

Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)

Annual Report 2023/24



Chair's Introduction and Scrutiny Reflections

As chair of the partnership I have led and been involved in various aspects of scrutiny activity. The role of scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. There is a requirement within Working Together 2018 that "scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement". It should also consider "how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported." The role of the Independent Scrutineer has been further reinforced in Working Together 2023 and as from the autumn of 2024 new scrutiny arrangements will be introduced including the appointment of an Independent Scrutineer for Newham.

Scrutiny, challenge and critical friend activity which has been led by myself has included:

- Ensuring accountability mechanisms are in place within the Local Authority, Police and the ICB to hold the representative on the NSCP to account and to ensure that those who are delegating their responsibilities are properly informed of the safeguarding issues being considered in Newham.
- Acting as a critical friend regarding Business Plan, Risk Register and Annual Report.
- Encouraging partners to increase financial and in kind support to business unit.
- Promoting the concept of and implementing an extended partnership meeting which will be able to be adapted to become the new delegated safeguarding partners meeting as required in Working Together 2023
- Sharing good practice from other areas to encourage improvement in practice locally.
- Facilitating a number of events to promote the learning from reviews, as well as priority setting and review sessions through which the outstanding partnership principles are embedded.
- Facilitating a partnership review of incidents that occurred over Easter 2023. The purpose of the event was to explore the learning from these community incidents and collectively identify actions that need to be taken to improve the partnership's response. The outcome of the event focused on being confident that the system can collectively respond robustly to any similar events in the future and be a more resilient system.

In November 2023 the NSCP executive requested that the chair be involved in scrutinising the thematic review which had been commissioned relating to 7 children at risk of extra-familial harm, who had also experienced intra-familial harm, specifically physical abuse. This piece of work was completed in June 2024. Some of the key contributions made during this process were:

- Challenging how the views of the children young people and families which had been gathered could be shared to ensure that their voices were heard.
- Building on the success of previous partnership events facilitated a successful event and an extended partnership meeting to share the learning and influence the action plan.
- Providing feedback on the report to the author, and the person taking the learning forward, to ensure that the content was appropriate and relevant.
- Supporting the chair of the meetings to ensure that actions agreed had been captured.

In early June 2023, we brought together senior leaders to test the effectiveness of the learning from a Child Safeguarding Practice Review which had been published in the

previous year. Sadie is a care leaver who disclosed that she had been abused by a close male relative, while she was a child in care. We specifically asked what had changed as a result of this review in terms of multi-agency working; what changes they had seen within their own agency; and how we can give assurances to children and young people now.

The feedback was that there is more evidence of multi-agency collaboration and problem solving and listening to children. Respectful challenge is also being seen as are improved inter-professional relationships both at practitioner and at a senior level.

Increased use of safeguarding supervision, escalation and increased professional curiosity. Children's Social Care has seen more challenge from partners in relation to section 47 enquiries and professional meetings.

Sadie's review has really helped us to re-focus. The NSCP have made child sexual abuse a priority. We want children and young people to know that we will be persistent in different ways when there are concerns that they are not ready to share with us. All professionals can help to do this, not just social workers. Finally, the main message to children and young people is - if an adult asks you to keep a secret, it's best to tell someone. Adults don't usually ask children to keep secrets for them. Talk to an adult that you trust – this doesn't have to be a professional. We will see you and we will support you.

Julia Stephens-Row
Independent Chair

1. About Newham

Newham is one of the most diverse Local Authorities in London with over 200 languages spoken. It has a vibrant community with a long and well-regarded history of inclusivity.

In the 2021 census, 42.2% of Newham residents identified their ethnic group within the Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh category, 17.5% identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African, 30.8% of Newham residents identified their ethnic group within the White category, 4.7% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups and 4.9% identified their ethnic group within the Other category.

Newham has a high proportion of households with multiple children. Nationally, 7% of households have 3 or more children, whilst in Newham 14% of households have 3 or more children, making Newham the 2nd highest in England for this indicator behind Tower Hamlets.

Newham is an area with significant social deprivation and a very mobile and transient population. 21% of the overall population are classified as 'low income families'. Around 30% of our children are eligible for free school meals a figure that has increased during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. 2019 government data reported Newham to be the 3rd most 'deprived' London borough overall with 51.84 % living in child poverty (highest rate in London).

At the height of the pandemic, the Covid-19 mortality rate in Newham (196 per 100,000) was the second highest in the country. In July 2020 102,000 residents were on furlough, or unemployment benefits – 35,000 more than our neighbours, Tower Hamlets and Hackney.

2. About the Annual Report

The Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) annual report for 2023/24 sets out examples of the evidence, impact, assurance and learning of the statutory safeguarding arrangements in the London Borough of Newham.

It reports on the following activity:

- The governance and accountability arrangements for the NSCP's safeguarding arrangements alongside a summary of progress against the NSCP's priorities.
- The context for safeguarding children in the London Borough of Newham, highlighting the progress made by the Newham partnership.
- The lessons that the NSCP has identified through its Quality Assurance and Learning Framework, the key messages for practice and the actions taken to improve safeguarding and welfare as a result of this activity.
- The range and impact of the multi-agency safeguarding training delivered by the NSCP.
- The NSCP's priorities going forward and the pledge of safeguarding partners.

In line with statutory requirements, the NSCP annual report 2023/24 has been sent to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

3. About the NSCP

The NSCP has firmly established itself under the framework provided by the *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* arrangements. Over recent years, the NSCP has evolved into a responsive and agile system, effectively addressing the safeguarding needs of children in Newham.

According to these arrangements, a statutory safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, as:

- The local authority
- An integrated care board for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area
- The chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area

Recognising the importance of a holistic approach to safeguarding, Newham has taken an additional step by including education partners as a crucial component of the partnership. This is reflected in the active participation of the Director of Education and Head Teacher representatives from both secondary and primary schools, ensuring that the educational sector is fully integrated into the safeguarding framework. This expanded partnership strengthens the collective efforts to protect children and ensures a comprehensive safeguarding strategy within the local area.

The safeguarding partnership is ambitious. Our experienced Independent Scrutineer and chair was appointed in December 2019, providing stability and continuity. We have extended the Executive meeting arrangements to enable wider engagement across the partnership.

Steps have been taken to strengthen relationships to enable greater levels of scrutiny, challenge and support, resulting in enhanced visibility of the partnership and improved communication, data sharing and information at an operational level.

The partnership has taken steps to improve communication and engagement. This has been achieved through the establishment of the First Friday Forum which is valued across the partnership and the dissemination of 7 minute briefings a mechanism to disseminate key thematic learning from safeguarding incidents, and regular partnership events to share learning.

We have **established 'outstanding partnership principles'**. This has translated into, for example: a culture of early identification and referral to partner agencies – the development of the Newham Information and Intelligence Partnership Briefing (LBNIIIPB) is evidence of applying this culture into practice; and open and transparent dialogue between partner agencies through increasing levels of quality conversations – we have received reports from across the system that the culture has positively changed. The partnership has endorsed the SEND & Inclusion Strategy and supported the development of the Education Partnership Board with an independent chair to bring together the work with settings alongside the Education Vision launched in December 2023.

NSCP Executive Members.

Annabel Bates - Director of Education & Inclusion, Children and Young People, LBN

Korkor Ceasar - Deputy Director for Safeguarding Children, NHS North East London

Charles Clare - Detective Superintendent, Met Police.

Victor Cook - Acting Director of Quality Assurance and Partnerships, Children and Young People, LBN

Laura Eden - Corporate Director of Children and Young People (DCS), LBN

Matt Hipperson - Head Teacher, St Luke's CEVA Primary School

Diane Jones - Chief Nursing Officer, NHS North East London

Mahfuzul Khan - Acting Director of Early Help and Safeguarding, Children and Young People, LBN

Sarah Morgan – Head Teacher, Eastlea Community School

Julia Stephens Row – NSCP independent Chair

The Groups explained:

- **Executive Group:**
 - The Executive Group oversees the NSCP, ensuring that it continues to promote and support multi-agency collaboration across all safeguarding areas. The local Police, Integrated Care Board, and Local Authority share equal responsibility for the partnership and its outcomes.
- **Partnership Group:**
 - This group brings together Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) from across the partnership, ensuring full representation and engagement from all sectors. The group focuses on advancing the NSCP business plan goals through collaborative efforts.
- **Performance and Quality Assurance Subgroup:**
 - This group manages the business aspects of the partnership, including the review of multi-agency data, audits, and action plans that emerge from statutory reviews. Their work ensures accountability and continuous improvement in safeguarding practices.
- **Learning and Workforce Development Subgroup:**
 - Focused on training and awareness, this group coordinates educational and training programs across the borough, ensuring that all partners are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard children effectively.
- **Child Safeguarding Practice Review Subgroup:**
 - This group is responsible for ensuring the implementation of learning from statutory reviews, including ensuring that lessons are effectively integrated into practice in all agencies to prevent future incidents.
- **Education Safeguarding Forum:**
 - A dedicated space for education providers to raise thematic and strategic safeguarding concerns, fostering open communication and collective problem-solving within the education sector.
- **All Age Exploitation Group :**
 - An all-age exploitation group that links the Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) with the Newham Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB). This group coordinates and drives forward multi-agency programs and interventions aimed at combating all forms of exploitation in Newham.

This structure ensures a comprehensive and integrated approach to safeguarding, with each group playing a vital role in maintaining the safety and well-being of children and young people in Newham.

4. Our vision and priorities

Purpose

The NSCP's safeguarding arrangements support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

Vision

Our vision is to make Newham the best place for children and young people. All young people in Newham will:

- Grow up healthy, happy and safe
- Flourish in our schools
- Benefit from training and employment opportunities
- Play an active role in our community

Objectives

Our objectives are to:

- Coordinate what is done by each agency to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each agency and by agencies working together

NSCP standards for an outstanding partnership

The NSCP aims to be a mature, high trust partnership in which conflicts are resolved through conversation. To achieve our aim, we have developed standards for the NSCP providing an outstanding leadership. This means:

- A culture of early identification and referral to partners agencies
- Open and transparent dialogue between partner agencies
- Respect
- Handling disagreements through conversation which seek to arrive at a joint understanding
- No weak link in providing support to a child

5. Strategic Boards and Partnerships linked to the NSCP

Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB):

The **Newham Safeguarding Adults Board** is a statutory multi-agency partnership dedicated to ensuring that adults in Newham can live free from abuse and neglect. It holds overall responsibility for coordinating safeguarding adult matters and ensuring that partner agencies fulfill their duties in protecting vulnerable adults.

Newham Families, Babies & Children Board

The **Newham Families, Babies & Children Board** in Newham is responsible for leading partnership decision-making related to babies, children, young people, and families. It sets the strategic direction through the Newham Children and Young People's Plan, advocates for the voices and needs of local children, young people, and families in decision-making, and develops key policies that impact services across the borough.

Health and Wellbeing Board:

The **Newham Health and Wellbeing Board** is a statutory body that brings together the NHS, local authority, and Healthwatch to collaborate on improving local health and care services. The board aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of Newham's residents, reduce health inequalities, and plan the commissioning of services based on local needs.

Community Safety Partnership Board:

The **Community Safety Partnership Board** in Newham is tasked with conducting an annual assessment of crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, and re-offending within the borough. These findings inform the creation of the **Community Safety Plan**, ensuring a coordinated and strategic approach to improving community safety across Newham.

6. Membership of the NSCP

“Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider are required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. A list of organisations that meet the criteria to be included as a relevant agency is set out in regulations. Strong, effective multiagency safeguarding arrangements should be responsive to local circumstances and engage the right people in a collaborative way. This approach requires flexibility from all relevant agencies, to enable joint identification and response to existing and emerging needs, and to agree priorities to improve outcomes for children.” – Working Together 2023.

Strengthening the Partnership

This year, the partnership has been significantly strengthened by key agencies taking the lead in shaping and driving work in our priority areas. Their leadership has been crucial in enhancing the effectiveness and impact of our safeguarding initiatives.

Snapshot of Membership

The NSCP's membership comprises over 60 professionals from various agencies and teams across Newham, representing a broad spectrum of expertise and perspectives. While the partnership includes almost every organisation that works with children and young people in Newham, here are a few key partners:

- **Newham Council**
- **Integrated Care Board (ICB)**
- **Metropolitan Police**

- **Children's Social Care and Early Help**
- **Education Sector (Primary and Secondary Schools)**
- **Health Services**
- **Voluntary and Community Sector**

These diverse members collaborate closely to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people in Newham, contributing to a robust and cohesive safeguarding system.

7. Partner Contributions

The LSP should agree on the level of funding needed to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This includes consideration of business and analytical support, independent scrutiny, infrastructure, and core functions including local children safeguarding practice reviews, multi-agency training and learning events. It is the responsibility of the LSP to ensure that adequate funding is allocated and spent in line with agreed priorities. Funding contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable and agreed by the LSP. Funding for the arrangements should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they can meet the financial needs of the arrangements.” – Working Together 2023

At the start of each year, the funding for the NSCP is agreed upon by all partners. This funding is essential for fulfilling the partnership's functions and ensuring that the safeguarding arrangements are effectively implemented. However, it is recognised that many organisations face financial challenges annually, which can impact their ability to contribute monetarily.

To address these challenges and maintain the partnership's operations, partners frequently offer their time and resources in kind. This in-kind support is crucial and includes a variety of contributions such as:

- Chairing and participating in sub-groups or task and finish groups: Partners take on leadership roles within these groups to guide specific initiatives or areas of focus.
- Conducting reviews and audits: Partners carry out critical assessments to ensure that safeguarding practices are up to standard and identify areas for improvement.
- Leading and attending workshops: Partners actively engage in professional development and knowledge-sharing activities, contributing to the partnership's continuous learning and improvement.
- Analysing and submitting data: Partners provide valuable data insights and analyses that inform the partnership's strategic decisions and help monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding measures
- These contributions, while not monetary, are vital to the ongoing success and sustainability of the NSCP, allowing the partnership to function effectively despite financial constraints

Budget and spend 2023/24:

Income

Income source	Amount
Barts Health	£5,000
ELFT	£10,000
CCG	£50,000
Police	£5,000
LBN - CSC	£107,000 (not including overheads)
LBN - Education	£10,000 (new contribution)

Housing	£5,500
Probation	£2,100
Total	£194,600

Expenditure

Expenditure Type	Full Year Budget	Year End Spend
Salaries	£145,000	£153,000
Training/ events	£30,000	£27,000
LCSPRs	£13,000	£12,000
ICT/ Printing/ Miscellaneous	£6,600	£4,000
Total	£194,600	£196,000

In the current financial year, the Department for Education provided all local safeguarding partnerships with a one-off grant of £47,300 to support the implementation of the latest iterations of the *Working Together to Safeguard Children* guidelines. This grant was earmarked for use within the 2023-2024 financial year. However, due to delays, the funds only reached the partnerships in the last quarter of the year.

The Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) allocated this grant towards essential areas, including:

- **Training:** Ensuring that all members and relevant stakeholders are fully equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to implement the new safeguarding requirements.
- **Salaries for independent scrutineer:** These roles are critical for the partnership's ongoing operations, with the scrutineer providing independent oversight and the apprentice supporting various administrative and operational functions.
- **Data:** To maintain a fully functional safeguarding system, it is essential to establish and sustain a comprehensive multi-agency data set. This data set will support effective analysis and decision-making across the partnership. By ensuring accurate and timely data collection from all relevant agencies, the NSCP can:
 - **Monitor trends:** Identify patterns and trends in safeguarding issues, enabling proactive interventions.
 - **Assess performance:** Evaluate the effectiveness of current safeguarding practices and initiatives, highlighting areas for improvement.
 - **Inform strategy:** Provide data-driven insights that guide strategic planning and resource allocation.
 - **Enhance collaboration:** Facilitate better communication and coordination between agencies, ensuring a unified approach to safeguarding.

A robust multi-agency data set is critical for the ongoing success and responsiveness of the NSCP, allowing it to address the complex needs of children and families in Newham effectively.

8. Working Together 2023

Working Together to Safeguard Children is statutory guidance produced by the government that outlines how practitioners working with children, young people and families should work together to ensure that children and young people remain safe from harm. Working Together 2023 underpins all of the activity of the Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Joint functions of lead safeguarding partners

1. Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.
2. Lead their organisation's individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.
3. Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.
4. Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).
5. Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.
6. Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements."

Overview of key changes in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

2023 saw significant changes in the Working Together Guidance, the NSCP is currently reviewing how the partnership can be strengthened through further compliance with the guidance.

The headline areas for change and improvement are:

- Changes to NSCP's strategic leadership
- Multi-agency expectations for all partners
- Ensuring interdependencies with other boards
- Role of education and childcare providers
- Further inclusion of the voluntary sector
- Working more closely with parents/guardians and families
- Strengthening accountability, data and reporting
- Tackling harm outside the home
- Support for children with disabilities

- Strengthening scrutiny functions

Independent Scrutiny

“Independent scrutiny should drive continuous improvement and provide assurance that arrangements are working effectively for children, families, and practitioners. It should also consider learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews, national reviews and thematic reports. The independent scrutineer or scrutiny group should be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and expertise in the area being scrutinised and consequently add value to the work of local agencies.” – Working Together 2023

Newham has had an Independent Chair in post for four years. In light of the new regulations, the NSCP will be employing an Independent Scrutineer in late 2024.

9. Overview of our priority focus areas

We are committed to ensuring that vulnerable children and families in Newham are provided with high quality support and protection and achieve the best possible outcomes. The business plan for 2023/26 reflects the priorities established at the priority setting event in January 2023 and the work with the partnership that has been undertaken six months prior in preparation. It is informed by data, Rapid Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and their associated learning, the knowledge and expertise of professionals and the views of children and young people. The Business Plan is reviewed annually and actions are monitored regularly by the NSCP Executive.

Priorities

Golden threads:

A golden thread running through the priorities is the consideration of the impact of poverty and the cost of living. For all priorities a special focus will be given to children with SEND, care leavers, unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees. We will begin to focus on the impact of racism, inequality, disproportionality and disparity in 2024/25.

NSCP and SAB joint priorities

1. All age exploitation - with an emphasis on 16-25 age group with a focus on exploitation and youth violence
2. Modern Day Slavery
3. Cuckooing
4. Domestic Abuse; *To seek assurance that the domestic abuse strategy and accompanying action plans are reviewed annually and assurance is sought that safeguarding is at the forefront of the activity.*

NSCP Children's Partnership priorities

1. Child sexual abuse including sibling sexual abuse.
2. Child Mental Health.

NSCP Executive Priority Setting Process

The **NSCP Executive** set the priorities for a three-year period through a comprehensive and inclusive decision-making process. The following activities were undertaken to guide and influence these decisions.

11. Key achievements and impact – snapshot

Publication of new arrangements

The NSCP has updated its safeguarding arrangements to align with current practices, marking significant development since the last update in 2019. These updated arrangements ensure transparency and are accessible to all partners and the public, reflecting the partnership's growth and adaptability.

Delivery of Safeguarding Friday Forum

The Children Safeguarding Partnership Friday Forum is a key platform for sharing and disseminating critical learning and information across the partnership. This forum serves as a regular meeting space where members from various agencies come together to engage in collaborative discussions, ensuring that the latest insights and developments in safeguarding are shared widely and acted upon effectively. The Friday Forum fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement, encouraging open dialogue among professionals. By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, the forum strengthens the collective capacity of the partnership to safeguard children and young people effectively. It is an essential tool for ensuring that safeguarding practices remain dynamic, responsive, and informed by the latest evidence and experience. Approximately 60 practitioners regularly attend the Friday Forum, and over the course of the year, 350 individuals have participated, taking the knowledge and insights gained back to their respective agencies.

Reflecting on our priorities

Every year, the NSCP take time to reflect on priority areas for multi-agency improvement projects. These priorities were carefully reviewed through a comprehensive process that included:

- Audits: Evaluating current practices to uncover gaps and areas for enhancement.
- Feedback from children and young people: Incorporating the voices and experiences of those directly impacted by safeguarding measures.
- Learning from CSPRs and Rapid Reviews: Applying insights from recent Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Rapid Reviews to inform future strategies.
- Partner and survey input: Gathering perspectives from across the partnership to ensure a well-rounded approach following NSCP conferences.

This agile methodology ensures that the NSCP's efforts are focused on the most critical areas for improvement, allowing for a more responsive and targeted approach to safeguarding children and young people in Newham

Implementation of 7 minute briefings for Rapid Reviews

To prioritise learning from reviews, the NSCP introduced 7-Minute Briefings following each Rapid Review. These briefings are designed to succinctly share key learning points and themes from the reviews. Key features of these briefings include:

- High anonymity: The briefings are highly anonymized to ensure the protection of identities involved in the cases reviewed.
- Effective delivery: Each session is concise, lasting only 7 minutes, allowing for quick dissemination of critical information.
- Strong participation: The briefings have been well-received, with attendance typically ranging from 40 to 60 participants at any one session.

These briefings are instrumental in raising awareness of critical concerns and emerging themes among a broad range of professionals. By providing focused, actionable insights, they help enhance safeguarding practices and promote continuous learning within the NSCP network.

Improvements to meetings

Improving governance arrangements has been a continuous focus for the NSCP over the past four years. This year, a shared risk register was introduced to highlight strategic safeguarding concerns across the borough and assign Executive Members for risk mitigation. This improvement enhances the partnership's ability to address and manage risks more effectively.

These initiatives and updates demonstrate the NSCP's commitment to continuous improvement in safeguarding practices, ensuring that the partnership remains responsive to the evolving needs of children and families in Newham.

12. Key challenges and impact – snapshot

Workforce – NSCP business unit

The NSCP Business Unit consists of one full time manager, an Independent Chair and 0.25 member of staff tasked with commissioning and arranging all the NSCP training. An additional member of staff has been working two days a week to manage the Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Admin support is provided by the local authority. This shortage has affected the delivery of several activities within the NSCP such as updating the website, as the Business Unit plays a vital role in supporting all NSCP operations. There is a significant commitment from partners through in-kind contributions which includes senior colleagues co-chairing and attending subgroups including rapid review and CSPR meetings; the coordination of multi-agency audits; delivering training and participating in the rollout of key learning messages.

Budget

The NSCP budget primarily covers staffing, independent scrutiny, statutory reviews, and training opportunities. The Local Authority provides the largest portion of funding, followed by the Integrated Care Board (ICB). However, safeguarding partnerships across London receive only £5,000 from the Metropolitan Police, which is centrally allocated by MOPAC. There are ongoing discussions with MOPAC that are taking place across London which hopefully will increase the contribution from the police

Leadership changes

The NSCP Executive Group is led by key directors from the three statutory partners. Recently, there have been changes in personnel within the Local Authority and at various levels in the Metropolitan Police. The Local Authority operated with interim Director of Children's Services (DCS) measures for approximately four months. Despite these transitions, the Executive Group continues to successfully lead and guide the partnership's safeguarding efforts. A new partnership agreement is being developed which will be in place by December 2024. The role of the Independent Chair will end and will be replaced by a partnership chair from one of the Designated Safeguarding Partners which will be rotated on an annual basis.

Partnership capacity

The NSCP has faced challenges due to capacity issues reported by partner agencies, which have affected their ability to fully contribute to the partnership's activities. These capacity constraints are largely driven by an increase in service demand alongside savings and budget cuts across agencies. As a result, the ability of some partners to engage consistently in NSCP initiatives has been impacted. It is anticipated that the impact on partnership agencies will continue to be a challenge however the partnership is trying to streamline processes and review activity wherever possible to increase efficiency and focus on a smaller number of key deliverables.

13. Safeguarding snapshot

During 2023/24 we have developed our Early Help response incorporating **universal, targeted and intensive services and interventions** that span across CYPS, Public Health, Schools, and local community and voluntary providers. There is a well-established helping early governance structure and improved involvement from wider partners across the NHS, East London Foundation Trust, Public Health and the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Children and families in need of help receive timely and appropriate support. Findings from the Ofsted ILACS in July 2022 showed that threshold is well understood, and children and families received a prompt and proportionate response to initial contact in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The co-location of early help coordinators and professionals from partner agencies supports the undertaking of robust checks and making of swift proportionate threshold decisions. We have continued to strengthen our arrangements via the well-established **MASH Strategic and Operational Board and monthly DSL meeting with school safeguarding leads** to improve the timeliness and quality of decision-making and practice.

Activity has been steady compared to the previous year. On average 40% of contacts were received from the police and 29% of total contacts proceed to referrals. During the same period, we have seen more children identified as at risk of significant harm or likely to have suffered harm compared to the same period last year and domestic abuse remains the top presenting issue in contacts. Specific tools embedded in the contact form are used to help workers identify risks and their impact, e.g. domestic abuse and children at risk of exploitation, alongside having embedded early help workers to support families in accessing food and support from the community and voluntary sector to reduce the impact of the rising cost of living.

Partners have a strong understanding of thresholds. We have updated our partnership thresholds document to bring it in line with the Pan London Procedures. We continue to monitor the understanding and application of the new thresholds document, 'Pathways to Help and Support', through the NSCP Performance and Quality Assurance (PQA) group.

Our data in the MASH for 2023/24 shows that 71% of contacts were progressed for either early help (42%) or statutory intervention (29%).

Newham MASH team has an **active consultation line** to offer advice to professionals as required.

Strategy meetings are timely and well attended by relevant professionals. During 2023/24 work has been undertaken to ensure missing strategy meetings are timely with improved police attendance.

Other highlights in 2023/24 include:

- There were 18584 contacts into the MASH (slight reduction on 2022/23) and 5249 referrals (slight increase on 2022/23)
- At the end of March 2024, in Newham there were 3447 children in need of protection open to children's social care:
 - **426 Children were subject to a Child Protection Plan.** This continues the trend of a lower rate than our London Average
 - **There were 426 Children in Care.** This also continues the trend of a lower rate than our London Average.

14. Our priority focus areas

Priority 1 - NSCP and SAB joint priorities

1. All age exploitation - with an emphasis on 16-25 age group with a focus on exploitation and youth violence
2. Modern Day Slavery
3. Cuckooing

Rationale: Extra familial harm has been an ongoing focus of NSCP Rapid Reviews and Safeguarding Child Practice Reviews.

Planned Impact: 16-25 year olds in Newham are safe from exploitation and youth violence; increased awareness and improved response to modern day slavery across Newham; increased awareness and improved response to and cuckooing across Newham

Summary of progress in 2023/24

The most recent Audits and Rapid Reviews following incidents of extra-familial harm show increased professional recognition of child exploitation and the use of screening tools. The single integrated exploitation pathway is being used and is well embedded.

A borough-based Intelligence and Information Sharing Partnership forum meets three times a week to screen and research individual referrals and determine the most appropriate pathway for the child or young adult, and /or place /space location of concern. The forum has contributed to improved cross borough information sharing, and timely response to emerging themes and trends and up to date knowledge over time to reduce harm.

Those working in Newham have access to a comprehensive child exploitation training programme via the NSCP to support:

1. Increased Awareness and Early Detection

Impact: With training, professionals become more aware of the signs of child exploitation (such as trafficking, grooming, or forced labor), enabling them to identify vulnerable children sooner. This is expected to lead to earlier interventions, reducing the chances of long-term harm.

2. Enhanced Skill Development for Professionals

Impact: Comprehensive training equips professionals with specific skills, such as how to handle sensitive disclosures, manage child exploitation cases, and work effectively with law enforcement. This improves the quality of responses and the overall safety of at-risk children.

3. Improved Multi-Agency Collaboration

Impact: Better communication and collaboration between agencies like schools, police, Children's Services, and health organisations have been evidenced in recent reviews. This coordinated approach has created a robust support network for vulnerable children.

6. Increased Public Trust in Authorities

Impact: The MPS is engaged in a robust program to build public confidence in the diverse communities that it serves. This includes a significant increase in resources for the "Safer Neighbourhood" and "Safer Schools" teams.

Officers embedded within communities and establishments can establish personal relationships with the public and present a familiar and trusted presence. Parents, children and concerned citizens alike are more likely to disclose suspicions and concerns when they have a connection to a trusted local officer.

In summary, the access to comprehensive child exploitation training in Newham is aimed to have a substantial positive impact on the prevention, identification, and handling of child exploitation cases, ultimately leading to a safer environment for children and more effective services being provided at the earliest point.

The Modern Day Slavery working group is hosted by the Community Safety Team. The group has been working towards completing the action plan and publishing an annual statement. The group is a sub group of the All Age Exploitation Group. Training sessions have been provided for staff across the partnership to improve knowledge and understanding.

Focus for 2024/25

- The focus for 24/25 will be to address the issue of cuckooing, this will be led by the Adults Safeguarding Board.
- Concentrating efforts on identifying perpetrators and securing convictions. A practitioners learning event is planned for 24/25.
- Ensuring the Newham community is equipped with the knowledge and tools to recognise and address all forms of exploitation
- Modern Day Slavery Group will undertake a rapid needs assessment to help focus on short and long term priorities for the group.

Priority 2

Child sexual abuse including intra familial sexual abuse, sibling sexual abuse and child on child sexual abuse

Rationale: NSCP has undertaken reviews that identify concerns of child sexual abuse, the partnership will need to respond to recommendations arising from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

Planned Impact: The partnership will have improved multi agency working so that practitioners are able to identify and intervene effectively with children who have suffered sexual abuse.

Summary of progress in 2023/24:

1. Improved Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

Impact: As the NSCP has undertaken reviews of cases of child sexual abuse, this has led to

the development of stronger safeguarding policies and procedures. The NSCP has also responded to recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). New protocols for responding to sexual abuse are being discussed to support the way agencies respond and offer support to victims. As part of our CSA pathway, The Sunrise hub and the specialist social worker are able to attend strategy discussions where there are concerns of CSA ensuring that the appropriate support is offered to the child(ren).

2. Enhanced Accountability and Oversight

Impact: The requirement to act on IICSA recommendations increases accountability within the partnership. Regular reviews of how these recommendations are implemented will ensure that all agencies involved are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. The NSCP plans to undertake an audit to ensure that the recommended changes are effectively integrated into everyday practice.

3. More Focused Interventions and Support for Victims

Impact: The Sunrise Hub which incorporates TIGER services is focused on interventions, ensuring victims receive timely and appropriate support. Social workers working with children where there are concerns about child sexual abuse are invited to a CSA Think Space with the social care liaison officer from the NHS and a Newham PDSW. These are centred around the experiences of the child(ren) and provide an opportunity for social workers to explore any aspect of their work with the family. These are a reflective and holistic space, which might offer ideas for assessing risk and/or offer direct work tools for practitioners to support their relationship building with children, where there are concerns about CSA. They can support a referral to the Sunrise hub for a holistic health assessment and/or a referral to TIGER services, alongside facilitating referrals to other services such as NIA or parenting groups for the non-abusive parent/carer. In addition, the lead social worker is able to carry out joint interventions with social workers, particularly around supporting practitioners in their work with the non-abusing parent/carer.

4. Increased Awareness and Training for Professionals

Impact: Acting on the recommendations from the IICSA and learning from local reviews has ensured training for practitioners working with children has been provided to support their ability to recognise and respond to signs and indicators of child sexual abuse. Any practitioner working with children and families in Newham has access to the NSCP training facilitated by the Centre of Expertise for Child Sexual Abuse, alongside in-house training focusing on 'Difficult Conversations' in the context of CSA. This focuses on supporting multi-agency professionals' relational skills, explores the barriers to disclosure, and explores how to support better communication in a family context to create greater safety. This training both incorporates and signposts practitioners to the resources offered by the Centre of Expertise for CSA.

In summary, the NSCP's response to concerns of child sexual abuse and recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has resulted in strengthened safeguarding policies, better multi-agency collaboration, improved support for victims, and greater public trust in child protection systems.

Focus for 2024/25:

- Undertake a multi-agency audit on practice to test impact of improvements made and identify areas for improvement

Priority 3

Child Mental Health

Rationale: Learning identified from Newham CSPRs. The ongoing impact of the pandemic on children and young people compounded by access to mental health services and resources available.

Planned Impact: The workforce will be able to support children, young people and families in relation to child mental health, ensuring services are received at the earliest point.

Summary of progress in 2023/24:

1. Improved Workforce Awareness and Competency

Impact: The learning from child practice reviews combined with The Newham Suicide Prevention and Action Strategy launched in 2023 has supported and enhanced understanding of how the pandemic has affected children's mental health. This increased awareness allows professionals to better identify early signs of distress or mental health challenges in children and young people.

The Newham Suicide Prevention and Action Strategy was developed in partnership with multiple teams across the Council and external partners including the NHS and voluntary and community organisations, as well as being informed by data and evidence, for example a three-year audit of suicides in the borough.

The purpose of the Newham Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-26 is to reduce the local suicide rate and support those affected or bereaved by suicide using the best evidence we can. The strategy aims to achieve this through taking action across seven priority areas in partnership with residents, the NHS, community and voluntary organisations and other partners.

Four goals for this strategy informed by its consultation include:

1. Improve awareness of Newham's suicide prevention strategy and local support services to create greater understanding of available help.
2. Make best use of community assets together with closely aligned borough strategies and programmes of work to help reduce risk. This includes working with communities and residents to help inform and co design how support can be Accessible, Relevant and Trusted (ART) by higher risk population groups.
3. Improve data collection and intelligence through working with health partners, the Coroner's office and London's Real Time Surveillance System (RTSS) to gain better understanding of population risks for Newham.
4. Continue to strengthen mental health support for children and young people in Newham to build resilience before adulthood, with the most recent audit data showing highest numbers of suicide in Newham between 20 to 40 years of age.

The priority areas are:

- **Priority Area 1:** Reduce risk of suicide in high-risk groups
- **Priority Area 2:** Reduce rates of self-harm
- **Priority Area 3:** Strengthen mental health and early intervention support

- **Priority Area 4:** Support for those bereaved or affected by suicide
- **Priority Area 5:** Reducing access to the means of suicide
- **Priority Area 6:** Support the media to reduce suicide risk
- **Priority Area 7:** Leadership, research, data collection and monitoring

Single Point of Access

The single point of access/integrated front door in East Ham has now rolled out to all stakeholders including schools. Newham's integrated front door pilot programme is a joint initiative between London Borough of Newham (LBN) and Newham CAMHS. It is being delivered in East Ham. The pilot was developed to test out a new approach to carrying out initial multi-agency understanding and review of children and family's needs who have an emerging emotional well-being or mental health need and would benefit from early help support. The main focus of the Integrated Front Door is for those children, young people aged 5-18 where agencies are concerned about the child or young person's emotional well-being or mental health. The team meets twice a week to carry out a multi-agency triage of children, young people and families referred into the team. The senior social worker is based full time in the team, to screen all children/families referred – to ensure that where there are safeguarding concerns or child has a mental health crisis, these are referred into MASH/ CAMHS Crisis Team.

In summary, the learning from safeguarding child practice reviews in Newham has led to a workforce better equipped to support children's mental health needs. By addressing the ongoing effects of the pandemic and improving access to services, this approach aims to ensure earlier interventions, better support for families, and a reduction in long-term mental health issues for children and young people. However, successful implementation will depend on the availability of resources and services.

Focus for 2024/25:

- To review the impact of the development of the Single Point of Access and the delivery and expansion of mental health in school's work.
- To review the embedding of the Newham Suicide Prevention Strategy and receive updates on progress against the action plan.

15. Progress on other safeguarding priorities

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a significant factor in the experience of many children and families who are referred to CSC. Through our children's partnership group, chaired by the Director of Early Help and Safeguarding we have been successful in supporting the development and implementation of a borough wide strategy to help to address this issue in Newham

We have implemented the Safe and Together programme and as a result our work with family members who are affected by issues of domestic abuse is showing clear signs of improvement and increasing impact. Direct work with survivors and those who harm is more firmly embedded.

The Safe and Together programme is training our social workers and partners to work more effectively with victims, survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse, partnering effectively with survivors and their children and holding perpetrators to account, helping to increase

social workers' knowledge and awareness to deliver interventions themselves to families rather than being dependent on referral to outside agencies. Training is provided on a rolling programme to maximise reach and cover staff changes. Support is provided to practitioners to embed this approach by a part time dedicated Implementation Lead worker and the team of Practice Development Social Workers. Representation at the MARAC panel is strong and impactful. A joint domestic abuse pathway has been established with r colleagues from Housing and Hestia.

Following a bid to MOPAC, Newham was successful along with 10 other Boroughs to start a perpetrator intervention programme in the borough Culturally Informed Family Approach (CIFA). Coupled with the roll out of Drive across London, Newham's ability to work with medium to high risk domestic abuse has increased. In July a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Panel was implemented with the purpose of accommodating a pathway for each programme and providing an informed and appropriate response to each family's circumstance.

There is CSC representation at all Domestic Homicide Review panels to maximise and disseminate cross service learning and improvement.

Safe Lives has been commissioned to conduct a full, whole system review of the local domestic abuse response. The review has started and CSC is playing an active part. This work is designed to support the area to identify and understand which aspects of the local response are working well, and could provide models of best practice, and which aspects are presenting challenges or barriers to survivors which may need to be addressed. The ultimate aim of the project is to ensure that victims are provided with the best quality of support, delivered in an accessible and timely manner, and that services are working together effectively

SEND

Over the last year (2022/23) the Newham Local Area Partnership has been making steady progress against the Written Statement of Action commitments.

Partners have focused on strengthening the system infrastructure needed to deliver positive and sustained outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Following the significant investment in SEND services agreed by the Council and NHS NEL in the Summer 2022, the local area has prioritised the redesign of the SEND service, completing historic overdue assessments and recruitment to therapy services in order to be able to start 23/24 with the workforce and resources necessary to deliver consistently timely and high quality support.

The most significant areas of development since the last inspection has been the positive Children's Services ILACS inspection which rated Newham 'Good' with 'Outstanding Leadership', the redesign of the EHC assessment process which has led to significant improvements in Newham's timeliness performance and helped to build stakeholder's confidence in the partnership to deliver the improvements set out in the WSoA.

The council has also completed the redesign of the SEND 0-25 Service to be able to meet growing demand for statutory support and to strengthen our early intervention offer to children and settings. This has led to the creation of 32 additional roles within the service and dedicated functions within the service to lead on placements, quality assurance and advisory support.

As a partnership we have been strident in our efforts to improve educational outcomes and attainment for children and young people with SEND. This has been driven through

strengthened collaborations between school improvement, SEND advisory teachers, revised service level agreements with Resource Provisions and more holistic performance review panels. This work has resulted in better outcomes for children with an EHCP. This saw the percentage of young people with an EHCP attaining 9-4 including English and Maths increase from 10% in 2019 to 16% in 2022 (above the national average of 13%) and attainment 8 from 8.7% in 2019 to 13.8% in 2022. The impact of the additional NHS funding for therapy provision is now being evidenced through reduced waiting times for ASD diagnosis, SLT and OT services, despite the national recruitment challenges in this area. For example, Autism diagnostic waiting times have reduced from 84 weeks in Q1 22/23 to 62 weeks in Q3. The political leadership in Newham is deeply committed to improving the local SEND system. The Mayor's Manifesto details the investment, scrutiny and support that will be provided by politicians including the ambitions to create a Centre of Excellence for SEND and Inclusion by the end of this political term.

Through the SEND services regular monitoring meetings with the DfE and NHS England we have been able to maintain a focused approach to our improvement journey. The service has benefited greatly from our DfE SEND advisor's expertise, with dedicated training session for multi-agency partners on quality assurance. As a partnership we have committed to undergoing a SEND peer review with the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) in the Autumn 2023. The Newham Parent Carer Forum have been supported to commission a host organisation to strengthen co-production across the borough, with Healthwatch successfully bidding for this work. The SEND surgeries, that now include evening sessions, and newsletters have continued to be a valuable source of information and support for families, alongside our redesigned Local Offer.

Learning has been taken from the social care improvement journey which includes the importance of changing the culture within the system and strengthening relationships across the partnership. This work is being supported by the Director of Clinical Practice and, as such, our parent carers forum chairs, and statutory service team managers, now receive monthly supervision sessions from the service recognising the emotional impact of the support they provide to families. This illustrates our efforts to promote a SEND culture that motivates staff to ensure that families are supported, celebrated and integrated into systems that many take for granted.

Focus for 2024/25

- Early Identification and Intervention
- Inclusive practice
- Preparation for adulthood
- Co-production with children, families & settings
- Developing our data and Joint Commissioning to meet need

Care Leavers

Newham has transformed the services to care leavers. Over the last 12 months the team has strengthened the offer even further. Terry Waite House has opened, providing 30 furnished independent accommodation for young people and 'The Cove', a dedicated space for Care Leavers. The purposely renovated space in the heart of East Ham acts as a hub for Care Leavers to come and speak with the Personal Advisors (PA), learn new skills or just hang out with fellow Care Leavers. The Cove provides access to work spaces, a fully working kitchen, showers and chill out space with games. Drop ins sessions and training is provided here on a range of subjects including sexual health, cooking, CV writing and interview skills. The Cove also acts as the central meeting point for our Care Leavers Forum

(CLF). This young person led meeting provides a place for them to discuss what is important to them, receive updates about their entitlements and consult around key initiatives with officers

The Local Offer for Care Leavers provides clear information around the entitlements for young people and is currently undergoing a refresh to ensure recent changes and improvements are highlighted. The updated Local Offer document was published at the beginning of 2024 and will be enhanced by easy online access.

Focus for 2024/25

- Ensuring access to safe, stable, and appropriate accommodation for care leavers, supporting their transition to independent living and promoting long-term wellbeing.

Children Missing Education

In March 2023 a transformation programme relating to children missing education and children missing out on education commenced, following a restructure within the Education Service.

A deep dive identified significant areas of non-compliance and urgent training needs for education providers, it was agreed by senior leaders in both the local authority and education providers that the existing processes could be replaced in full with new ways of working which would also support attendance levels in schools.

The transformation commenced with the agreement that the team would now be delivering a service relating to children missing out on a full time suitable education in addition to the usual children missing education which was primarily a service that tracked and located school leavers where their destination was not initially known. Within the first year of change the following had been delivered:

- Development and launch of a new suite of online referral smart forms for:
 - Verified leaver – statutory notification to local authority of new home destination and education
 - Unverified leavers - referral to local authority where education providers know the likely destination but this cannot be confirmed.
 - Children Missing Education – referral to local authority of leavers where their destination is unknown
 - School Attendance Order – referral where a family refuse to agree a start date with their named school or provide details of the education their child will be receiving instead
 - Children Missing Education – internal referral for officers who locate a child out of education
 - Children Missing Education – other local authority notification of children who have moved from their LA to Newham but new education placement if not known

The smart element of these forms ensure education providers supply all statutory requirements.

- Introduction of a new Children Missing Education Strategic Board, chaired by the Director of Education with internal stakeholders from across education and social care.
- Development and go live of a new data dashboard
- Full day training offer for all education providers in Newham with a new suite of process flow diagrams (hosted on Newham Connect)

- Development and go live of a new [Newham Connect Children Missing Education](#) information service – everything hosted in one place.
- Introduction of termly school support staff forums
- New ways of international tracking and communicating with families have moved out of England and not informed their education provider.
- Created a new set of ‘dummy education bases’ held on our education management information system, to ensure all users could see at the glance any child’s education placement of CME status.

As expected with a new and simplified process referrals have significantly increased caseloads and has improved safeguarding information and the new ways of working has improved attendance levels in schools and entrenched cases can be removed from their registers and then directly managed by the local authority.

The Department for Education commended the transformation work on two visits to Newham and as a local authority we are now confident of our position in safeguarding children and ensuring they receive a suitable education.

Focus for 2024/25

- Next steps are to provide training to internal stakeholders and start more data analysis to understand why and how children are missing education and how this linked to other directorates within the council such as housing.

Youth Justice

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) for Newham is now integrated alongside Children’s Social Care. The newly created Adolescent Safeguarding service (Reset) is working to ensure that children who receive both youth justice and statutory social work support have aligned plans in place, that take a holistic view of need. The service has undertaken a piece of joint work to support preventing the criminalisation of children who are in our care and in addressing issues of disproportionality. The Youth Justice Management Board (YJB) adopted a Child First approach as a strategic priority (as detailed in its Strategic Plan 2021-2024). The Child First approach recognises that children who are in contact with Youth Justice Services are ‘Children first, offender second’. This focuses on holding a child-focused lens to address the underlying causes of offending by children and has been adopted to build on the current child-friendly reception space and ensure that it is accessible for all children. The team have created a platform to engage children and young people in dialogue on shaping services and important issues such as youth safety. A direct outcome of this work is the development of the launch of ‘The Break’ a creative educational space for children at YJS. The quality of assessments continues to improve. There are clear references to assessments within reports and integrated plans particularly for statutory assessments, further improvement work needs to take place in relation to timeliness of assessment completion.

Private Fostering

Newham’s private fostering statistics, is comparable with other London boroughs. To implement best practice and quality assurance, all new private fostering cases transferred to the service are reviewed and ratified at the Private Fostering review panel. In the first year of the Private Fostering arrangement, 6-weekly regulation 8 monitoring visits are maintained. Targeted awareness raising has continued with internal stakeholders and external partners.

A Private Fostering Awareness campaign is being delivered to all internal and external partner agencies focussed on increasing PF Notification levels. Coram Baaf delivered a national awareness day in November 2023, and further session is planned for November 2024.

Private Fostering Joint assessments are working well. However, there is a need for more focus on safeguarding when assessing 'suitability' of care arrangements; particularly where there is lack of PR and parental consent to the care arrangements, absent parenting with an international context to the case. There is a need for the Local Authority to routinely seek legal advice on such cases to determine pathways i.e. CIN Plan, LPM; whilst further assessments are undertaken to ensure Privately Fostered Children who are known to our Local Authority are being safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.

Focus for 2024/25

- Provide further training and promotion across the safeguarding workforce.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Newham developed a co-ordinated and multi-agency response in relation to addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers through our Migrant Health Operational Group. Responding swiftly to the need to respond to the needs of Ukrainian refugees, our social work teams have been at the heart of driving forward our local response, alongside our Public Health Team. We have developed a working group which, involves colleagues from Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Health and Public Health that meets on a monthly basis with the Home Office and their local accommodation provider to ensure we have clear safeguarding processes in place as well as to learn from any case studies.

Newham has currently has four contingency hotels. All hotels in Newham are mixed sex. Previous requests had been made by LBN to move these to single gender hotels but to no avail. Hotel managers have assured LBN that women and children are placed on separate floors to men as it is recognised that from some cultural and religious perspectives, some women cannot share space with other men so this can bring up experiences of both fear and shame for women and girls

Previous safeguarding visits by LBN and NEL DSLs have exposed concerns around barriers to healthcare as well as privacy and dignity to guests. Work to improve safeguarding skill and knowledge has been undertaken with positive results.

While some improvements have been made through safeguarding training, the mixed-gender accommodation in Newham's contingency hotels continues to present significant challenges, particularly around cultural sensitivity, privacy, healthcare access, and safeguarding risks. Ongoing efforts are needed to address these concerns, particularly regarding the request for single-gender accommodations and enhanced support for vulnerable populations.

Focus for 2024/25

- To maintain the relationships built with contracted hotels and offer further safeguarding training.

Safer Workforce

The role of the LADO is to coordinate information sharing with the right people and monitor and track investigations with the aim of resolving them as quickly as possible in an independent, fair, proportionate and reasonable manner for all parties with a focus on ensuring the ongoing protection of children.

The Newham LADO is represented at regional and national level via the National LADO Network. The network has been working to develop a LADO Handbook, which aims at

ensuring consistency in managing allegations against adults working with children across the board. It is envisioned that the Handbook will be finalised in the second half of 2024. Ongoing engagement with the National LADO Network ensures that information is disseminated around resources available to LADOs and legislative updates, including regional updates which could resonate with locally identified needs or trends.

Open dialogue and consultation offers providers and whistle-blowers an opportunity to explore their concerns in an open and non-judgemental manner. This supports the identification of appropriate training for an organisation which can be easily signposted. It also promotes demonstrable organisational transparency and supports a culture of challenge and reflection.

From 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, the Newham LADO received 347 consultations on a range of issues including organisational safeguarding advice and threshold consultation. In terms of full referrals sent to the LADO, 117 referrals were received with 54 of these meeting the threshold for LADO Involvement after initial enquiries/evaluation ASV meetings being held. This number has been fairly constant the previous year; however, an ascending trend is noticed due to ongoing outreach.

The LADO has been working closely and openly with partners across the board: Education, Police, Health, Early Years, Adults Social Care, faith sector and the voluntary and community and social enterprises, undertaking outreach work which has led to an increase in awareness of the LADO role. In real life terms, this means that the LADO now receives more enquiries from sources which were not making any contact at all (for example members of the public).

Focus for 2024/25:

- Initiate, with the support of Education partners and NSCP, a mapping process for all educational settings and out of school settings in Newham;
- Continue to support the NSCP in delivering training sessions to professionals;
- Trial bespoke sessions to Mosques in the London Borough of Newham, with the support of the Newham Muslim Forum;
- As part of outreach, develop a leaflet with details of the LADO role, aimed at children and young people and parents.

16. Learning from the system

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Key Data and Incidents:

Notifiable Incidents: There were 7 notifiable incidents involving 9 children, compared to 3 incidents involving 5 children in the previous year.

Tragic Deaths: Three children died, including an 11-year-old with a chronic health condition, a 5-week-old infant from a non-suspicious cause, and a 16-year-old killed was murdered by another child from the same school.

Serious Injuries: A toddler survived a non-accidental injury.

Analysis and Themes:

Sudden and Unexpected Child Deaths:

- A multi-agency psycho-social meeting was established at the local hospital to discuss at-risk children.
- An annual psychological review was introduced for children under clinical care.

Sudden and Unexpected Death of Infants (SUDI):

- Learning from a national review was implemented through a multi-agency Task and Finish Group.
- Support was provided to the mother of a deceased infant who had no recourse to public funds.

Non-Accidental Injury:

- A rapid review revealed gaps in the communication of risks across police and local authority boundaries.

Extra-Familial Harm:

- Multiple adolescents involved in incidents of serious youth violence.
- A thematic review highlighted the discrimination faced by Black adolescent boys, resulting in a recommendation for a Newham Anti-Racism Strategy.

Learning Points:

- The importance of understanding children's lived experiences and why some support systems may fail.
- The need for better communication and continuity in services provided to families, particularly in preventing crises.
- The role of race and cultural competence in safeguarding practices, with a focus on addressing biases and improving engagement with Black children and their families.

The 7-minute video briefing continues to be the main vehicle to disseminate learning from reviews in a succinct and timely manner. The following briefings have been produced this year:

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Learning from the Sadie LSCPR
- Safeguarding Adolescents from Extra-Familial Harm Version 2 and 3
- SUDI and Safeguarding

The learning from our reviews has been shared at three partnership events this year:

- Extra-familial harm shared further review learning alongside key service developments for improving safety and outcomes for vulnerable children (Nov 2023)
- Safe Sleeping, SUDI and Safeguarding Conference (March 2023)
- Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence Partnership Conference (April 2024).
- The three practitioner events (for the two LSCPRs and the Thematic review) were well attended and generated a rich source of learning for those reviews.

In 2023/24 the NSCP developed **Standards for Rapid Reviews:**

Standard 1 Amplifying the voices of children and families in the rapid review process

- We reflect the voices of children and their families that are gathered by professionals for the rapid review in the rapid review report.
- What we know about the child's lived experience is summarised in the report.

- We will discuss how we could share the learning from the review with the child and their family and obtain their feedback about the help that has been offered to them

Standard 2 Practitioner Engagement in the rapid review process

- The agency information for the rapid review is completed by the designated reviewer alongside the lead practitioner / key worker for the child.
- Practitioners are not normally expected to attend the rapid review meeting. If it has been agreed with the review chair that they will attend, they will be supported at the meeting by the senior lead for their agency.
- The 7 minute briefing will be shared at a multi-agency network meeting (Child in Need, Child Protection, Children Looked After review, if there is one) as part of the wider cascade of learning and the feedback from this group collated.

Standard 3 Learning, Development and Improvement Plans

- The actions in these plans will address any systemic issues that are impacting on local child safeguarding practice.
- It is the responsibility of the senior leads to make arrangements for the completion of all agreed actions, in accordance with the stated timeframe and to provide progress updates to the NSCP, when requested.
- We will share and assess together the impact of rapid review learning on practice by bringing together senior leads 3-6 months after the rapid review.

Standard 4 Support for Staff who are Involved in Rapid Reviews and LSCPRs

- Staff members who are dealing with serious safeguarding incidents involving children will be offered a safe space by their agency to debrief, and to discuss what further support is available.

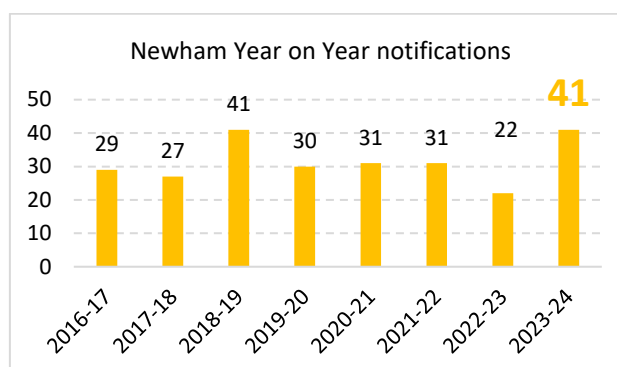
Standard 5 Meeting Timescales

- As safeguarding partners, we are committed to meeting the timeframe for submitting information for reviews and for signing off the final review report.

Our Focus for 2024/25:

- Develop and implement an Anti-Racism Strategy to address systemic biases.
- Enhance the support provided to children at risk of criminal exploitation through initiatives like the Risk Outside the Family Home Assessment and Plan and the Thriving Communities Hub.
- Implement robust learning development and improvement plans with clear actions, timelines, and accountability.
- Promote the voices of children and families in the review process to ensure their experiences inform future safeguarding practices.

Learning from Child Deaths (CDOP)



Newham had a higher number of child deaths in 2023-24 however this was following an unusually low number in the year 2022-23. The average number of child deaths in Newham per year based on 14 years of data is 32.3 deaths.

60% of child deaths occur in the neonatal age group (up to 28 days) with the next highest in the under 1 age group. This is consistent with the national picture of child deaths.

Newham the 5th highest rate infant deaths in London.

It was noted that there was a 6% increase in cases of neonatal deaths in Newham in the last year 2023/24. On further review of those cases most were babies born very early below 24 weeks' gestation or babies born with a life limiting condition.

Mode of death by age group of death notifications

2023/24 Newham	≤ 28 days	29 to 354 days	1-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-17 years
Palliative care	4	2	1	1		
Treatment withheld	7	2			1	
Brainstem death						
Failed cardio resus	11	3	3	1		2
Found dead/ collapsed					1	1
Not known						1
Total	22	7	4	2	2	4

The ethnicity of the children was in line with the demographics of the local population Asian is the highest ethnic group in Newham followed by Black/African/Caribbean.

40 child death cases were reviewed in 2023/24 in Newham and this is consistent with previous years and with new notifications per year and those carried over. The modifiable factors identified in the cases reviewed can be seen below:

Modifiable Factors	Number of cases
Unsafe sleeping practices including overcrowding, sleeping away from home	6
Poor interagency communication	6
Failure to recognise sepsis	5
Social issues including housing, overcrowding, smoking, drug use, alcohol use, domestic abuse not picked up or actioned. Including language as a barrier to understanding care processes. One of these cases was due to not being seen and assessed during lockdown.	9
Smoking	4
Maternity Issues: CTG interpretation, Maternal Obesity, maternal diabetes. Missed Group B streptococcus infection, low staffing.	8
Wider system issues / public health – youth exploitation/ e scooters	2

Our focus in 2024/25

- To continue raising awareness around safe sleep practice in babies in collection with NSCP across all agencies in Newham
- To host a learning event around recognising sepsis signs and symptoms for babies and children.
- To raise awareness for children with additional needs who are unable to communicate their needs, therefore are more vulnerable.

17. Ensuring effective multi-agency safeguarding practice

Performance Data

The PQA subgroup has reviewed performance data from CYPS, BARTS including maternity, ELFT, Police and 0-19 Health Service during 2023/24.

A Section 11 education audit was completed and the findings were reviewed. By understanding and being informed of this data, the group gained an indication of how well Newham schools are working to keep Newham children safe and identify potential areas of concern and collaborate with educational partners to target improvement.

The PQA group reviewed the child death statistics for the period 2022/23 in Newham, allowing the group to identify trends, patterns, and potential areas of concern within the community. By understanding the circumstances surrounding these deaths, including any common factors or systemic issues, the group discussed areas for improvement in safeguarding measures and services. In 2022/2023, a number of sudden unexpected deaths in infants (SUDI) deaths occurred in quick succession within the sub-region raising the question of whether we are doing enough to prevent cases of SUDI. NHS NEL ICB are now leading a piece of work across the seven boroughs to oversee and coordinate SUDI prevention. A time-limited task and finish group within the NSCP, has been set up to assist all agencies who have contact with babies, and parents and carers of babies, to reflect on their current provision with regards to safe sleeping and to seek how the multi-agency response can work to reduce the number of sudden unexpected deaths in infants.

The PQA subgroup received presentations on the Newham University Hospital (NUH) Safeguarding Annual Report 2022/2023, Child Protection Coordination Service Annual

Report 2022/23, LADO (managing allegations against adults in a position of trust) Annual Report 2022/23 and Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Annual Report 2023.

Activity during 2023/24 focused on the ongoing review of the NSCP dataset and the development of a new dashboard. The establishment of a single coordinated multi-agency data set remains outstanding. In order to address this issue, we will be allocating part of the funding received from the Department for Education (DFE) towards implementing the Working Together 2023 guidance to provide the necessary resources to enhance our data collection processes and ensure that we have access to accurate and reliable information. By investing in this endeavour, we aim to strengthen our ability to monitor, themes, patterns and trends relating to the key safeguarding metrics and improve safeguarding practices effectively across all partner agencies.

Multi-agency case auditing

The multi-agency case auditing programme was further developed to focus on specific areas of the safeguarding system. The auditing methodology has received good feedback from partners and lessons identified have led to tangible improvements. All audits result in an outcome focused action plan that the NSCP uses to track and evidence improvements in front-line practice. Learning is also disseminated to front line staff via the First Friday Forum monthly briefings.

In 2022/23, the NSCP utilised the in-house expertise of the CYPS auditing team to coordinate the multi-agency auditing programme.

Two audits, in May and October 2023, focused on assessing the quality of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) providing insightful tracking of themes and issues over time. This comparative approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the changes in EHCP quality, guiding targeted improvements reported into the Newham SEND Executive Board.

The PQA sub group successfully concluded a discharge planning protocol audit. This multi-agency audit revealed 3 key findings:

- Section 1 presenting information: standards fully achieved for all cases.
- Section 2 use of discharge protocol in multiagency framework: overall standards partially met. It was indicated that greatest area for improvement (at the time of this audit in June 2023) was around use of the DPM template.
- Section 3 summary of the impact and effectiveness of the intervention: overall standards achieved.

These findings served as a foundation for targeted interventions and improvements to optimise discharge-planning processes and ultimately enhance the quality of care and support provided to children and families in Newham.

An audit was undertaken to analyse the use of multi-agency strategy discussions, and section 47 enquiries, in cases where children are at risk of, or are experiencing exploitation. This subject was selected following NSCP undertaking the rapid reviews of three children who had been exploited and suffered physical harm in 2022. The audit identified both areas of strength and areas of development, as a result multi-agency training sessions were delivered focusing on best practice in strategy discussions.

Following a Rapid Review in November 2022 involving a serious incident where a child was harmed who was known to be at risk of child criminal exploitation, the review identified a number of areas of learning but did not recommend that a Local Child Safeguarding Practice

Review was required. A decision was made to conduct a Thematic Safeguarding Review focusing at extra-familial harm and intra-familial abuse. Seven children's cases were subject to an in depth audit and review. Seeking children, young people and parent's views and their lived experience was a strong feature of the review. Work to engage children and families in the review was very successful which will enrich our learning about how best to support children and their families in the future. 3 staff events were held. The thematic review was completed with learning shared with the NSCP Executive. This review has provided valuable insight and learning opportunities for the partnership, providing us with a wealth of knowledge to inform the development of our youth safety strategy moving forward.

Partner agencies have continued to deliver a variety of single agency audits to maintain oversight on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. For example, the PQA subgroup received an update from the 0-19 Health Service regarding their audit findings and action plans showing improvement in practice in response to embedding learning from child safeguarding practice reviews.

The PQA subgroup has focused on national issues, including the national review into safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs who are placed in residential settings. Following the national panel phase two report, a task and finish group has been established to review our progress against the general recommendations in the overview audit report completed in November 2022 but also to benchmark our local practice against the findings of the report. Significant safeguarding concerns have been raised about a Residential School where Newham children were placed, there is a working group to address the concerns with key partners, ensuring parents, and carers are kept informed.

A multi-agency audit of child sexual abuse (CSA) has been agreed for 2024/25 and the full findings will be shared in next year's annual report. An update on the impact of intervention from the North East London Sexual Abuse Hub was presented to the subgroup, including an evaluation of the project and its future aims. This information has allowed the group to review the effectiveness of interventions and ensuring that our practices remain informed by evidence-based interventions and best practices in combating sexual abuse.

Working Together 2023 implementation

A task and finish group has been established led by the PQA subgroup to specifically address transition planning in accordance with the Working Together 2023 guidance and is reporting progress into the NSCP Exec. By fostering creativity and collaboration, the subgroup seeks to generate fresh ideas and propose new approaches to working together.

Information sharing

The PQA subgroup received a briefing on the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF). The PSIRF will replace the current Serious Incidents Framework (SIF). The framework represents a significant shift in the way the NHS responds to patient safety incidents and is a major step towards establishing a safety management system across the NHS. It is a key part of the NHS patient safety strategy.

The PQA subgroup was presented with important information regarding permissions to share information/data and the local privacy notice. This presentation highlights the significance of ensuring compliance with data protection regulations while also facilitating effective information sharing among relevant agencies. By understanding the permissions required and the local privacy notice guidelines, the group can navigate the complexities of data sharing with confidence, ensuring that sensitive information is handled responsibly and in accordance with legal requirements.

During 2023/24 the PQA subgroup led on updating the NSCP Escalation and Resolution Policy, Best Practice Guidance for Working with Children and Young People with Disabilities and Severe Complex Needs and Newham Preventing Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy.

Inspection

A Focused Visit on Care Leavers took place in January 2024. Ofsted found that improvements have been sustained and identified no priority actions. Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements and support for young people in care aged 16 and 17 and moving into adulthood, and for care-experienced young people aged 18 to 25. Inspectors found workforce stability has helped ensure that the needs of most care-experienced young people are well met. Care-experienced young people and those aged 16 and 17 and moving into adulthood are well supported, with the vast majority, including those who live out of the borough, in suitable and stable accommodation. Care-experienced young people with specific additional support needs, such as risks linked to criminal exploitation and serious youth violence, receive strong and effective support.

The PQA subgroup is preparing partners for potential inspections in the areas of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and/or Youth Justice Services (YJS).

Our Focus in 2024/25

- In response to tackling racism, inequality and disproportionality becoming an explicit principle within all work of the NSCP, PQA subgroup activity will include reference to how the work of the partnership is impacting on practice and outcomes for children and families in this area. Audit tools will be strengthened to evaluate anti-racist practice and data will be reviewed to analyse disproportionality and disparity as a specific theme.
- Completing the multi-agency audit of child sexual abuse (CSA).
- Establishing a single coordinated multi-agency data.

18. Improving skills and knowledge in the workforce

The NSCP continued to provide a comprehensive learning and development programme in 2023-2024, in response to the needs of the multi-agency safeguarding partnership. The programme emphasised the importance of collaboration between organizations to safeguard children, young people, and families effectively and was made accessible online. There were also some in-person sessions offered. Consultation with staff across the service who work with children, young people and their families has informed the programme, how it is delivered, and to whom.

Please see the link to the brochure:

<https://www.newhamscp.org.uk/learning-zone/>.

The Safeguarding and Workforce Development subgroup was established in late 2022 and continued into this year. The group has been able to commit more time to ensuring that the training is a key focus. At each meeting, data has been shared regarding uptake and cancellations, and impact is focused upon.

A training needs analysis, including a survey, was undertaken between February and May 2024 with good engagement from across the partnership.

The new learning management system was implemented which has aided ease of booking training. The training report will be shared with the safeguarding partners to review their uptake of the training offered and identify any steps they will be taking to increase this.

From the period 01/09/23 to 30/07/24 the attendance rate for half day training shows as 48% and full day training shows as 39% for the partnership.

There was an increase in the number of practitioners booking onto training this year to 813 (Sept to July 24) from 725 in 22/23 (Sept to July 24). Though of these only 490 places were attended. As with the Social Care Academy training, increased promotion and targeted marketing is required to increase attendance, due to the under utilisation of the offer. Similar to previous years, attendance is highest from staff in Children and Young People's Services, LBN, in Education, and the Private and Voluntary sector. The training offer proposal has been reduced from over 50 sessions to (2023/24) to over 20 sessions, due to the low attendance, high cancellations and under-utilisation of the training offer. Following consultations and feedback, it is proposed that in addition to the training, that podcasts, webinars, videos and other resources are created by the NSCP in order to facilitate learning for the partnership who are struggling to attend training due to time constraints, and other factors

During 2023/24 there were 67 occurrences of training with 1184 offered places.

Feedback

The NSCP is the platform for some of the Core offers for CYPS. CYPS and the Private and Voluntary sectors utilise the offers the most from the partnership.

Feedback from evaluation is positive overall for the partnership. There has been feedback to request more bite-size learning and creative resources such as webinars, podcasts and videos. This is being considered and part of the training budget for the forthcoming year has been allocated to this area. As attendance at training has been an issue for several years, promoting training and streamlining it is a high priority.

Our Focus in 2024/25

- A revised Learning and Development offer has been proposed which will be commissioned over the summer and will commence in September 2024.
- The programme will be streamlined and the number of sessions reduced to try and ensure that training will be fully booked and well-attended.
- Creative resources will also be designed including podcasts and bite-size videos to make training material accessible and in response to feedback from the partnership.

19. Our plans for 2024/25

1. **Implementation of Working Together 2023:** This will include a comprehensive review to ensure compliance and alignment with the updated guidelines.
2. **To produce a partnership Youth Safety Strategy with a focus on tackling exploitation and reducing youth violence** - a reduction in serious incidents has been achieved however there is further work to do.
3. **Focus greater attention on child sexual abuse**
4. **Children missing out on education and disproportionality** are a focus in the development of capacity to build on existing interventions.
5. **Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) Learning and Impact Assessments:** Measuring the effectiveness of the learning from CSPR and its influence on safeguarding practices.

6. **Create a Multi-Agency Partnership Data Set:** Working with our partners to establish a shared multi-agency data set, enhancing data use to better inform decision-making and improve outcomes across the partnership.
7. **Ongoing Review of Priorities:** Continuing with current priorities while reviewing and adjusting them based on emerging needs and outcomes.