

THSCP

The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP) is fully established under the Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018 Arrangements and has developed over the last year into a responsive and agile system.

The Working Together Arrangements state that:

A 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:

- (a) the local authority
- (b) a clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area
- (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area

Within Tower Hamlets James, Korkor and James make up the leadership and core partners and rotate chairing THSCP Executive.



James Thomas
Children's Services

James is the statutory Director of Children's Services for Tower Hamlets, and the Corporate Director for Children and Culture, with lead responsibility for children's safeguarding as well as for the delivery of a range of social care, education, early help and commissioned services. He is also chair of a number of children's partnership boards and sits on the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership. He is also the national and London lead for ADCS on multi-agency safeguarding and sits on the cross-governmental Safeguarding Reform Delivery Board and the London Safeguarding Children's Partnership.



Korkor Ceasar
Integrated Care Board

Korkor is the Associate Director for Safeguarding Children, NHS North East London Health and Care Partnership. She leads on the implementation of all safeguarding statutory duties for children safeguarding and Looked after Children, ensuring all risks are escalated through the appropriate governance. She is responsible for providing expert advice and guidance to the Partnership Boards via Chief Nurse and other colleagues on all safeguarding functions, aspects and responsibilities; with a particular focus on ensuring the strategic needs are met. Korkor is also responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is effectively managed across the health system, engaging local providers in a robust partnership approach to commissioning and provision of health services.



James Conway
Metropolitan Police

Detective Chief Superintendent Conway is the senior police officer responsible for the strategic and operational oversight for the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney. James Conway works closely with both internal and external partners in order to safeguard the vulnerable, tackle crime and continue to build on trust and confidence in policing amongst the community it serves.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

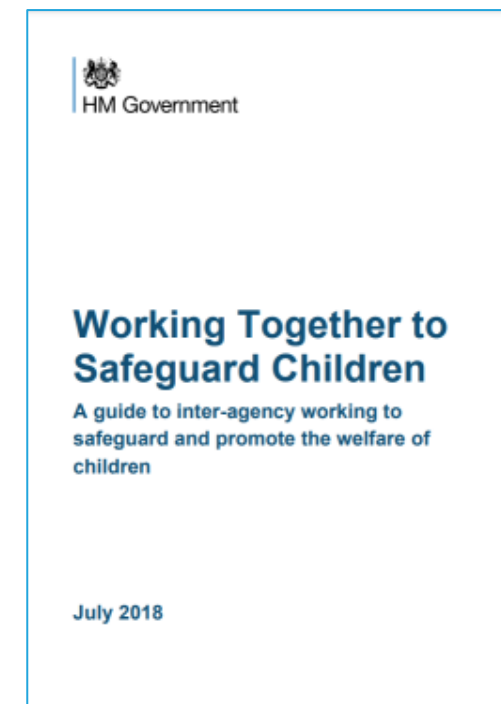
In April 2017, the Children and Social Work Act received Royal Assent, which abolished Local Safeguarding Children Boards and all sections of the Children Act 2004 that relate to it. The Department of Education published the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance in July 2018, which sets out what organisations and agencies, who have functions relating to children, must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England. In addition, further statutory guidance was published to support LSCB's, the new safeguarding and child death review partners, and the new Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in the transition from LSCBs and serious case reviews (SCRs) to a new system of multi-agency arrangements and local and national child safeguarding practice reviews. The guidance aims to help those involved understand the requirements and to plan and manage their work in the transitional period. In March 2020 the transition period ended, and new safeguarding arrangements were fully implemented. For Tower Hamlets this meant stepping away from a traditional board and implementing an agile partnership. Since 2020 Tower Hamlets has introduced, developed and started to embed new ways of working in a Safeguarding Partnership realm.

The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, lays the foundations for Safeguarding Children Partnerships. The major shift has been that the responsibility of safeguarding children in Tower Hamlets is shared between the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and Police.

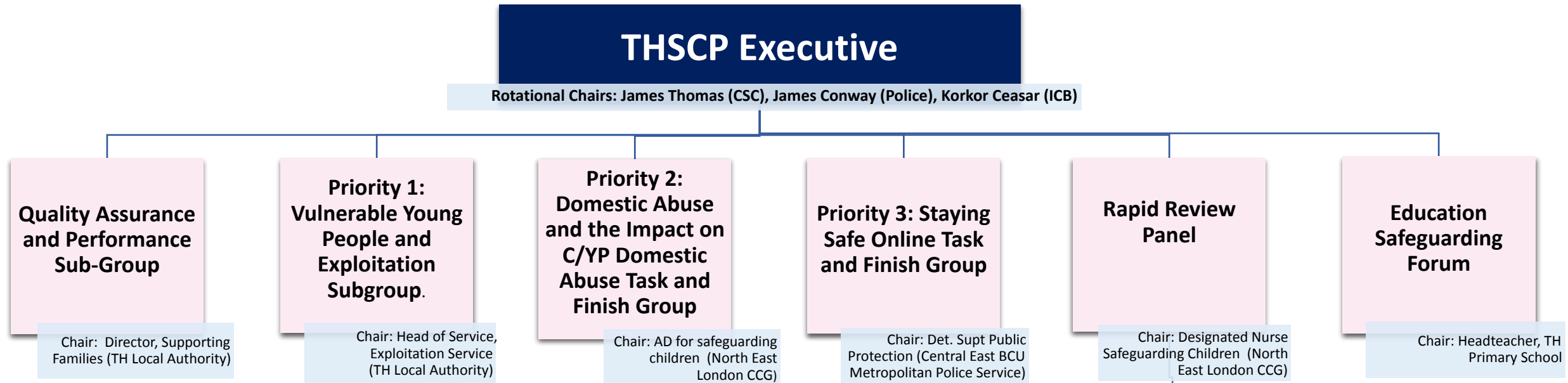
“Local organisations and agencies that work with children and families play a significant role when it comes to safeguarding children.

To achieve the best possible outcomes, children and families should receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way. Fragmented provision of services creates inefficiencies and risks disengagement by children and their families from services such as GPs, education and wider voluntary and community specialist support.

There is a shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.” – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018



Governance and Structure



The Groups Explained:

- The Executive Group oversees the THSCP, which aims to continue to promote and support multi-agency working across all areas of Safeguarding. The local Police, Integrated Care Board and Local Authority are equally responsible for the Partnership and its outcomes, *this is one of the major differences compared to the LSCB arrangements.*
- The Quality Assurance and Performance Group oversees the business part of the partnership which includes (but is not limited to), reviewing multi-agency data, audits and actions that arise from statutory reviews (through oversight of the Rapid Review Working Group which holds and implements the Action Plan).
- The three priority groups are set up to focus a lens on an area that has arisen as a challenge within the borough. The current priorities are coming to an end and Priority Setting for new priorities has begun.
- The Rapid Review Panel has been established to respond quickly to serious incidents when a child has been significantly harmed or died from abuse or neglect. The group reviews the cases, draws out any immediate learning and makes recommendations to the Executive on what level of Statutory Review is required.
- The Rapid Review Working Group has the responsibility of implementing the learning from statutory reviews.
- The Education Safeguarding Forum is a space for Education Providers to raise thematic and strategic safeguarding concerns.
- Each member of the Executive Group sponsors a sub-group, attends and offers support.

Governance and Membership

“Strong, effective multi-agency arrangements are ones that are responsive to local circumstances and engage the right people. For local arrangements to be effective, they should engage organisations and agencies that can work in a collaborative way to provide targeted support to children and families as appropriate. This approach requires flexibility to enable joint identification of, and response to, existing and emerging needs, and to agree priorities to improve outcomes for children.” – Working together to Safeguard Children 2018

The partnership has been made stronger this year through key agencies taking the lead in many areas including shaping and leading the work in our priority areas. During the period of Covid-19, the partnership has had to work smarter to ensure that collaboration is continuous. This has meant utilising technology and becoming creative with ways to engage. Key events were held in person, via video conferencing or as a hybrid of both, throughout the year. Partners have faced a number of challenges and the THSCP has created the space for agencies to be open and honest about challenges and work together to mitigate them.



THSCP Priorities

Achieving the Priorities:

Throughout 2022-23, the priorities set in 2021 have been embedded across the partnership. The Priorities are coming to an end and new Priorities will be set and launched in September 2023.

The achievements of each Priority Group are captured below:



Exploitation – Local Authority led

- Development of a Screening Tool with Partner engagement.
- Development of joined up disruption plans for children, involving the Police.
- MACE review and re-launch (to include oversight of missing children).
- Launch of Harm outside the Home framework when working with young people where the risk is identified as extra-familial harm.
- Exploitation Team training package for partners.



Domestic Abuse and the Impact on Children and Young People – Health led

- A Vlog on appropriate language for professionals to use regarding domestic abuse and awareness raising across all agencies of appropriate language use in record keeping.
- Refresh of Multi-Agency domestic abuse guidance.
- A tool kit for young people on when and how to talk to an adult and how to support each other.
- Partnership Engagement Events led by experts in the field to have a deeper understanding of domestic abuse.



Staying Safe Online – Police led

- Gaming and Gambling Harms training commissioned for professionals, parents and carers. Professionals who attended felt better equipped to talk to Young People about Online Harms. Resource packs available for use when working with children and young people.
- Partnership Engagement Events led by experts in the field to have a deeper understanding of Online Safety.
- A tool kit for parents, carers and young people to know where to go for support and how to have conversations around online safety.
- A school survey on online safety carried out with 1567 Primary School children and 542 Secondary School Children. The report findings further shaped the work of the group and ongoing work of the Partnership.

Key Achievements and The Impact

<p>Multi-Agency policies and procedures refreshed</p>	<p>Various Procedures are being refreshed and updated ensuring that all professionals have the tools and pathways to safeguard children. Updated procedures include; Non-Accidental Injury Protocol, Neglect Guidance, Non Recent Abuse Protocol and Domestic Abuse guidance.</p>
<p>Delivered NSPCC Introduction to Safeguarding and Designated Lead training</p>	<p>Safeguarding training was delivered to ensure that all partners and volunteers have basic level understanding of Safeguarding. This equips people with the ability to spot signs of abuse or neglect and understand how to escalate that information to prevent harm.</p>
<p>Delivered Safeguarding Month</p>	<p>During November 2022 Safeguarding month was delivered where partners came together to host and attend awareness sessions. The topics included, an Infant Neglect conference, Domestic Abuse, Exploitation, Online Safety, Learning from CSPRs and the Rapid Review process. This gave the opportunity for multi-agency partners to come together to ensure they all received consistent information on the topics.</p>
<p>Training Programme</p>	<p>A multi-agency Training Calendar has been developed which incorporates all available Safeguarding Training for any professional who works with children and young people in Tower Hamlets. Courses have included Gaming and Gambling Online Harms, Talking to children about Mental Health, Self Harm; Responding to Risk and Intrafamilial Sexual Abuse.</p>
<p>Continuing improvement to Rapid Review Processes</p>	<p>Rapid Review Processes have been tightened meaning that learning is drawn out at an earlier stage to avoid delay. The Statutory Review Action Plan ensures that themes can be picked out and time is not spent on duplication activity. This also ensures there is a more thematic approach to implementing the learning from all cases reviewed. Alongside the Rapid Review Panel, a Rapid Review Working Group has been set up to meet six weekly with the sole purpose of implementing the learning.</p>
<p>Child Safeguarding Practice Review Learning Sessions</p>	<p>Once a CSPR was completed a learning session took place within two weeks, which brought the partners together to discuss the findings and the implementation. This gives the partners opportunities to ask the report author about the review and directly feedback ideas for improvement for the wider system and begin the process of implementation. A year after publication of a CSPR there is then a Learning Reflection Session which is an opportunity to remind partners of the recommendations, consider how the learning has been embedded and identify any gaps to be addressed.</p>
<p>Young Scrutineers working within the Safeguarding Partnership</p>	<p>Three Young Scrutineers, aged 16 & 17 work in the Partnership upto 4 hours a week. They are paid an adult living hourly rate wage and their contracts are flexible around their education. Their role is to give their views, share theirs and peers experiences and review policies and projects to ensure the voice of the child is at the centre of the Partnership's work. They are currently working alongside the Independent Scrutineer on a '6 steps of Scrutiny' project and will also input into deciding the new Priorities.</p>
<p>Introduction of Escalation Tracker</p>	<p>Following feedback from partners that they felt distanced from the Executive and unclear on decision making and Escalation Tracker was introduced. The tracker records all escalations from groups to the Executive and the Executive response and is circulated with papers for every meeting. Partners report feeling more informed.</p>

Key Challenges

Multi-Agency Data	THSCP developed a multi-agency data dashboard, which requested data from partners that was 'readily available', due to this, the data is not always aligned with the most recent quarter. The THSCP has identified that data should focus around the priorities and themes, as well as a compliance return and to include comparative data from the previous quarter or year. Work in this area is ongoing.
Capacity and Funding	There is still a significant way to go to a Safeguarding Partnership of equal funding and the Local Authority contribution decreasing substantially. Local Authority restructures meant the role responsible for the multi-agency training was deleted. The THSCP ensured that standard safeguarding training was still commissioned and held awareness events over the year and has begun to commission a training package. Partners who have had a very difficult couple of years within the pandemic have expressed issues with capacity to carry out some work within the THSCP.
Embedding of Learning	This is a key challenge across many Safeguarding Children Partnerships, though the processes have changed, to ensure the learning is thematic and all held in one place, the embedding of the learning has been slow. In order to address this the THSCP has now set up a 'Rapid Review Working Group' which meets 6 weekly with the sole purpose of embedding the learning from audits and statutory reviews
Website/Hosting Space	Feedback from partners has been that the website we use is not interactive, we aimed to commission a new website in 2022 but due to other priorities this is now planned for 2023.

Strategic Plan for the Year Ahead

The THSCP will continue to deliver and will develop the following areas over the next year...

Evidencing the embedding of learning

Further development of the multi-agency training package

Continued inclusion of young people

Improvements to the THSCP digital presence