

Youth Safety, Tackling Child Exploitation and Youth Violence Away Day and Adolescent Exploitation Summit

Report on Findings, Insights and Recommendations



1. Introduction:

The last couple of years have been an incredibly challenging year for families and many of us across the Council, the Children's Safeguarding Partnership, Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS). The Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to rethink and be creative in how we engage and deliver services to those we are working with.

Throughout the pandemic we have strengthened our dialogue and transparency between agencies and have ensured children, young adults, families and the community voices are at the centre in tackling exploitation.

Through the delivery of the Youth Safety Work¹ including our Adolescent Exploitation and Violence Reduction and Vulnerability Strategies we are seeing early signs of impact in the borough. It is important to share some of the key highlights to remind us all of how much we have achieved together:

- Better and more sophisticated use of data, soft intelligence and information that is being shared across different parts of the system to inform a joined up service offer to vulnerable children, young adults and families
- Designed and implemented a single multi-agency pathway for referral, assessment, planning and review to tackle child exploitation and violence
- Improved partnership delivery with Police, Probation, Health, Youth Justice, Youth Empowerment Service, Community Safety, Housing, Adult Social Care, Schools and communities on place base services and intelligence working together to create safer communities
- Capturing the voices of children and young adults and demonstrating the importance of their voices being heard, listened, and responded to in shaping policies, service design and pathways that have a long-lasting legacy

Whilst we are very happy that our early signs of progress have been recognised by Ofsted and through multi-agency practice reviews, we are keen to ensure that our practice is positively impacting the lived experience of all children and will continue to listen and adapt our approach based on their feedback.

2. Youth Safety Away-Day and Summit Key Themes:

2.1. Retrospective – Reflections on the last 2 years on the work focused on youth safety, exploitation and youth violence:

- Rose: What went well?
- Thorn: What were the thorny issues and where could we have improved?
- Bud: Where are the opportunities presenting?

¹ Where the term 'Youth Safety' is mentioned or discussed in this report, it is referring to a whole system approach to safety for children, young people and families in Newham. This covers the full spectrum of work related to prevention, early intervention and early help, intervention and disruption (including enforcement). It also captures the sharper end of the spectrum where children, young people and families are currently affected by modern slavery (including exploitation and trafficking) and serious youth violence.

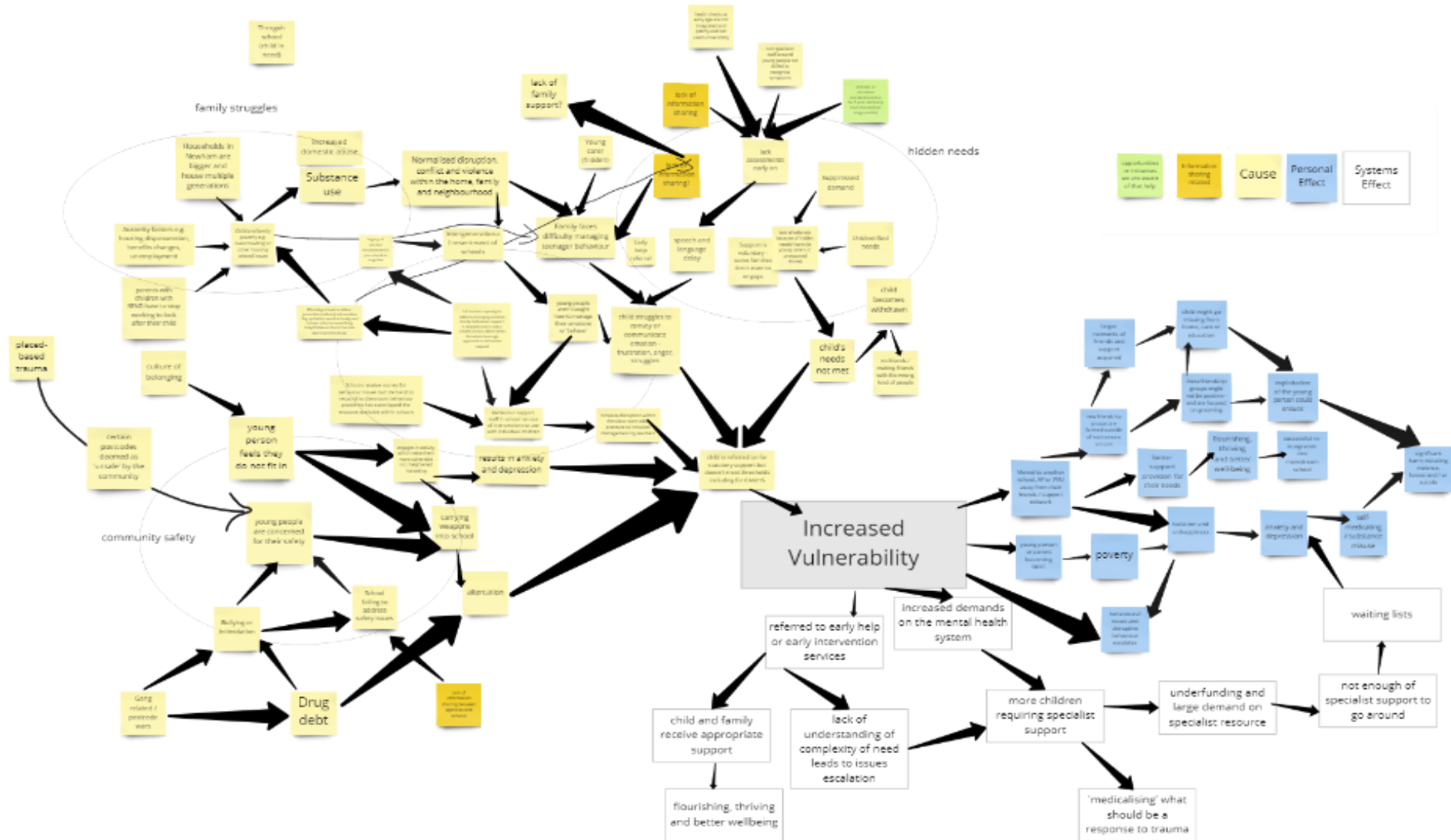
Rose	Thorn	Bud
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appetite to create a more cohesive plan around youth safety work • Single pathway to tackle exploitation and youth violence • Increased work around quality assurance of multi-agency work on youth safety • Newham Partnership working within itself and with other local authorities led to an improved and more coordinate response including on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holiday programmes - COVID response - Critical incident Response - Information and intelligence sharing • Trauma support for staff following serious / critical incidents • Collaborative work amongst education settings and the local authority to reduce permanent exclusions • Linked to the above - 0.39% of children went to Alternative Provision – a very small proportion of all children and young people in Newham • Provisions for children, young people and families generally working towards being more ‘systemic’ and ‘relational’ and less ‘behaviourist’ • Violence and vulnerability plan is held up as good practice externally • Reduction in robberies and serious youth violence over the last 2 years • ‘Good’ Ofsted inspection with ‘outstanding leadership’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to get a strong or robust data exchange (previous data breach still tarring trust between agencies) or data integration which has an impact our full and joint understanding of the picture of risk, need and harm in Newham • Growing complexity of cases including those with underlying and undiagnosed special educational needs and social emotional mental health needs means still many needs unmet • Engagement with some partners in the youth safety space still a challenge. Including housing, ELFT (CAMHS in particular) and some mainstream non-maintained education settings (especially Multi-academy trusts) • Tackling exploitation and youth violence pathway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - requires improvement – there is still duplication e.g. LBNIIPB; PCEHH; Partnership Violence Reduction Meetings - Relationships between MASH; LBNIIP and MACE still unclear - Exploitation screening tool is not being used across the partnership - Individuals are bottlenecking certain aspects of the pathway which mean it lacks safety - Information from the MACE is not disseminated back out again, but could be an opportunity • Knowledge and insight on adults of concern over 25 is lacking (unless it’s domestic abuse or young people becoming parents) • Very little provision for young people ages 16-25 • Lack of evaluative thinking e.g. how are we measuring impact / change and has benefit occurred • Engagement in partnership training opportunities (NSCP and Social Care Academy) around youth safety is very poor • Communication of the offer to children, young people and families is fragmented, disjointed and duplicative • ‘One’ Joint Youth Safety Plan never really got off the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping abreast of the tools used by those in Organised crime networks – specifically better understanding county lines business models for disruption • Growing trust between partners, especially police and the local authority • Less ‘firefighting’ especially in mainstream schools • Changing profiles of children and young people and our response to the shifts (we better recognise the full eco-system of children, young people and adults) • Understanding of transgenerational county lines activity (in the family) • Better harnessing of wider good practice, learning and insights from other areas, universities and thought leaders in this space • Increased data informed approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better understanding of ongoing need and gaps in provision - Trying to get better at evidencing what works - Information from the MACE is not disseminated back out again, but could be an opportunity • More Purposeful and mutually beneficial engagement with the knowledge, expertise, experience of our VCFS as a key stakeholders to help us reach families and communities early e.g. cost of living crisis

3. Systems Mapping – Cause and Effect:

This section is about better understanding the issues / problems and as many of the causes and effects of vulnerability which affects youth safety. Using the driver diagram on youth safety for the Health and Well-being Board we honed in on the following vulnerabilities:

- experiencing poverty and deprivation
- experiencing educational disadvantage

- The diagram below is the cohesive systems map which features many of the key causes and effects highlighted in each individual map created by groups linked to the areas of vulnerability above):



4. 'How might we' better support children, young people and families around Youth Safety

It was highlighted at the away day and the summit that it is important we don't just focus on the work we are doing or the mechanisms that underpin them, but that we always consider the impact of this – and the change that we are creating and driving through this. This is imperative when communicating with and to the children, young people, families and the community we are serving: they're not interested in how we got there (or the cogs behind the system and how they turned), they are interested in the effects and benefits to them, their families and communities. In this arena, these are safety, well-being, good health, connectedness and belonging.

The theory of change below sets out the metrics which demonstrate theoretically the impact we would like to achieve for children, young people and families. This includes showing how the activities we undertake move to tackle and resolve the concerns to address, how they can be tangibly measured (outputs) and the change we would like to continue to see for children, young people and families (outcomes).

Concerns to Address	Activities	Outcomes	Impact
<p>Increasing concern about serious risks faced by children and young people including risks of violence, exploitation, homelessness, mental health and well-being challenges, substance misuse, the increasing numbers involved and the complexity of cases</p> <p>Risks outside of family and home are not limited to physical spaces, but also include risks in the virtual realm, including adolescent use of technology and online spaces is of increasing concern.</p> <p>Fragmented coordination of support for children, young people and families, especially earlier on when challenges start to emerge – and for the 16-25 age group</p> <p>Local offer not fully known nor communicated widely so that children, young people, families and practitioners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a 'shared language' which will promote trust, cohesion and connection in the system Develop a 'test and learn' approach which enables new ways of working with different groups of stakeholders (testing what works in Newham) and builds a strong evidence base that which meets needs and tackles risks Quality Assuring provision and practice to ensure children, young people and families are getting the best support. This includes around cultural competency and anti-racist practice. Integrating data, information and intelligence to develop a collective understanding of need, risk, patterns and trends in order to better respond Building a stronger multi-disciplinary offer and integrated ways of working that respond to the spectrum of need Further develop outreach & place-based interventions in underused / disused physical spaces to widen access to children, young people and families 	<p>Children, young people and families</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> know where and who to go to for help receive timely, appropriate and higher quality help proportionate to risk & need feel and are safe and cared for in the spaces they are in, both physical and virtual Decreasing vulnerability <p>For the workforce:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger leadership and direction with great accountability, clarity and decision-making Greater trust across teams working together with families A positive working environment that better supports staff, empowers and keeps them safe <p>For the partnership (including VCFS²):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding of need, risk, trends and patterns around youth safety in the borough and beyond Improved use of resources Better understanding of what works well in Newham 	<p>Children, young people and families in Newham feel like they belong, are connected and can lead happy, safe and healthy lives</p>

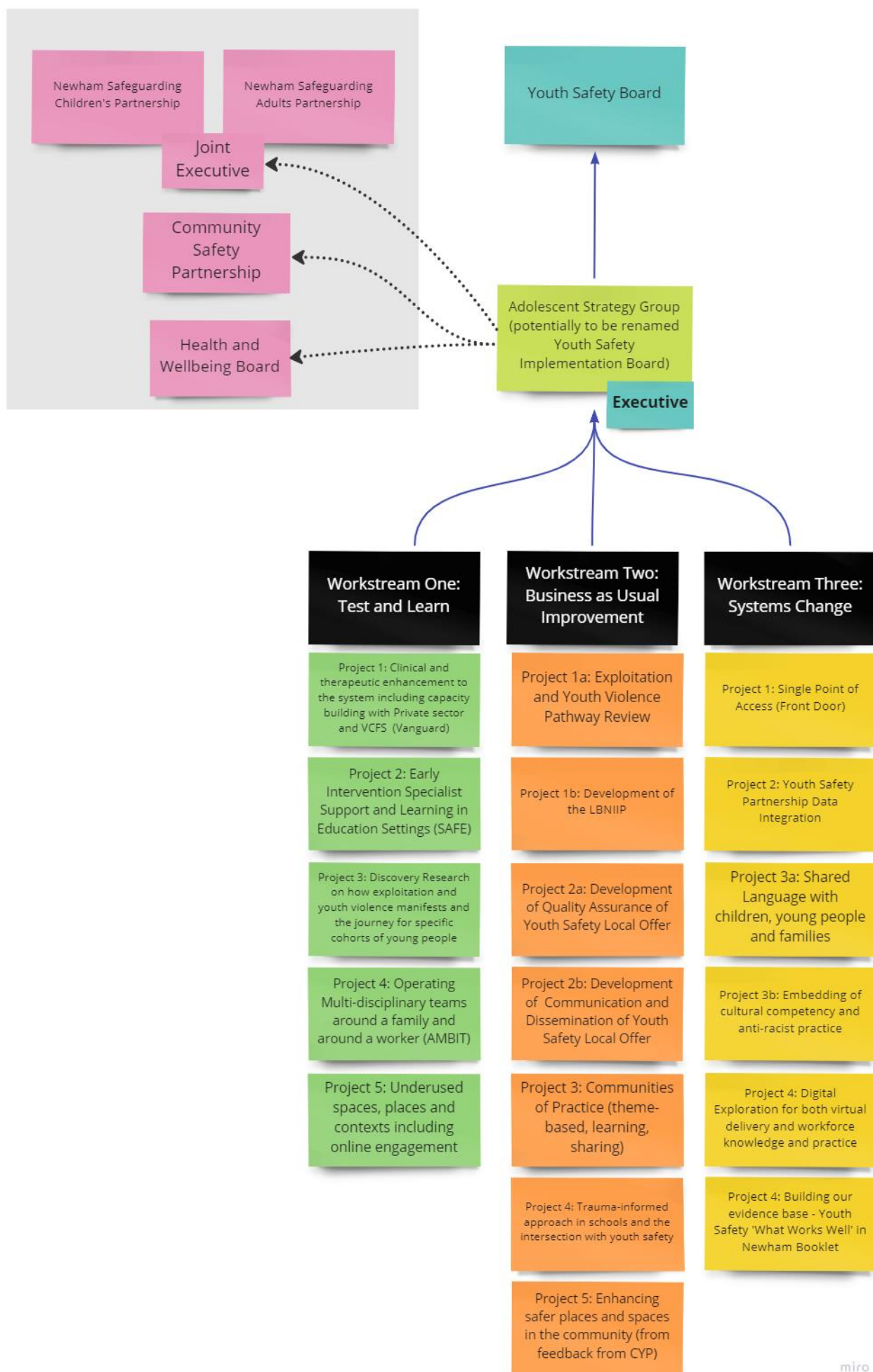
² voluntary, community and faith sector

<p>across the system know what is in offer and how to access it</p> <p>Staff supporting children young people and families from all agencies not taking advantage of the array and variety of training, upskilling, sharing and learning in this arena to better support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper research into the journeys and experiences of specific groups and communities in Newham in order to ensure we are giving the best support • Streamline access and pathways to reduce duplication, confusion and 'intervention' fatigue for families • Scope technology and virtual spaces work to better understand how this is navigated and used by children, young people and families 	<p>11. A more cohesive, varied and responsive support offer</p> <p>12. Improved culture of learning, sharing and reflection</p>	
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5. Governance

What do we keep?	What do we lose?	What we could change?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-5 & Early help partnership have merged into The all age early help strategic board too soon to see if this is positive • Adolescent Exploitation Strategic Group. This has had wide feedback of working well in terms of partnerships, pathways, systemic approaches and partnership contribution • Utilisation of the DCS - legal duty to bring together partners. • Introduction of additional layers of 'catchment' and support to meet needs of children and young people who don't meet thresholds e.g. Preventing Child Exploitation and Harm Hub • Keep 0-25 age focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many people involved in decision making and nobody specifically accountable or responsible • Local authority managing and chairing the LBNIPB. This should be done in partnership with the police and / or health so that there is joint accountability for research, intelligence and info gathering and sharing • Duplication of strategy groups and boards that cover similar areas (this should also be reflected operationally) • Hierarchy – we need less of it with a more approachable structure for quick decision making • A 'grand plan' that is all encompassing – this can stifle creativity and speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of the youth safety board should change (Reps on the Youth safety board are not representative of people who need to be on the board) • Terms of Service – this does not fit the current landscape • Voluntary, faith and community partners bringing them into governance • Meaningful lived experience at boards: positive & negative experiences taken into account • Get the right levels of representation for oversight, scrutiny and decision making. Often board meetings are just a 'talk shop' and info update without the scrutiny required on risks / issues, escalations, decision making. • Police, Health & CYPS should be more jointly accountable and responsible for governance • Developing a more integrated youth safety plan which has clear scope, remits, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities • We need stronger governance that tackles duplication across the system • The all-age exploitation group and this duplicates some of the conversations and work being done at the adolescent strategy group, but then also loses the focus of older age groups affected by exploitation. This may change in relation to the new setting of joint priorities of the NSCP and NSAB execs. • Better communication in terms of governance structures – remits, membership and interfaces, but also how information from board are fed back to respective agencies and stakeholders within specific arenas • Greater focus on scrutiny around 'upstream' work (prevention; early help and early intervention included) • Creation of learning and sharing spaces aligned to board

The governance structure set out below is based on the feedback from the away day on accountability,



5.1. Considerations for the governance:

5.1.1. Youth Safety Board

- The terms of reference (including the membership) of the Youth Safety Board should have the space to be flexed more easily and bring in new skills, knowledge and expertise.
- It needs to reflect how outcomes from Youth Safety is contributing to the wider council aims / objectives.
- Receives updates against the YS Implementation Group action plan & provides a steer against pace of change
- Responds as a 'critical friend' to provide suggestions, advice, support against suggested actions
- Utilises 'spheres of knowledge & influence' to strengthen WSA development and delivery
- The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Youth Safety Board will provide oversight to the Youth Safety Implementation Board (but will not be responsible for decision-making on implementation of the Youth Safety work – this will sit with the Youth Safety Implementation Board)

5.1.2. Youth Safety Implementation Board (previously the Adolescent Strategy Group)

- The executive of the new Youth Safety Implementation Board (previously the Adolescent Strategy Group) are the primary decision makers for the Youth Safety agenda.
- The executive will be made up of senior decision-making reps from each agency (Children and Young People Services, Public Health, NHS (CAMHS specifically); Housing; Education; Police).
- This board will be more of a robust programme board with a decision-making remit focused on each project area outlined by the Youth Safety Plan. The board will be responsible for scrutiny on progress of implementation and impact.
- This board will be chaired by the DCS as he has legal responsibility for this area.
- Each project area will report to the Youth Safety Implementation Board

5.1.3. Statutory Boards

- The Youth Safety Implementation Board will provide updates to statutory boards on request e.g. Health and Well-being Board, Community Safety Partnership and Joint Exec of Newham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NSCP) and Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)³.

5.1.4. CYPS Programme Board

- Consideration to be given about how this will interface with the CYPS Programme Board (what is the focus of this and how will it interface with this? - is this more about performance and improvement?)

³ The Joint Exec of the NSCP and NSAB are in the process of updating their priorities so the ongoing priority on all-age exploitation may change in the near future

6. Youth Safety Plan Recommendations

It was highlighted at the away day and the summit that it is important we don't just focus on the work we are doing or the mechanisms that underpin them, but that we always consider the impact of this – and the change that we are creating and driving through this. This is imperative when communicating with and to the children, young people, families and the community

These workstream areas and each of the projects within these were scoped at the Youth Safety Away Day and the Adolescent Strategy Summit by all stakeholders, including children and young people from the youth assembly.

Each of the projects within the workstream area will:

- Be allocated a project lead and deputy project lead⁴. These person will be responsible for driving progress in this project area and for reporting back to the board every 6 weeks (a written highlight report will be required and potentially a verbal discussion).
- Have a set of reporting objectives including milestones to assess progress and a set of outcomes to deliver which will measure the impact of the project
- The project leads can decide how they would like to run the project. They can set up a small working group, a series of meetings, a mini-plan or liaise directly with programme managers and service leads who interface with their particular project area.
- Will work with the new programme co-production and participation lead and the youth empowerment service to ensure that children, young people, parents / carers and wider families stay front and centre of the development – and that rigorous co-design, co-production and 'user testing' forms part of their work ethic

6.1. Workstream 1: Test and Learn

These projects will use a set of agile practices which allows the partnership to test what works in real-time to understand impacts on experience. From there, we learn what needs to be iterated and improved. This approach also contributes to building an evidence base about what works in a particular context or for a particular group of people. It's efficient, cost effective, and ultimately returns a greater return on investment. This will also include grant funded pilot programmes which are focused on tackling exploitation and youth violence.

Project #	Project Focus	Detail
1	Clinical and therapeutic enhancement of the system including capacity building with and in the VCFS	The overarching vision is to facilitate trauma-informed systems and multiagency working which enables vulnerable children and young people affected by violence to thrive. Included in this project area will be the Vanguard programme.

⁴ The project leads do not have to be service leads, delivery managers or programme managers – however, they will have to be convenors and facilitators for the project area they are responsible for, interfacing and working with those delivering the work. Ideally the project lead and co-lead will be from different agencies. The idea of this project plan structure will ensure that we operate a 'flatter structure' which means cutting out bottlenecks, quicker decision-making and responsibility more widely spread across the system.

2	Early Intervention Specialist Support to support learning	Empowering groups of education settings to identify and commission the right support for young people whose attendance, learning challenges and behaviour are impeding their learning and leaving them exposed to involvement in serious violence, gangs and county lines. The SAFE Programme will be included in this project area. This project will also be reflected in the inclusion strategy, interfacing with the Education Partnership Board.
3	Discovery Research on specific groups	Set pieces of discovery research which will focus on experiences and journeys of specific cohorts of young people to find out what their specific needs are and how we might better meet and support these with reference to their safety. This will include Black and Asian young males, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller young people and young teenage females. The research and findings will determine a more detailed response to these groups.
4	Testing multi-disciplinary teams around families and workers to support.	This project will test whether multi-disciplinary teams make a bigger impact on families because of the array of skills and provision available around the family – and around the key worker. This project will include the Vanguard and SAFE teams and the AP Specialist Taskforce in Tunmarsh School.
5	Underused / disused spaces, places and locations in the borough to engage with children, young people and families	This will also involve trialling new virtual approaches to engaging children and young people, including in online contexts.

6.2. Workstream 2: Business as Usual Improvement

This workstream will be focused on improving the current delivery to children, young people and families – as well as those of practitioners within the system, the outcomes of which will be better quality assured, communicated, accessible and user-friendly services.

Project #	Project Focus	Detail
1a	Following Ofsted inspection, conducting an external peer review of the exploitation and violence reduction pathway with recommendations for improvement.	<p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revisiting and reviewing the exploitation pathway guidance in light of discussion about thresholds of risk and need and the offer for families. - This includes a review of the various panels in this space – LBNIIPB, PCEHH, MACE, Partnership Violence Assessment Meeting etc. - The Exploitation screening tool needs further development around the review process and link to safety plan (which requires review/sign off) and statutory process. Plans for training partnership on using the exploitation screening tool and the pathway - Evaluation of the London Borough of Newham Intelligence and Information Partnership (LBNIIP). A report of progress, learning and recommendations will need to be compiled for decisions about whether and how this function continues. - Formalise the MACE role, interface, responsibility and relationship with LBNIIP. - Review timescales of high, medium and low with the offer of intervention. - Formalise quality assurance

1b	LBNiIP development	Linked with project 1b, this project area will commence with a business case to the board which sets out the recommendations on next steps for the development of the LBNiIP. This will include resourcing, funding, data integration, interfaces with other parts of the pathway.
2a	Quality assuring the youth safety offer.	This will ensure that all services and support (both within the partnership and the VCFS) for children, young people and families. This will start with provisions supporting those affected or at risk of exploitation and youth violence. The outcome of this will be a) a better understanding of the local offer on youth safety and the quality and impact of each b) a set of preferred providers for commissioning
2b	Communication and Dissemination of the Youth Safety Offer	To coordinate the offer, access routes, referral criteria and specific details to ensure children young people and families know how and where to access support.
3	Communities of Sharing and Learning	Establishing communities of learning and sharing, first and foremost focused on practitioners from different agencies and the VCFS coming together to explore, learn and share around specific topics around youth safety. This will also extend to parents and carers and ambassadors in the community.
4	Improving the trauma-informed offer into schools	Improving the trauma-informed offer into schools to support early help and early intervention on issues where mental health and well-being affect safety.
5	Enhancing spaces and places in the community to make them safer.	This for example could be sorting out pathway lighting, ensuring that young people hanging around certain spaces do not make others feel intimidated etc.

6.3. Workstream 3: Systems Change

This workstream will be focused on building the conditions for change in the system to enable bigger, wider and larger scale. This may include adjustments or transformations in the policies, practices, power dynamics, social norms or mindsets that underlie youth safety in Newham. This will involve the collaboration of a diverse set of stakeholders.

Project #	Project Focus	Detail
1	Single Point of Access	Although this is focused on the wider pathway to enable children, young people and families' easy access to support, there is a specific intersection of the SPOA with the exploitation and violence reduction pathway and the new programmes focusing on supporting vulnerable children and young people. This will be scoped elsewhere but will report on progress and impact to this board, and the CYPs Improvement Board.
2	Youth Safety Data Integration	This project area will have dedicated resource going forward, to enable Newham to scope and set out the indicators and metrics linked to changes in youth safety, bring together datasets from all partners linking to these and analysing these for trends, patterns and insights to enable a) a better understanding of the changing profile risk and need in Newham b) better measurement of impact c) better understanding of where to allocate resources proactively
3a	Shared Language with children, young people and families	As part of our wider work on diversity and inclusion, there is a particular cultural and systemic drive to ensure that we share a language which does not alienate children and young people – and one which shows an understand, empathy and kindness
3b	Embedding of cultural competency and anti-racist practice	As part of the project 3, quality assuring that we are embedding anti-racist practice and cultural competency in all of our work in this space

4	Digital Exploration for both virtual delivery and workforce knowledge and practice	Discovery project to help explore the technologies, virtual methods and online spaces which young people Newham use, live and operate in, in order to make our offer more accessible, creative and engaging. This also comes with mandatory training and upskilling for staff about how children and young people navigate virtual spaces and the online world and how best we can support them in this.
5	Building our evidence base - Youth Safety 'What Works Well' in Newham	This feeds into the vision of becoming a centre of excellence. It enables us to document what is having an impact and working well in Newham, a 'playbook' of sorts which others in similar contexts are able to pick up and use in their spaces, places, areas and contexts.