were adopted.

#### The age Profile:

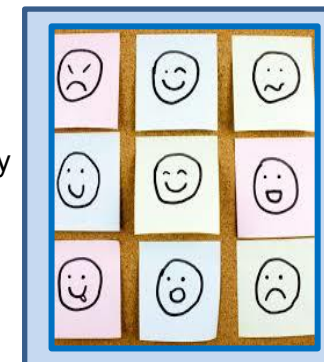
- 14.8% less than 1 year old
- 9.0% 1-4
- 9.0% 5-9
- 25.4% 10 -15
- 41.8% 16 and over

#### Entitlements and Advocacy

- 100% of children were provided with information about their entitlements, including their entitlement to a £2,000 setting up home allowance – and help with costs of education or training up until the age of 21 or 25 if the young person remains in education; and help with the costs of getting or keeping a job
- 100% of relevant young people, aged 16-21, had a Pathway Plan and had a personal advisor or social worker
- Of 21 young people in the Pathway Plan, 10 were in higher education
- Independent Reviewing Officers ensure that children have access to advocacy and are provided with the information they need to raise a complaint
- 81% of children aged over four participated in their review – and all are encouraged to participate in setting the agendas

### Children's Views

The Participation Officer supports children and young people in expressing their views about the services they receive. The Officer meets with children and young people individually before their review to obtain information and to help them plan how they can engage in the process. A consultation form is completed by the child/young person to inform the review and feedback is obtained afterwards too:



*I know who my IRO is – she is very good*

*I know what my IRO does*

*I would like to move to a larger room in my placement*

*I have no family in the UK*

*I have support from the CLA nurse*

*My IRO will make sure my needs are covered and check the social worker is supporting me*

*She is kind and understands me*

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### Family Group Conferences

A Family Group Conference (FGC) is a voluntary process which involves a meeting at which the wider family makes plans and takes decisions for children who need support or protection.

- Families are assisted by an Independent Co-ordinator to prepare for the meeting
- The family and professionals share information about the child's needs and what will keep them safe
- The whole family meet on their own following the initial conference with the family support officer, to make a plan for their child/ren which takes account of any safety concerns explained by the social worker and others involved

### Achievements in Harrow:

- FGCs have been taking place in Harrow for the last 3 years and have held 134 conferences.
- 72% of FGCs have engaged the child's father (often harder to reach in such cases)
- A high proportion of the cases referred to the programme are accepted on to it (83%). This is the highest conversion rate across London
- Harrow has also had the highest child participation rate (aged 6 and above) at 92%
- 81% of children had improved circumstances following the FGC – and this matched the perceptions of family feedback forms

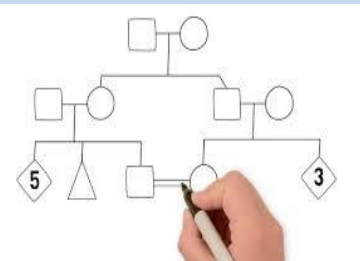
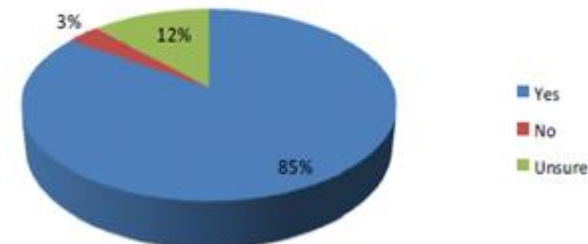
The success of FGCs in Harrow has now led to a new pilot for the service to extend into adult services too.

*It was good that my family was able to gather and talk about how they will look after me*

*It was nerve-wracking at first, but when we were discussing it became less weird. The FGC did help my family*

### FGCs and empowerment of participant

Do you feel more able to deal with your family problems post FGC?



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service ensures that any allegations of abuse made against adults who work with children are dealt with in a comprehensive, fair and timely manner. The LADO's oversight of all cases ensures that children are protected and that the rights of the accused worker are respected.

#### Activity in Harrow:

- 73 referrals were received by the LADO during the year. This was a decrease on previous years
- Allegations breakdown: 33 for physical abuse; 18 sexual abuse; 6 neglect; 3 emotional abuse; 3 multiple; and 8 other category
- Schools made more than 50% of the referrals. This is in line with the national picture and expected given that they have more staff working with children than any other body and their higher degree of daily involvement
- During the year (note – not all cases are concluded within the year) 18 cases were concluded with the concern being substantiated

#### Achievements:

- 55.8% of cases were completed within three months. Those that took longer, more generally did so because of delays obtaining evidence of on-line material and/or because there were criminal/ court proceedings
- There has been a decrease in referrals from previous years – This may be due to a better understanding of thresholds across the partnership which has led to fewer inappropriate cases being referred – and to safer working practices being embedded
- The LADO provides training on behalf of the Partnership for all agencies and the voluntary sector to help ensure adherence to local procedures

### Section 11 Audit – New Local Approach

Under section 11 Children Act 2004, all agencies that have contact with children must have good safeguarding arrangements in place. The quality of these arrangements is overseen by the HSCB through a Section 11 Audit process.

Throughout the year, the Quality Assurance Sub-group receives individual agencies' audit reports on how their organisations meet their safeguarding responsibilities and these prove very useful in allowing the Partnership to identify good practice and identify areas for further development.

Going forward, the Sub-group have made plans to extend the audit to front-line practitioners to check levels of knowledge first-hand. As well as finding out how well the workforce understands its responsibilities, this form of 'triangulation' of evidence will help the Partnership gain a view of how well leaders have embedded safeguarding learning across their individual organisations.

This model has been used elsewhere across the country and the QA Sub-group will report on findings and its effectiveness as an audit tool for the next annual report. To support Harrow's 'Think Whole Family' approach, practitioners will be asked questions on safeguarding vulnerable adults as well as safeguarding children.





## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE VOLUNTARY, PRIVATE AND FAITH SECTORS

### Voluntary Action Harrow (VAH)

VAH was commissioned by HSCB in 2016 to reach a wide range of voluntary, private and faith organisations with safeguarding messages and support. It has been very successful at this and so HSCB has extended its commission of this service for another 3 years.



VAH provide a range of support through training, advice and the production of up to date guidance. In addition, VAH support organisations with their safer recruitment processes, including helping to process DBS checks.

Their outreach team have helped embed knowledge about priority areas for the Partnership including domestic abuse, FGM, child exploitation, modern day slavery and mental health. They also offer a helping hand to volunteers who need guidance on how to make or pursue referrals to statutory agencies when concerned for a child. This has helped to build up confidence in the voluntary sector when they need to ensure that their voice is heard.

Year on year, we have seen VAH reach a wider range of smaller organisations that are working very close with our diverse communities – and consequently VAH's activities have supported the HSCB in making safeguarding children everybody's business. This year they have offered training and support to well over 100 local organisations.



*I didn't know about some of the things I was taught – you have taken me out of my comfort bubble*

A really well structured session

Approachable and really friendly trainer

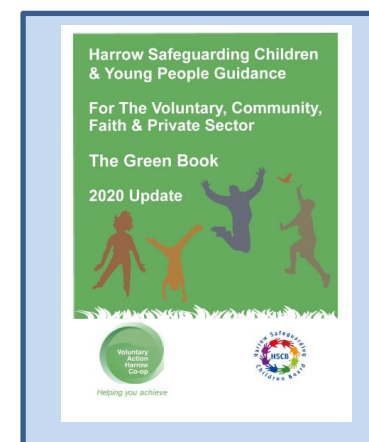
The VAH outreach team is also an active member of the Partnership's subgroups providing key support to the multi-agency training pool, the annual safeguarding conference and focused working groups.

As this report is being written, we note the exceptional response VAH and the voluntary sector as a whole made from March 2020 onwards to Covid-19 and the lockdown – maintaining vigilance and working hard to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Harrow.

Another significant achievement is the revision of the joint VAH and HSCB '**Green Book**' a comprehensive guidance tool for the voluntary and private sector. VAH have brought this up to date to reflect changes in legislation and to inform the sector of key safeguarding issues – including emerging themes for Harrow.

The Guidance also provides the sector with model policies to help them meet their safeguarding responsibilities.

[safeguarding Green Book](#)





## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### The HSCB's Learning and Development Programme

Following a restructure of the Learning and Development programme in 2018 a new programme was delivered throughout 2019 into 2020. This was a response to demands for shorter refresher courses which allow for easier release of staff to attend, without putting undue pressure on service delivery.

The HSCB's Core courses: Introduction and Advanced Safeguarding, continue as full day courses. These are necessary to equip those with lead duties, especially in their contribution to Child Protection Conferences and core groups.

Our refresher courses were delivered as Learning Events, which ranged from lunchtime forums to half-day sessions. Those attending our courses are provided with certificates to evidence their continued professional development.

All courses are for a multi-agency audience, promoting better understanding of how the Partnership needs to work together – and the courses are delivered by a very committed and experienced pool of multi-agency trainers.



From time to time the HSCB's training pool members have also provided some separate support to single agencies own internal training.

A wide range of courses have been maintained, reflecting existing and emerging themes e.g. Domestic Abuse, Substance Misuse, Neglect, Sexual and Criminal Exploitation, Problem Gambling, Abuse linked to culture/beliefs such as FGM, Breast Flattening, and Forced Marriage.

Next steps include developing new courses which deal with the link between Mental Health and safeguarding. We are also strengthening our collaboration with adult services by adapting our course content and thereby encouraging a mix of delegates from both children and adult services.



### New Ways of Working

The Learning and Development Sub-group have begun planning for the delivery of courses via video platforms in response to the restrictions brought in by the Lockdown for Covid-19. Pilot events have already indicated that such platforms attract good attendance from all partners in Harrow and so the multi-agency training pool will be skilled up to deliver our learning events through these means.

### The Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum for Schools

The HSCB's termly Designated Safeguarding Forum has continued to attract very high attendance from schools and colleges in Harrow.

The Forums are a useful way of keeping Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools up to date with safeguarding knowledge and requirements – in an environment where they can also network with each other.

As well as keeping their safeguarding knowledge up to date, DSLs make good use of the forum to raise and discuss key issues with senior representatives from partner agencies.

## ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE - MENTAL HEALTH, SELF-HARM & SUICIDE AWARENESS

The HSCB and HSAB chose Mental Health – Self-harm and Suicide Awareness as its topic this year in response to growing national concerns and some very tragic local cases.

The very sad story of Molly Russell, a young girl who took her own life and the findings of a case review into the death of an elderly woman meant that Harrow needed to take action.

The Safeguarding Boards were very privileged to be supported by experts in the field and courageous parents who wanted to help us make a difference for other young people and vulnerable adults:

- **Nick Dorling** works in Mental Health Law and shared his knowledge of the law and particularly the dilemmas that professionals encounter when balancing the need to protect someone from harm against their right to self-determination
- **Ian Russell**, father of Molly gave a powerful presentation of his insight into the pressures faced by young people and promoted the need for us all to identify concerns early. The excellent work of the Molly Rose Foundation is being used to inform our local agencies and schools in particular



- **Dr Sangeeta Mahajan** is a consultant anaesthetist and Trustee of Papyrus – a charity for the prevention of suicide in young people – gave us a fascinating insight into brain development and the impact on emotional development. She also shared her own story of the loss of a child to suicide, balancing both her professional and personal knowledge and experience
- **Dr Paul Hopper**, Divisional Medical Director for Central North West London Healthcare Trust gave us a highly informative presentation on the links between physical health and providing mental health care for the elderly
- **Jevoughan Gregg-Fuller** made a very powerful impression when he shared his experience as a service user – and he also urged us to ‘read the signs’ early when a young person is struggling with depression



### Workshops

The conference was also supported by an excellent range of workshops – examining topics for both the adult and children’s workforce; sharing their expertise and local resources:

- Molly Rose Foundation and Papyrus
- The Wish Centre
- MIND in Harrow
- Voluntary Action Harrow
- Near Neighbours
- Samaritans Outreach

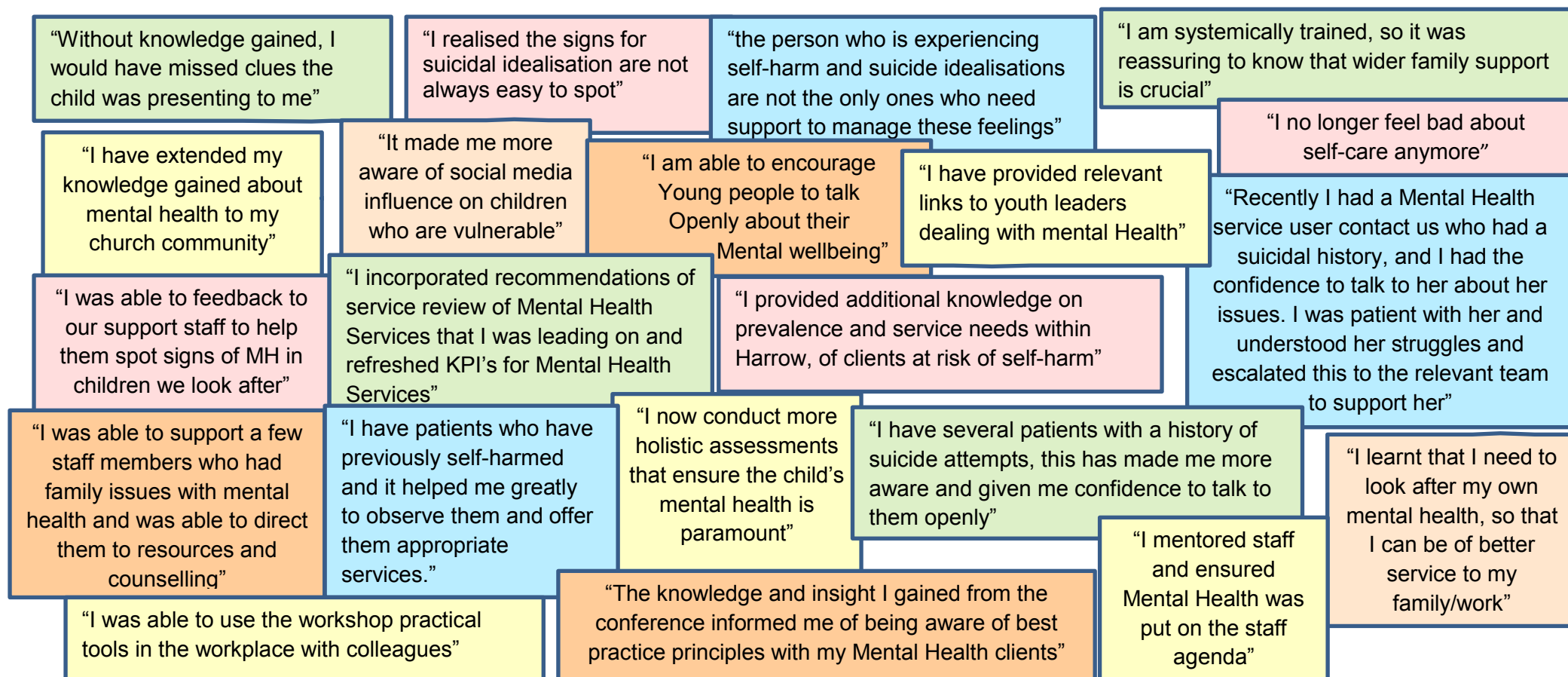


All delegates are asked to report back on how they have embedded the learning into their service.

## 2020 Annual Conference “Safeguarding Matters” Mental Health, Self-Harm & Suicide Awareness



We want to ensure that our safeguarding learning events lead to better, professional practice – and want our learning to improve the lives, wellbeing and outcomes of children, adults with support needs and their families in Harrow. Our 2020 joint conference with the Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board led to the following feedback and actions taken by a selection of those people who attended





## MENTAL WELLBEING

### Waiting Times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

In previous years, the HSCB questioned the delays that children and young people experience in waiting for assessment and treatment services from CAMHS. However, in its Safeguarding Health Outcomes Framework report for 2019 to 2020, CAMHS presented data to evidence a marked improvement – and now Harrow CAMHS is now very close to meeting its targets.

### Improvements in provision of Tier 4 Care

Tier 4 care is the term used to describe in-patient mental healthcare. Nationally, there have been considerable challenges to finding appropriate placements, especially close to home for children and young people.

Lavender Walk is a new facility for adolescents recently opened to bring about improvements to this issue. It is a dedicated unit for young people with mental health difficulties aged between 13 up and 18. It offers inpatient care for up to 12 young people and a day programme for 4 young people. This adds to the existing provision at Collingham Gardens for younger children.



The Team at Lavender Walk



### Self-Harm Data from London North West University Healthcare Trust (LNUHT)

At the request of the Quality Assurance Sub-group, LNUHT has begun presenting data on how many children and young people are admitted to hospital with self-harm. The first quarter year's data was presented in December 2019 showing that there had been 90 admissions to Northwick Park Hospital and 12 to Ealing Hospital. Unfortunately LNUHT cannot yet identify Harrow specific cases and these figures include young people from neighbouring boroughs and not just Harrow.

Harrow has the smallest population of the cluster of boroughs served by these hospitals, so it is likely that Harrow's young people make up a relatively small proportion of these figures.

All young people admitted due to self-harm are assessed by mental health services for further support and or treatment.

As the data is now becoming available, this will allow the Sub-group to monitor any changes and seek further details about the nature, cause and outcomes. A&E staff remain vigilant to the links with contextual safeguarding risks for these young people.

## MENTAL WELLBEING

### Supporting Schools Supporting Children

Schools in Harrow have prioritised the need to promote and maintain good mental health for the children and young people in their care. Curriculums, pastoral arrangements, Educational Psychological Services and a range of external services are provided to respond to the general and individual needs of their pupils. Schools have shown a strong commitment to equipping their staff to identify early signs of anxiety, depression and self-harming behaviour.

The HSCB's Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum has invited a number of local and national organisations to keep schools up to date with research and emerging themes such as those associated with peer pressure, on-line abuse and criminal/sexual exploitation.

The Forum has been used to share information about available mental health resources and to gain feedback from schools about their effectiveness in meeting the needs of their young people. Some examples include:



Papyrus is a national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. They have supported schools in Harrow by providing confidential support and advice to young people and to anyone worried about them. Schools have also benefitted from the training they provide to help staff understand personal and societal attitudes to suicide, equip them to spot early signs and give them the confidence to explore and respond.



The wish centre is a London based charity that works to prevent self harm, abuse and exploitation of young people. It provides therapy and counselling in many of the schools in Harrow and at its centre in Harrow.

Schools and other partners, including community groups have also taken advantage of the training the wish centre provide in order to develop strategies in helping young people to stop self harming. The team working with the wish centre also support the HSCB's multi-agency training programme.

*Was able to understand the reasons people self harm*

*Very informative – I learnt a lot about self harming and how to get help*

### Other Mental Health Support in Harrow

Harrow's schools and colleges have also taken advantage of a range of services, including workshops provided by Mind in Harrow and Samaritan's Outreach – both raising awareness of the importance of mental health, emotional resilience and stress management – providing children, young people and staff with coping strategies. They also provide specialist workshops for young people who have self-harmed or who have suicidal thoughts.



## DOMESTIC ABUSE

### Challenging Gender Bias

Domestic abuse remains a key factor in the majority of child protection referrals and so the Quality Assurance Sub-group maintain regular scrutiny of all related data. A joint HSCB and HSAB audit of domestic abuse cases in 2018 revealed that domestic abuse perpetrated by females was often not viewed as serious as that perpetrated by males, especially in relation to the impact on children. Even where behaviour was clearly the same, it was not being recorded within the category or context of domestic abuse when perpetrated by a woman. This situation meant that potentially the harm was being 'underplayed' in both assessments and interventions.

The HSCB began to address this throughout 2019 in a revised training course for domestic abuse.

By the end of 2019, domestic abuse data indicated a marked increase in the proportion of domestic abuse cases where the victim was recorded as male – now reaching 25% of domestic abuse referrals.



### Expanding the use and scope of Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a system by which the police notify a school of an incident of domestic abuse which may have affected one of their pupils. It allows for timely notification (by the following morning) so that the school can respond appropriately to the child's needs and it may prompt the school to share relevant information with the police and/or MASH (The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) to further safeguard the child.

The HSCB is very keen for schools in Harrow to connect with this system and has promoted the known benefits of such information sharing at its Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum.

In 2019 the HSCB sought feedback from schools about the benefits of the system and any obstacles to its effectiveness. There was mixed feedback, with some schools expressing disappointment with limitations on the type of incident reported to them. For example, only cases where a child was actually present during an incident were being reported. This left out a large number of cases where a child may not have been present at the time, but nevertheless was affected by living in such a hostile environment.

The challenge was raised with the local Basic Command Unit which responded very positively by expanding the scope of cases reported by schools.

In addition, the HSCB sought assurance from the MASH that schools are informed and consulted in all cases of reported domestic abuse, so that schools can actively contribute to the assessment of risk and respond to the emotional needs of the child.



## CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

Contextual Safeguarding seeks to understand, and respond to, young people's experiences of significant harm experienced beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form among their peers, in their neighbourhoods, in their schools and online can involve or lead to violence and abuse. This became one of the Partnership's priorities in 2019 and much activity has taken place to build upon and strengthen our response to concerns of child sexual exploitation and extend the focus to the interlinked concerns of criminal and sexual exploitation for both children and vulnerable adults.

### Multi-agency Criminal Exploitation Panel (MACE)

The MACE Panel was set up in 2019 and replaced the existing Child Sexual Exploitation Panel in recognition that many of the young people were both exploited sexually and criminally or significantly linked through peer group relationships.

The Panel looks for patterns and themes from known cases. It identifies links between victims and perpetrators; sometimes finding that the same individual is both. It also identifies 'hot spots' and cross border issues which are used to inform and target strategic and operational responses across Harrow and often in collaboration with other areas due to gang or 'County Lines' activity.

New Terms of Reference have been agreed by the partnership, with a focus on:

- **Predict and Prevent** – drawing upon data and emerging themes (local and national)
- **Identify and Intervene** – using a wide range of local sources of intelligence
- **Disrupting and Stopping Perpetrators** – agencies flexibly apply the full range of disruption tactics available through both criminal and civil routes to protect children and young people.



MACE works closely with colleagues in the Community Safety Team and the Adult Safeguarding Team. Together they have identified 'hot spots' in areas and in residences where action has been taken to successfully disrupt and, where necessary, prosecute offenders.

### Rescue and Response County Lines Project

In 2017 it was identified that nearly a third of 'County Lines' concerns originated in London, making London the major exporter of this high harm model of drug distribution. It drives gang related violent crime and criminal exploitation of young people and vulnerable adults. The London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime has funded the Rescue and Response Project across London to help understand, target and respond to County Lines.

Harrow is committed to this Project and a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations work together across Harrow and beyond to combat the activities and impact of this crime on our young people and vulnerable adults.

#### What we know – and the response in Harrow:

Harrow is fortunate in being less impacted by County Lines than some other North London boroughs, but it has nonetheless referred 35 people to the project for support (18 children and young people and 17 adults). The 11<sup>th</sup> highest referring borough in London.

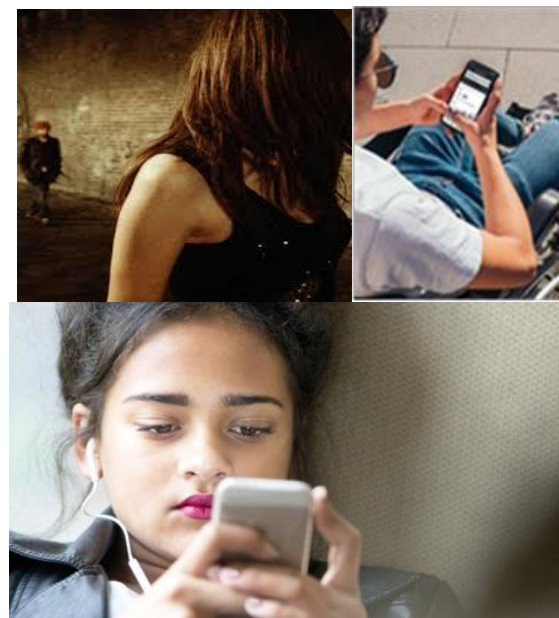
On average across London, young people make up 33% of all referrals into the Project. Harrow's higher referral rate of 59%, according to the Project, indicates that organisations in Harrow are good at identifying concerns for young people at an earlier stage through effective sharing of intelligence.

## CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

### Serious Incident Group

This school's led initiative is a multi-agency meeting held monthly to gather information about current incidents and emerging themes affecting school age children in relation to issues such as peer abuse; gang rivalries, criminal and anti-social behaviour in shopping precincts etc.

Along with the MPS and security for the business community, the group forms a network for sharing intelligence and identifying young people in need of diversion or protection at the earliest possible stage. Intervention then takes place with the young person and their parents/carers to confront them with the behaviour of concern and offer support to divert them from similar behaviour. Every effort is made to encourage young people to understand the impact of their behaviour on other young people, their communities and local businesses, so that they are steered away from prosecution and a life of crime.



### ***This Serious Incident Group makes a significant impact in Harrow***

The Serious Incident group also acts as an alert to the network about organised activities e.g. where intelligence indicates that there might be inter-school altercations planned. This allows the police, school staff and business security staff to make their own presence known to deter and sometimes formally exclude individuals or groups from specified areas.

The positive contribution this group has made to Contextual Safeguarding has been recognised in recent external inspections and reviews.

## CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO MISSING

Children and young people who go missing from their homes or from care are often among the young people most at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation. The Partnership gives these cases a high priority by monitoring them on a weekly basis at a meeting attended by senior officers in Children's Social Care and the North West Borough Police Command Unit's Missing Persons Sergeant.

In July 2019 a second Missing, Vulnerable and Exploited Children Co-ordinator was appointed to the Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Team to improve the number of Return Home Interviews being carried out within 72 hours of a child returning. These interviews are crucial to identifying any harm suffered and any further risks for the young people concerned. They also provide an opportunity to set up support services e.g. counselling for any abuse they may have suffered, substance misuse and sexual health – as well as gathering intelligence that might help protect others from exploitation.



As is the case nationally, many of those who go missing in Harrow are Children Looked After. The number of Children Looked After in Harrow is relatively low compared to other areas but nonetheless these children often go missing on several occasions and so remain among the highest risk children requiring priority attention.

The Quality Assurance Sub-group continue to monitor the local response to these children and in particular the timeliness and effectiveness of Return Home Interviews.

### CHILD ABUDUCTION WARNING NOTICES (CAWNS)

CAWNS are a tactic used by the police and social care to protect children from adults who pose a risk to them. They are warning letters to those that are believed to be involved in harbouring children.

In recent years CAWNS have become a valuable tool in the fight against Child Sexual Exploitation but they can be used where there is any element of exploitative intent and therefore relevant to our wider focus on criminal exploitation.



So far, Harrow's use of CAWNS has been less than most other London Boroughs and so the Quality Assurance Sub-group keeps the data under scrutiny and ensures that Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation training highlights when CAWNS can be of use. The fairly recent restructuring of the Metropolitan Police Service should lead to greater consistency in their use across the North West London area.




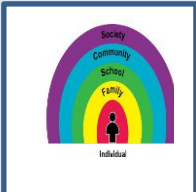




## HARROW PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES 2019-21



**‘THINK WHOLE FAMILY’**



 <p><b>Preventing harmful behaviours</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1. MENTAL WELLBEING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote an early intervention and prevention approach to mental ill health with a focus on harmful behaviours, including self-harm and suicide</li> <li>• Promote collaboration between services and agencies at all stages of assessment and intervention</li> <li>• Consider how multiple vulnerabilities impact mental ill health such as substance misuse and domestic abuse</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Through a welfare lens</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2. CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target the contexts in which that abuse occurs, from assessment through to intervention</li> <li>• Develop partnerships with agencies who have a reach into extra-familial contexts e.g. transport providers, retailers, residents associations, parks and recreation services</li> <li>• Monitor outcomes of success in relation to contextual, as well as individual, change</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Early identification of risk</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3. DOMESTIC ABUSE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all relevant sectors have access to training and awareness training</li> <li>• Promote vigilance to the fact that age, gender, ethnicity and ability do not discriminate in terms of who can become a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse</li> <li>• Ensure early intervention and appropriate support for victims</li> <li>• Promote access to specialist intervention programmes for perpetrators</li> </ul>
<p><i>Considering the voice of children and those with care and support needs in everything we do</i></p>	<p><b>Safeguarding Guidance:</b></p> <p>Adults: <a href="http://www.harrow.gov.uk/safeguardingadults">http://www.harrow.gov.uk/safeguardingadults</a></p> <p>Children: <a href="http://www.harrowlscb.co.uk">www.harrowlscb.co.uk</a></p>



<b>HSCB Budget &amp; Expenditure 2019-20</b>	
	<b>Outturn</b>
Harrow Council including Business Support	-152,014
Police / MOPAC	-5,000
National Probation Service and CRC	-1,000
London Fire Brigade	-500
Cafcass	-550
Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group	0
HSAB contribution to conference	-1,000
Training Income	-10,300
External Consultancy	-3,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-173,364</b>
LSCB Chair	19,384
Professional Support (full time BM; Vacant part time L&D co-ordinator)	73,183
Training Admin (.8 FTE)	26,965
SCRs and Independent Auditing	180
Recruitment expenses	1,271
Voluntary Outreach work	14,000
<b>Staffing &amp; consultancy expenditure Total:</b>	<b>134,984</b>
Council charges	21,020
Annual Conference	2,985
Training Providers	6,264
Venue Hire	229
LSCB Website & 3 year Chronolator™ Licence	3,250
TASP Membership	1,500
Publications, Printing, USB Production	84
Catering & Misc	3,049
<b>Delivery Costs Total:</b>	<b>38,380</b>
<b>Total Expenditure:</b>	<b>173,364</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>

### Appendix 3: HSCB BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE – APRIL 2019 TO March 2020

Representing Organisation	Title	Attended
HSCB	Independent Chair	3/3
Lay Member	Vice Chair	3/3
Political Accountability	Lead Member children & Young People	1/3
Harrow Council, People Services	Corporate Director	3/3
Harrow Council, Public Health	Director of Public Health	2/3
Harrow Council, Education	Divisional Director	1/1
Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board representative	Service Manager 0-25 Disabilities Service	0/3
Harrow Council, Children and Young People Services	Divisional Director for Children & Young People	3/3
Harrow Council, Housing & Resident Services	Senior Professional	1/3
Metropolitan Police	Detective chief Inspector or Representative	3/3
Harrow CCG	Chief/Assistant Operating Officer	0/3
CCG Designated Nurse	Designated Nurse	2/3
Central North West London healthcare Foundation Trust	Associate Director (also Chair of Case Review Sub Group)	2/3
North West London University Healthcare Trust	Director of Nursing or Representative	3/3
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital	Deputy Director of Nursing or Representative	1/3
West London Drugs Project	Service Manager	2/3
Sexual Health Services	Consultant Doctor	0/3
NHS England	Lead for NW London	1/3
Voluntary Sector	Director, The WISH Centre	0/3
High Schools	Headteacher, Kingsley High School	2/3
Infant and Primary	Headteacher, Kenmore Park	1/3
Independent Schools	Safeguarding Leads for Harrow School and John Lyon School	2/3
Colleges	Safeguarding Lead Stanmore	3/3
Special Schools	Lead for Special Needs and Kinglsey School	3/3
National Probation Service	Assistant Chief Officer	1/3
Community Rehabilitation Company	Head of Stakeholders & Partnerships	0/3
Cafcass	Head of Service	1/3
<b>Sub Groups:</b>		
HSCB Chair, Case Review Sub-Group	Director, Safeguarding & Safety, CNWL	2/3
HSCB Chair, Quality Assurance Sub Group	Service Manager, Quality Assurance (LA)	3/3
HSCB Chair of Learning & Development Sub-Group	Lead for special Needs – Shaftesbury School	2/3
<b>Sub Groups in existence only for 4.6.19 meeting</b>		
HSCB Chair, Policy & Procedures Sub-Group	Quality Assurance Officer (LA)	0/1
HSCB Chair, Violence, Vulnerability & Exploitation Sub Group	Head of Service, Children's Access Team	0/1
Advisor to the Board	Senior Solicitor, Harrow Legal Services	1/3
Advisor to the Board	Business Manager	3/3

**Board Meeting dates: 4.6.19, 17.9.20 & 3.12.20**



**Appendix \*: HSSP MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE – APRIL 2019 TO March 2020**

Representing Organisation	Title	Attended
Harrow Council	CEO and Chair	4/4
Harrow Council	Corporate Director People Services	4/4
Harrow CCG	Chair of Harrow CCG	3/4
Harrow CCG	Managing Director of Harrow CCG	2/4
Collaboration of CCGs	Chief Nurse, NWL	2/2
Harrow CCG	Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children	3/3
Harrow CCG	Designated Nurse Safeguarding Adults	2/2
MPS	Met Police Safeguarding Partnership Hub	4/4
Primary Schools HSSP Representative	Head of Norbury School	1/1
Secondary Schools/Colleges HSSP Representative	Head of Bentleywood School	1/1
Harrow Children's Services	Divisional Director, Children and Young People's Services	2/2
Harrow Adult's Services	Director Adults Social Services	1/2
Independent	Chair of HSCB and HSAB	4/4
Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board	HSAB Business Manager	3/3
Harrow Safeguarding Children Board	HSCB Business Manager	4/4

**HSSP Meeting dates: First Meeting 30/5/19, 17/6/19, 8/11/19; 27/1/20 (please note some members joined at a later date).**

