

**THSCP  
Annual Report  
2021-2022**

Tower Hamlets  
**Safeguarding  
Children**  
Partnership



# Introduction

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 Marcus 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  
Clinical Commissioning Group

Korkor is the Associate Director for Safeguarding Children, NHS North East London Clinical Commissioning Group. 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.



Marcus Barnett  
Metropolitan Police

Detective Chief Superintendent Barnett is the senior police officer responsible for the strategic and operational oversight for the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney. Marcus Barnett 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.

# Executive Summary

“Our job is to provide leadership of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for all children in Tower Hamlets and to ensure that those arrangements are effective in protecting children from harm.

In reviewing our work over the course of 2021/22 we think we have secured many of the foundations of an effective safeguarding partnership, notably in respect of a stable multi-agency data dashboard, effective review processes in respect of serious incidents and learning reviews, systematic multi-agency auditing, oversight of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), a training needs analysis and strengthened voice of children. Several of these foundations have needed to be put into place over the past two years and there has been good progress despite the pandemic.

We need to recognise that Covid 19 has continued to pose a huge challenge to families and partner agencies in the borough, and we have worked hard to ensure all have resumed and maintained face to face services as much as possible. In the one Child Safeguarding Practice Review completed and reported on in this report, it was a significant factor that the child was not being seen in school for a key period. We have worked with partners to ensure the impact on the workforce has been mitigated and to get assurance upon any service impacts.

## **Are children at risk of harm identified effectively?**

Our scrutiny of the MASH and auditing activity has given us a good level of assurance that children at risk are identified and rapid action is taken to ensure their safety. Some agencies have expressed concern about the application of thresholds and ensuring a clearer consistent understanding of these is therefore a priority for the year ahead.

## **Are plans effective in protecting children from harm?**

Overall auditing and reviews have shown that most children are effectively protected, and that we have a well developed Early Help offer across the partnership. Relationship-based practice is a strength in the borough. Auditing and reviews have shown us that where there is a need for more consistency, this is in respect of a number of long-standing challenging areas of practice including our three priority themes (Domestic Abuse, Exploitation and Online Abuse) as well as Neglect, information sharing and engagement of fathers.

## **What does our partnership need to do better?**

We are ambitious to develop further the core planks of our understanding of our safeguarding system through better use of data more rigorously related to children’s outcomes. And to deepen our local learning system with more focus upon the follow up to recommendations from audits and reviews. We need to improve our website. And we need to find more effective ways in our pandemic recovery phase to engage with all partners and ensure that they feel connected to the work of the Executive.

There will a number of key developments in 22/23 that we need to anticipate: our next Child Safeguarding Practice Review; the Care Review and National Panel Review recommendations and government response; and the taking up of their respective roles of our new Independent Scrutineer and three Young Scrutineers.

Finally our deepest thanks first and foremost to the children and families who have given feedback to help improve our safeguarding system, next to all the frontline practitioners for their commitment to the difficult work that they carry out day in and day out, to all our partners, and finally to Keith Makin, our Independent Scrutineer, who will be moving on.”

- James Thomas, Marcus Barnett and Korkor Ceasar

# Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

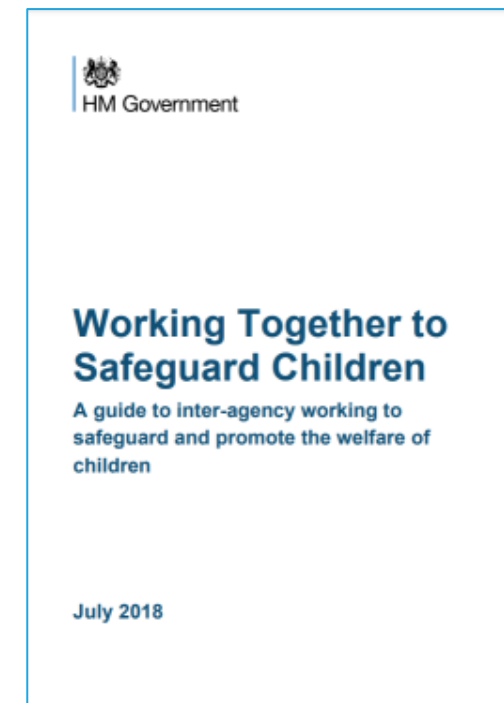
In April 2017, the Children and Social Work Act received Royal Assent, which abolished Local Safeguarding Children Boards and all sections of the Children Act 2004 that relate to it. The Department of Education published the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance in July 2018, which 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.

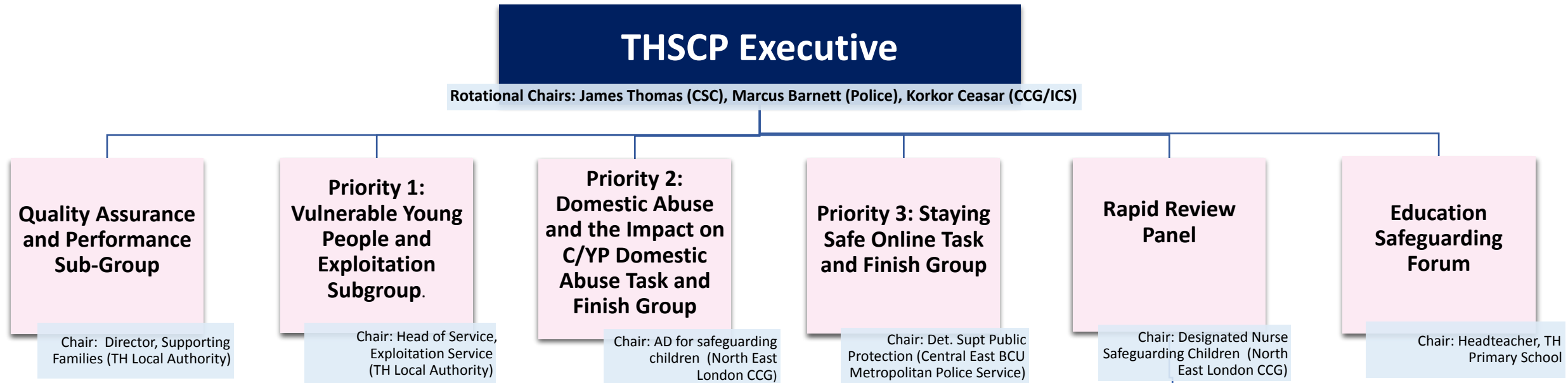
*“Local organisations and agencies that work with children and families play a significant role when it comes to safeguarding children.*

*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, Clinical Commissioning Group 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 action plans that arise from statutory reviews.
- The three priority groups are set up to focus a lens on an area that has arisen as a challenge within the borough.
- 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.



# Independent Scrutiny

*‘The role of independent 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’ and ‘The independent scrutineer should 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.’ – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*



Keith Makin was appointed as the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Independent Scrutineer in 2018. Keith trained as a social worker and went on to several senior management positions, including Director of Social Services, headed up a Local Government Improvement Agency, Chief Executive of an independent childcare company and chair of several LSCBs. He has been involved with several voluntary organisations and social enterprises. He is very interested in improving services for children and young people with disabilities and has carried out several reviews into this. What drives him is a passion for making life better for every child and young person.

Keith will sadly be leaving the THSCP in the year 22-23 to focus on National Level Reviews, we would like to thank him for his hard work and continued dedication to Safeguarding in Tower Hamlets. Keith has been with the THSCP from the very beginning of the process of implementing the Working Together Arrangements and had a pivotal role in outlining and developing our current processes.

## Independent Scrutineers Reflections over the Last Year

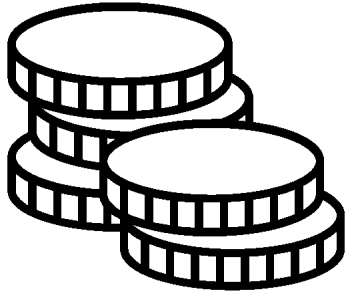
*“This year has been a difficult one for all partners, with the pandemic affecting all the work and making safeguarding an even greater challenge than is usual. The partnership has continued to progress in this period, despite those challenges and you will see many examples of that within this Annual Report.*

*My role as Independent Scrutineer changed to a large extent throughout some of the lockdown periods and I was spending a lot of time helping the partners to tackle the priority issues via weekly meetings, which focused on ensuring that the direct contacts with families and children could continue. The Borough achieved this in a good way, thereby avoiding the real danger of children going unnoticed and under the various radars.*

*The safeguarding of children in the Borough is strong, with sound policies and monitoring in place and effective communications between the core statutory partners (Police, the Council and Health). The use of data to inform decision making and to help to spot trends has improved and the voice of the child and the young person is being heard more, through various initiatives which are contained in this Report.*

*Priority setting was achieved via an open and inclusive process, which included the wider partnership. The speed of delivery of reviews into serious cases has improved. This has been a problem for some time in the Borough, with some reviews taking an unacceptable time to complete. My assessment is that the Borough is now on track with this very important process both in terms of the speed of delivery and in how those reviews are providing vital learning, informing future practice.*

*The partners are committed to safeguarding as a top priority in the Borough and that gives me real confidence for the continuation of the good progress seen over the period of the Report. I want to thank, in particular, the Strategy Manager and Co-ordinator, who have worked so hard and with such determination to ensure that things have got done!”*



# Funding the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership

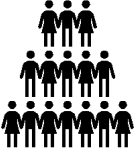











*“Working in partnership means organisations and agencies should collaborate on how they will fund their arrangements. The three safeguarding partners and relevant agencies for the local authority area should make payments towards expenditure incurred in conjunction with local multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children. The safeguarding partners should agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which should be equitable and proportionate, and any contributions from each relevant agency, to support the local arrangements. The funding should be transparent to children and families in the area, and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice review” – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*

Funding is agreed at the beginning of the year with the partners and is used to fulfil the function of the partnership. It is noted that many organisations face financial challenges each year. The partners will often give their time and resources in kind to support the functioning of the partnership. This includes, chairing and participating in sub/task and finish groups, conducting reviews, audits, leading and attending workshops and analysing and submitting data.

Income	Amount	Expenditure	Amount
LBTH General Fund	£67,967	Business Unit Salaries	£111,943
LBTH Children’s Services	£15,000	Independent Scrutineer	£15,447
Clinical Commissioning Group	£60,000	Thematic Review	£19,208
Police	£5000	Website Hosting Cost	£2880
East London Foundation Trust	£2500	Safeguarding Training	£10,550
		Harmful Sexual Behaviour Training	£18,000
		Event costs	£135
		DBS Checks	£23
<b>Total</b>	<b>£150,467</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£178,186</b>
		Overspend	<b>£27,719</b>



# About Tower Hamlets

	<p>Tower Hamlets continues to have one of the fastest growing populations nationally and now has an estimated population of <b>324,745</b>. The latest population estimates published by ONS show that Tower Hamlets continues to have one of the youngest populations in the country with a median age of <b>31.6</b>.</p>		<p>The council has the 7th highest housing waiting list nationally. There are <b>18,808</b> households on the council's housing waiting list. BME households account for <b>78%</b> of all households on the housing register. In March 2019, there were <b>2,529</b> households in temporary accommodation, of which half are placed in accommodation outside of the borough.</p>
	<p>Tower Hamlets has a similar proportion of young people aged 0-19 to England and London. There are an estimated <b>78,000</b> children and young people aged 0-19 resident in Tower Hamlets, a quarter of all residents.</p>		<p>Tower Hamlets has a high proportion of children in need when compared with England and London. The number of children identified as being in need has risen considerably since 2017. Neglect is the most common form of abuse for children in receipt of a child protection plan.</p>
	<p>There are <b>45,000</b> pupils in primary and secondary schools in the borough. Most pupils want to attend university/higher education.</p>		<p>In 2016-18, life expectancy for men in Tower Hamlets was the same as in the UK, while for women it was slightly higher than the UK average. Babies in Tower Hamlets were more likely to be born with a low birth weight than in England or London, but mothers were less likely to be smokers. The infant mortality rate was higher than the national or regional average.</p>
	<p>Tower Hamlets economic output in 2017 was <b>£29.7bn</b> – more than Birmingham or the City of Manchester. The economy grew by 49% between 2008 and 2017.</p>		<p>Crime in Tower Hamlets has risen in recent years but less rapidly than in London as a whole. In December 2019 there were <b>35,118</b> notifiable offences, a <b>4.2</b> per cent increase since 2016, compared to the <b>16</b>. per cent increase in the London as a whole. Recorded youth crime in the borough has fallen, as it has elsewhere.</p>
	<p>During 2016-19, around two thirds of Tower Hamlets working age population were in employment (<b>67%</b>).</p>		<p>The borough has a rich and historical environment, with more than <b>200</b> parks and open spaces. CO2 emissions have fallen but not sufficiently quickly, so Tower Hamlets declared a climate emergency in March 2019</p>
	<p>Tower Hamlets became significantly less deprived between the 2015 and the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, moving from 10th to 50th on the rank nationally, but 60% of the borough are still within the 30% most deprived parts of England. Deprivation among children and older people is much higher than deprivation as a whole.</p>		<p>Tower Hamlets has an extensive transport network with <b>7</b> Overground stations and <b>9</b> underground stations, the busiest of which is Canary Wharf station. The borough is also served by <b>17</b> DLR stations and <b>26</b> daytime bus routes.</p>

# Data regarding Children and Young People: Children in Need

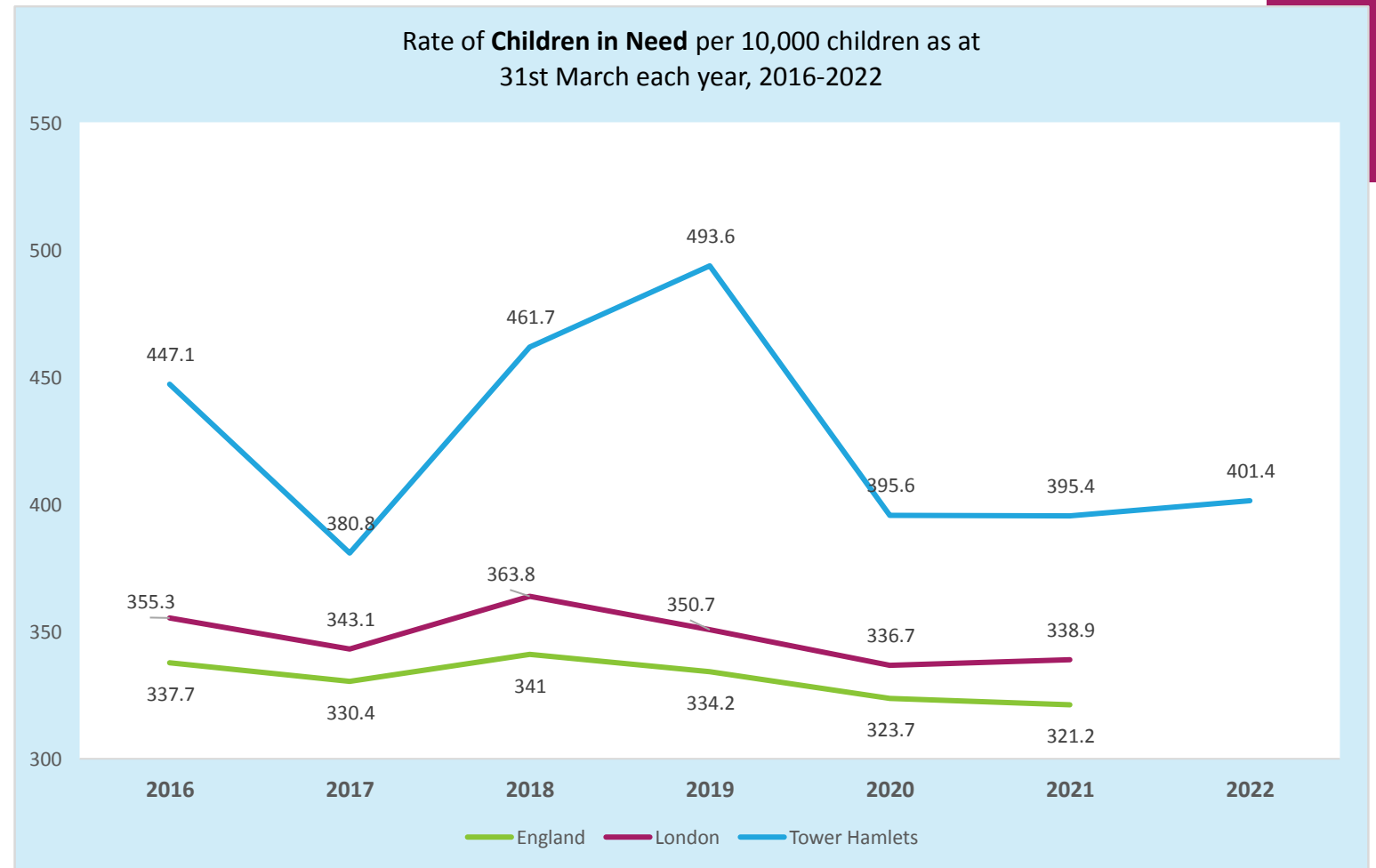
Tower Hamlets has a high proportion of Children in need when compared with England and London.

Section 17 of The Children Act 1989 places a general duty on all local authorities to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.

**A 'child in need' is a child who needs additional support from the local authority to meet their potential.**

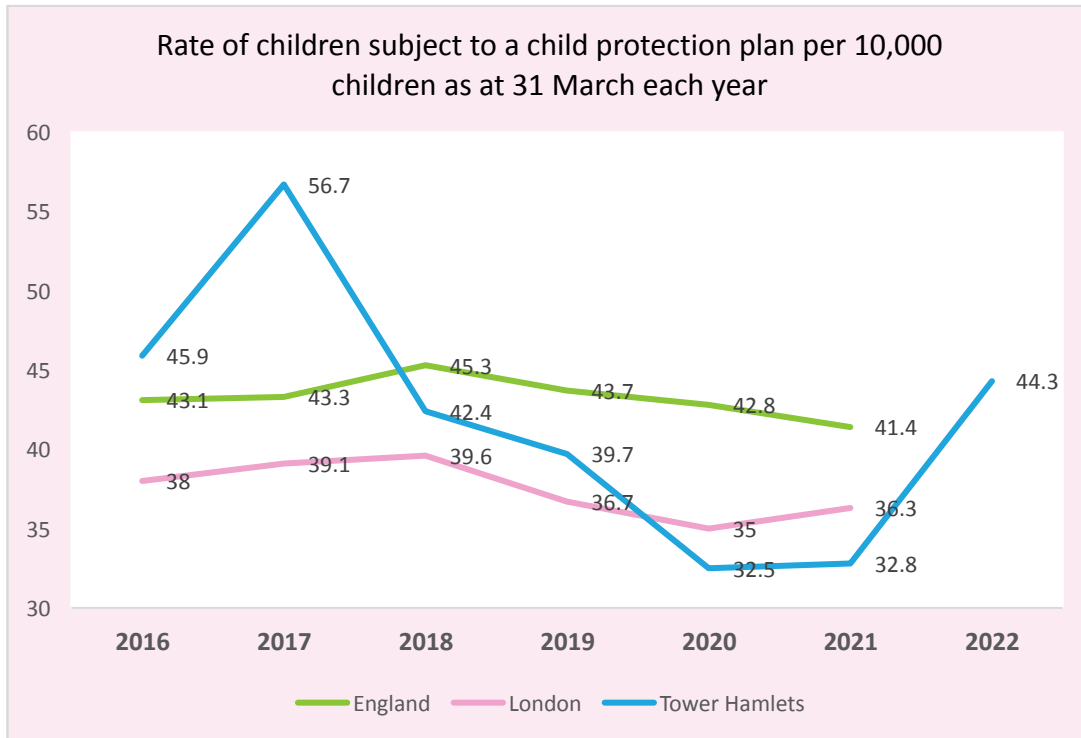
As at 31 March 2022 there were **2,972** children in need in Tower Hamlets, an increase of **1.5%** compared to last reporting year and **15%** lower than the peak in 2019. Additionally, reported a rate of **401** per 10,000 children which is above both the 2021 England and London rates.

Neglect (**56%**) and emotional abuse (**41%**) are the most common form of abuse for children in receipt of a Child in Need Plan.

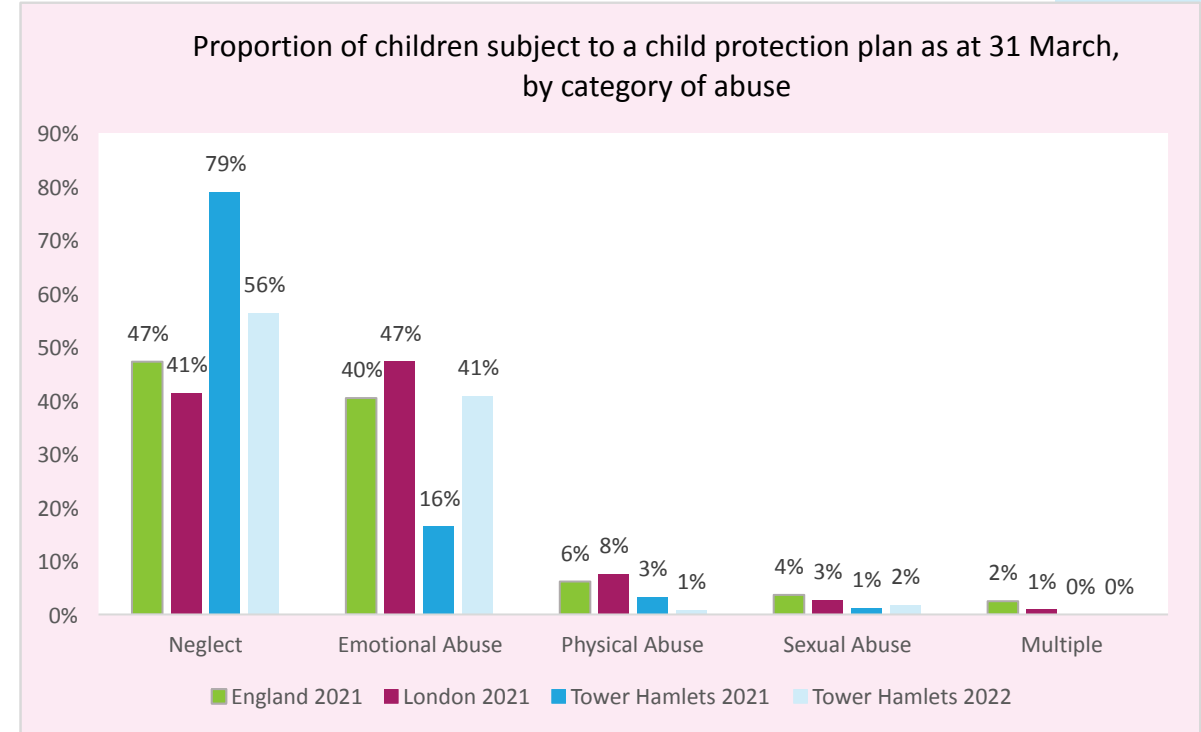


# Data regarding Children and Young People: Child Protection Plans

A Child Protection Plan is made when a child is considered to be at risk of significant harm, significant harm being a level of harm that affects the health, welfare and development of a child. Section 47 of The Children Act 1989 Act requires the local authority to investigate the child's circumstances where they have 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child ... is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm,'



There were **328** children with child protection plans in the borough as at 31 March 2022, a **35%** increase on the 2021 reporting year. The lower CP numbers during 2020 and 2021 could be attributed to COVID-19 pandemic, as we see a sharp increase following the restrictions been lifted. This is a rate of **44** children subject to a plan per 10,000 population, a level noticeably higher than both England and London rates in 2021.



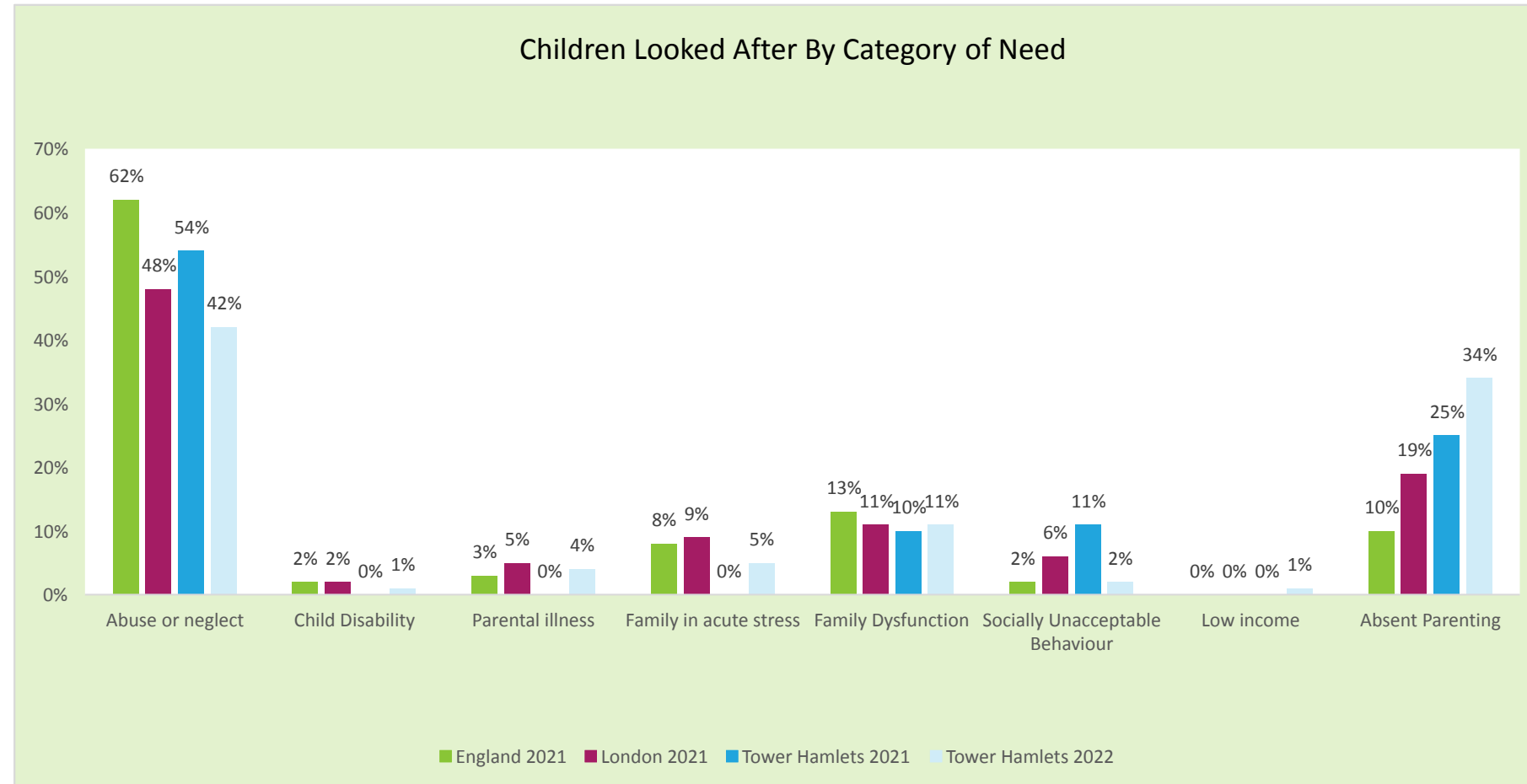
The most common reason for being subject to a child protection plan in Tower Hamlets in 2022 was Neglect (**56%**), a higher proportion than the England and London averages. We have however seen a drop in Neglect (**79%** in 2021 to **56%** 2022) and an increase for emotional abuse (**16%** in 2021 to **41%** in 2022) as the reason for being subject. There are no children subject to Multiple categories.

# Data regarding Children and Young People: Children Looked After

A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer.

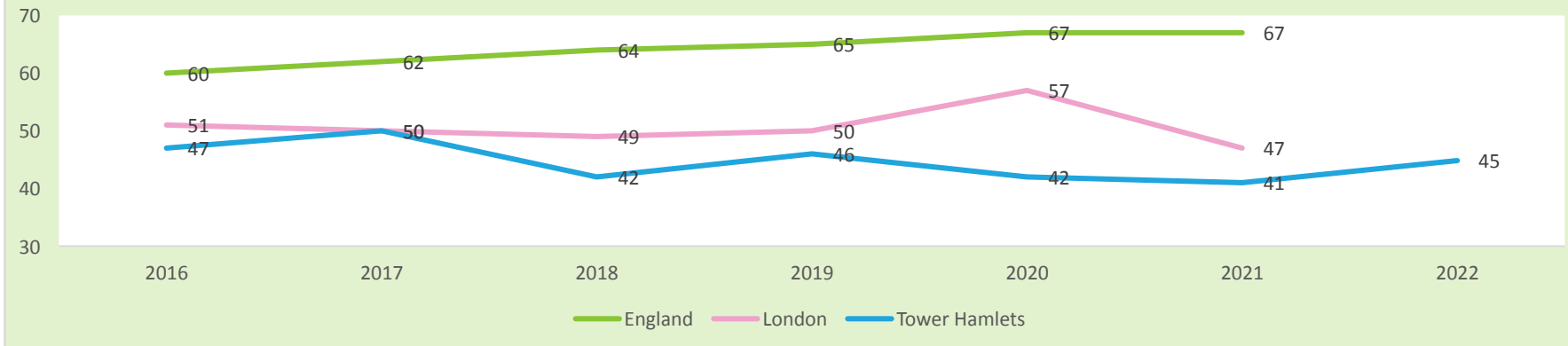
The most common reason for children entering care in 2022 was abuse or Neglect (**42%**), although this was below both 2021 England and London averages. Additionally, children in Tower Hamlets were more likely to enter care as a result of Absent Parenting (**34%**) compared with the 2021 England and London averages, which reflects our rising numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

There has been a notable decrease in the children being looked after due to Socially Unacceptable Behaviour (**11%** in 2021 to **2%** in 2022).



# Data regarding Children and Young People: Children Looked After Continued

Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 Children as at March 31st each year, 2016 to 2022



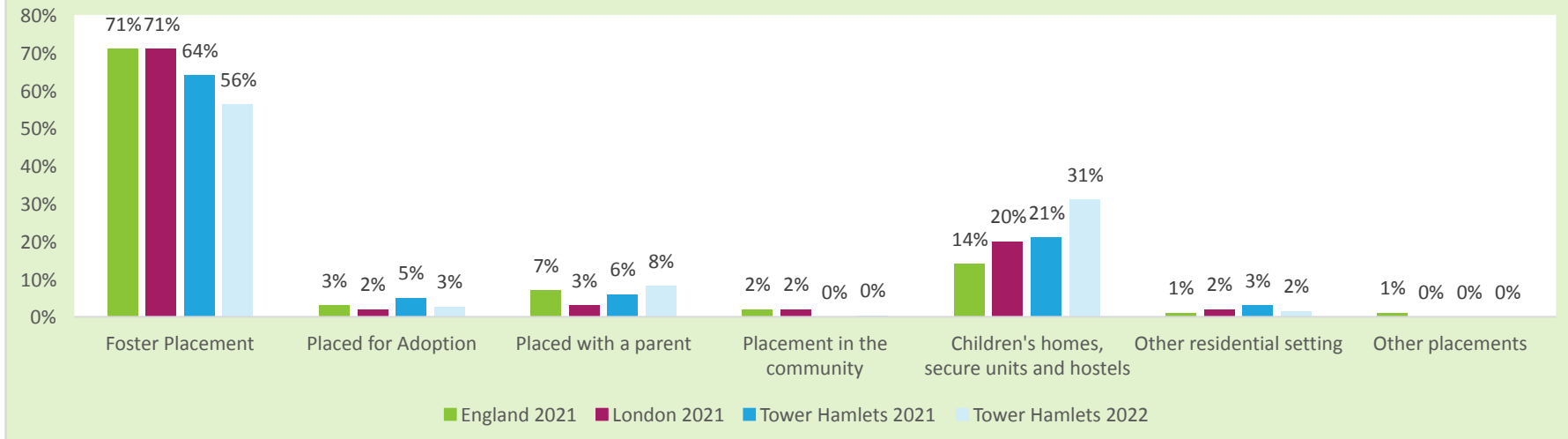
As at 31st March 2022, there were **332** children being looked after by Tower Hamlets, an increase of **8.5%** compared to the 2021 reporting year and a rate of **45 per 10,000** population.

This was noticeably below the 2021 England average rate of **67**.

**56%** of children in 2022 were in foster placements, this is below the 2021 averages for both England and London (**71%**). Tower Hamlets has a higher proportion of children Placed with parent, in children's homes, secure units and hostels compared to the 2021 England and London averages.

There were no children Placed in community settings or Other placements in the years 2021 and 2022.

Looked After Children as at 31 March, by Placement



# Key Achievements and The Impact

<b>Set up the Education Safeguarding Forum</b>	The forum was set up to bring together Education Providers to discuss and raise systemic safeguarding concerns. During a November meeting concerns of Harmful Sexual Behaviour in schools were raised. The THSCP responded by commissioning 'Managing Sexual Harmful Behaviour' training for all practitioners and schools.
<b>Delivered NSPCC Introduction to Safeguarding and Designated Lead training</b>	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.
<b>Delivered Safeguarding Month</b>	During November 2021 Safeguarding month was delivered where partners came together to host and attend awareness sessions. The topics included, Domestic Abuse, Exploitation, Online Safety, Reducing Risk of Accidental Injuries in the Home and Rapid Reviews. This gave the opportunity for multi-agency partners to come together to ensure they all received consistent information on the topics.
<b>Multi-agency Audits took place into Infant Neglect and Adolescent Neglect</b>	Multi-agency audits ensure that all partners can reflect on cases and how partners collaborated to ensure the safeguarding of children. This period introduced multi-agency audits to the THSCP, where partners are responsible for presenting cases from their agency and taking part in the audit activity. This ensures there is a 360 joined up review of systemic issues. The audits review areas for improvement and best practice. The majority of the activity take places in a workshop style meeting where partners can have open and honest discussion about the cases.
<b>New Ways of Conducting Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews</b>	CSPRs were conducted within the partnership with a more thematic approach. This ensured that practitioners involved had more opportunity to talk about their experience and ensure the review itself did not inflict any further trauma on the child or family.
<b>Child Safeguarding Practice Review Learning Sessions</b>	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.
<b>Implementation of Young Scrutineers</b>	The 'behind the scenes' work was completed this year to recruit young people directly in to the THSCP as paid employees. With legal clearance, contracts set up and recruitment completed, three young people will be starting in June 2022 to ensure the voice of the child is at the centre of our work.
<b>Developed a Multi-Agency Guidance for Private Fostering</b>	Robust private fostering framework is important to ensure that partners understand private fostering and their roles and responsibilities. When private fostering goes under the radar, it can be a risk to the safeguarding of a child, and private foster carers are eligible for support. Partners came together to agree a framework and awareness plan. The final version of the guidance will be published in May 2022.

# Key Achievements and The Impact

<p><b>Rapid Review Process Improvements</b></p>	<p>Rapid Reviews are held to decide what level of statutory review a case requires, this time is now also used to make any immediate changes to practice. Tightening up the Rapid Review process includes discussions with partners about the level of detail provided on the cases. Actions are taken directly from the Rapid Review Panel by partners. This agile response ensures that learning is reviewed at pace.</p>
<p><b>Creation and implementation of a Statutory Review Action Plan</b></p>	<p>The THSCP has one action plan that contains all the actions from audits, Rapid Review and CSPRs, this 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 a Rapid Review Panel, a Rapid Review Working Group has been set up to meet monthly with the sole purpose of implementing the learning.</p>
<p><b>Priority areas have been developed, with action plans in place.</b></p>	<p>Task and finish groups were set up in to the priority areas Online Safety, Exploitation and Domestic Abuse and the impact on children and young people. These groups ensure there is a multi-agency focus into the three areas. The actions plans have been developed to implement improvement into these areas.</p>
<p><b>Thematic Review has been conducted into Serious Youth Violence</b></p>	<p>A thematic review named 'Troubled Lives, Tragic Consequences' took place in 2014-2015 which reviewed older children who had committed serious offences or were victims of serious harm. The aim was to understand common themes in the lives of these older children, relating to system practice and academic research. The reviewer was re-commissioned to return to this subject of work which allows Tower Hamlets to see what change has taken place and what change needs to happen to protect children and young people from serious youth violence.</p>
<p><b>Development of Quality Assurance and Performance</b></p>	<p>The quality assurance and performance group work included strengthening the process regarding data scrutiny, auditing and deep dives. This process ensures that the quality of work across the partnership continues at a high standard and improves outcomes for children and young people.</p>
<p><b>Implementation of VVE Strategy</b></p>	<p>A Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy has been published and this year was spent on building and implementing a multi-agency action plan to improve the response to exploitation and ensure early intervention takes place.</p>
<p><b>Training Needs Analysis Completion</b></p>	<p>A full training needs analysis was completed to review gaps across the THSCP. This will ensure the commissioned training and awareness raising events in 22-23 will target areas identified.</p>
<p><b>7 Minute Guide to Named and Designated Safeguarding Leads</b></p>	<p>7 minute briefings have been used for CSPRs where they have been developed to demonstrate information to all agencies in a digestible format. Understanding the roles within health is important for escalation and multi-agency working.</p>

# Key Challenges

<b>Partnership Engagement</b>	<p>Virtual working has helped speed some processes up, but it has left a gap of engagement. Throughout the year many online sessions were held but there was feedback from partners about a disconnect. In the coming year the THSCP will be holding more events in person and via hybrid methods. The Executive have also committed to attending task and finish and sub-groups.</p>
<b>Multi-Agency Data</b>	<p>Last year the 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, as well as a compliance return and to include comparative data from the previous quarter or year.</p>
<b>Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs)</b>	<p>CSPRs took place within the partnership this year (rather than being externally commissioned), which ensured they were completed in a timely manner and that the person authoring understood the internal processes so therefore could make achievable recommendations for change. However capacity for the review is limited as this has to be undertaken alongside the authors day job. The THSCP are exploring options of bringing in additional resource for this.</p>
<b>Website/Hosting Space</b>	<p>Feedback from partners has been that the website we use is not interactive, we aim to commission a new website this coming year.</p>
<b>Implementation of Young Scrutineers</b>	<p>The THSCP were ambitious with the project to employ young people directly into the business unit. Ensuring the young people are paid created barriers as new contracts had to be built. The local authority was undergoing a large restructure and HR resource was limited. The THSCP are pleased this process is now complete, but reflects on how this could have been implemented in a more timely manner. All documentation on how the THSCP made this happen has been shared with other authorities to prevent any further barriers in other areas.</p>
<b>Capacity and Funding</b>	<p>There is still a significant way to go to a Safeguarding Partnership of equal funding and the Local Authority contribution decreased 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. Partners have had a very difficult couple of years within the pandemic have expressed issues with capacity to carry out some work within the THSCP.</p>
<b>Embedding of Learning</b>	<p>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 monthly with the sole purpose of embedding the learning from audits and statutory reviews.</p>



# THSCP Priorities

## Setting the Priorities:

In November and December 2020, the THSCP set the priorities across the partnership: A rigorous process including reviewing all data, workshops for managers and practitioners, engagement with children and young people and review of all audits, was put in place to ensure the priorities tackle the core issues that children and young people are facing in the borough. The Executive Group reviewed the evidence and made the final decision on the chosen priorities. The priorities have been in place for one year and will continue for the next year to imbed the action plans which include (but are not limited to):



### Exploitation – Local Authority led

- To provide a greater level of preventative support to those children and young people who may be vulnerable to Child Exploitation
- To offer a support group to parents whose children are at risk of/experiencing CSE.
- Support Group for young people
- To develop a complex (contextual) Safeguarding approach when working with young people where the risk is identified as extra-familial harm



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

- A Vlog on appropriate language for professionals to use regarding DA
- Support for practitioners working with families with DA in the home including training
- A tool kit for young people on when and how to talk to an adult and how to support each other.
- Awareness sessions on the impact of DA and what this looks like in Children and Young People



### Staying Safe Online – Police led

- Community Engagement Events for parents and carers to feed into the Online Safety Agenda.
- 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.
- Dedicated webpage set up to hold information on Online Safety.

# Partner Commitment to the Priority Areas

*“We have reinstated the role of Safeguarding Transitions Social Worker in our Central Safeguarding Team and are working with Children’s Services to ensure we proactively identify children and young people who may come to the attention of Adult Social Care via a safeguarding route. The postholder has reached out to local organisations to raise awareness. We have agreed for the ASC Safeguarding Service Manager to co-chair the Vulnerability Violence & Exploitation Sub-Group which sits under THSCP.” - **Adult Social Care***

*“All maternity staff are Level 3 domestic abuse trained and we ensure as a team that we offer regular supervision sessions which are mandatory so that we can share any updates and advise on any new legislation etc. This is also a space for case discussions so that staff can share their own experiences and management of cases which enables staff to learn from us and each other.” - **Barts Health Midwifery Service***

*“Domestic Abuse is an integral part of both Safeguarding Children and Adults work and Named Professionals often provide joint group supervisions and case advice to teams and individual clinicians ensuring a wide consideration of the impact and safety of children within the context of the whole family’s needs. The Safeguarding Team is involved in internal Domestic Abuse group and MARAC to ensure a live ongoing discussion and also attend as far as possible any steering or working groups within the THSCP as well as working jointly with our Safeguarding Adults colleagues on Domestic Homicide Reviews” - **East London Foundation Trust***

*“Exploitation Screening Tool has been developed for partner agencies to complete to enable partners to screen/assess children where are the concerns around exploitation and include as part of any MASH referral. Exploitation Risk Assessment has been developed – these are completed by social workers to enable them to identify and analyse the risks or harm. There are support workers in the team engaging with children being harmed through exploitation or at risk of this. We are a co-located team with the Police – information and intel are shared regularly between partner agencies, which enables disruption around exploitation. The development of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Panel – MACE. The Exploitation Co-ordinators in the team raise awareness and deliver training around exploitation to partner agencies and Children’s Social Care. They also assist with developing the workforce around identifying and assessing exploitation and have a key role in improving practice for harm*

*outside the home.” - **Exploitation Team***

*“Staff undertake a range of training to inform and ensure safeguarding practices. Policies and procedures are in place around safeguarding, and these are kept in the staff room for children to access. The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes Quality Assurance Training around safeguarding on a two-year basis. The children who have access to the internet at the scheme have restrictions in place that stops them accessing certain websites and no access to social media. All children who bring mobile phones to the scheme must hand them into reception.” - **Holiday Childcare Scheme***

*“We have an extensive safeguarding team, all of whom train and develop staff in terms of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) child abuse and trauma etc and members of staff have their own specialism. For instance, a CSE trained member of staff who can dedicate time to the girls on site and works in order to be able to provide sexual health support. Safe East delivers 1-2-1 sessions as well as workshops to our students at KS3 and KS4. The Osmani Trust comes to LEAP at least once a week to focus on exploitation work, knife crime, gangs etc. We also have Kazzum onsite each week at KS4 working with students in small groups on issues. We have parenting support workers, who deliver workshops and bespoke parenting support programmes. Our PSHE program focusses on all of these issues, from consent to CSE, domestic abuse, online safety and many more. All key workers discuss these issues with their key students daily and report back in daily staff briefings after school. We have also provided links to other organisations and have recently appointed a social worker who works on site” - **LEAP***

*“A regular programme of test purchasing of harmful age restricted products such as tobacco, vapes, alcohol, knives, corrosive substances, psychoactive substances and fireworks to ensure that retailers are abiding by the law; and prosecution of those found to be selling such products to minors. We also instigate licensing reviews for licensed premises where there is evidence to show that they are failing to protect children from harm. This may result in either revocation of the licence or additional conditions being imposed on the licensees to ensure better measure are put in place for the protection of children.” - **Trading Standards***

# Partner Commitment to the Priority Areas

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*“Parental Engagement and Family Support staff embed THSCP priorities within the Keeping Children Safe Online sessions. The Parental Engagement Team also deliver a range of courses and Zoom sessions such as Speakeasy, Emotional First Aid and Platform to Talk forums which explore a focus on a range of issues including exploitation and the impact of Domestic Abuse on children. This year we have worked with **Nurture UK** funded by the national **Violence Reduction Unit**. The training has supported our work with children who have experienced **Domestic Abuse** The training focused on developing staff awareness of trauma informed practice and attachment theory. We have accessed excellent training for example, Attachment patterns in the classroom & In-class Strategies, Emotion coaching, Nurturing Parent Engagement & Nurturing support for families using SVRI Tool. We have also accessed a series of author talks and been provided with free copies of the books which have inspired and informed leaders for example: Understanding Shame in Children with **Betsy de Thierry** and ‘Building a Trauma-Informed Restorative School with **Joe Brummer**’. **Online safety** is integrated into the Computing curriculum throughout the year, the school has a focus on online safety/cyber bullying annually in the anti-bullying assemblies. We run online safety workshop for parents and also provide parents with an extensive range of online safety resources, which were also published on the school’s website and could be accessed via: <http://www.williamdavis.org.uk/online-safety.html> Leaders have ensured that they attend training in order to further understand the impact of **Exploitation**; and share key updates with staff in training sessions and briefings.” –*

**Parental Engagement Team**

*“Our local Exploitation team has been working closely in partnership with LA partners and other key agencies to ensure a joined-up approach to deal with those identified as at risk of child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation alike. A key example of this is when dealing with regular missing children who come to notice for possible links to County Lines style offending, working with Central Specialist Crime (Op Orochi) while ensuring those being exploited are treated as victims and safeguarded. Domestic Abuse processes ensure the voice of the child is captured early in the investigation and we are able to assess*

*whether there are opportunities to pursue child cruelty or neglect charges due to the effect of emotional distress that growing up in a home where DA is a reality will clearly be causing to the child. Work with the CPS to maximise these opportunities is ongoing centrally at time of writing. The MPS chair the Staying Safe Online group and are committed to ensuring the safety of young people in the online realm”. – **Police***

*“ We ensured staff are fully trained in regard to Domestic Abuse and Child Safeguarding. We encourage victims of DV to seek support and understand impact on their children” –*

**RESET Treatment**

*“We are committed to the THSCP Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan. VAWG training delivered covers exploitation and impact of Domestic Abuse on children. Schools can access this training and can sign the anti-VAWG pledge where they commit to enhancing policies, attending training and having VAWG Champions within the school. 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence is supported annually; the VAWG&HC Team have delivered workshops to children’s centres, schools, held stalls at conferences, run webinars and in-person training.” – **VAWG Team***

*“Co-ordinators have been trained by Positive Change in REPAIR, so that the REPAIR approach is adopted which means holding perpetrators to account, work alongside the survivor and not continuing to revictimize and the impact of abuse of parent rather than judging parent. We support the safer and together approach which feeds into the Child Protection Plans. We share expertise around DA via Learning Wednesdays. Lots of consideration has been given to exploitation including measuring harm outside the home as well as harm inside the home, we work closely with the Exploitation Service to consider how we work differently. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has created a leaflet to support parents make decisions about who they invite into their home, choosing sports coaches, clubs, tutors.” -**Supporting Families Service***

# Voice of the Child and Young Person at the Centre of What We Do

The following Children and Young People's Engagement Groups were consulted in the priority setting period :

- CAMHS YP Participation Group
- Barts Health Youth Forum/Youth Empowerment Squad
- Children Living in Care Council
- Youth Council
- Young Carers forum
- Young Health Watch
- Youth Service Providers Forum
- Young People with SEND Forum

The feedback helped us set the priorities last year and has been used to develop the action plans under the priorities this year. In response to the feedback, the groups are working towards the following in their priority areas (including but not limited too):

- Procurement of new website which has a host of resources for young people to use.
- Development of tool kits for young people to have conversations about difficult subjects such as Domestic Abuse and Online Safety with their peers, professionals and parents and carers.
- Online Safety group has ensured their plan of action covers more than social media and includes children of all ages.
- Campaigns and awareness events are planned to take place to include young people in these subjects.
- To publish and be transparent about what happens when disclosures are made.
- Development of engagement groups with children and young people to have their feedback as these projects are taking place.
- This year we have put in place direct routes of where young people will be consistently engaged within the strategic work, this includes the implementation of the Young Scrutineers and Youth Advisory Board (which has been developed for 16–21-year-old) to ascertain their views around service delivery and assisting to implement new policies and strategies.

## Feedback from the Consultation with Children and Young People

We are worried about misinformation/conspiracy theories online – how to verify information

Want to better understand the reasons for issues eg county lines in order to make better informed choices

Want to know where to get information if worried about friends/how to spot signs of Domestic Abuse

Want a bank of online resources in a place that is accessible; "we want to know who to go to and how to get help for ourselves and friends"

Aware of campaigns such as Ask for Ani and Ask for Angela aimed at adults and would like similar for instance in youth centres/schools

Want a system of rewarding and listening to and believing courageous reporting

There is an assumption that everyone is on/wants to be on social media and some feel pressured to join certain sites to fit in

Want more information about consequences of gang involvement and advice on alternatives sooner (both in terms of at a younger age and prior to getting involved)

# Voice of the Child and Young Person at the Centre of What We Do

A significant project within this year was the development of Scrutiny which has included the recruitment of three 'Young Scrutineers'. Through this time period the back office work has been complete. This type of role has sat outside 'usual' HR processes as the young people will be paid a London Living Wage for their work and the role is flexible to fit around any educational or training commitments. We have successfully built contracts with the HR and legal department to ensure this and have recently appointed three young people between the ages of 16 and 17 to work with the THSCP to ensure the voice of the child and the young person is present within all the work.

The Young Scrutineers will start after the May exam period and join the team in June 2022.

Their role will include:

- Each being allocated to a priority work area and working with the chair of that priority group;
- Reviewing any projects and outputs linked with the THSCP to ensure the tools created work for young people;
- Collaborating with other young people engagement groups;
- Engaging young people who are not a part of specific engagement groups;
- Offering challenge to the leaders with the THSCP;
- Being included in the development of strategies and policies.

**Impact:** Directly recruiting young people into the Team will ensure that the professionals are scrutinised by those affected by the decisions. Consultation from peer to peer will bring in honest thoughts on any changes the THSCP sets out to make. Consulting with young people throughout makes sure the THSCP gets things right the first time and any tool kits which are created are beneficial to children and young people, it also ensures that the priorities are aligned from professionals to children and young people.



# Children and Young People at the Centre of THSCP

The THSCP makes it a principle to consult with children and young people when implementing decisions, such as setting the priorities, but throughout the year we ensure our partners keep the voice of the child/ young person at the centre of their care, some examples of this are below:

*“We have worked in cooperation with Children’s Services on a case of forced marriage involving one child and one young adult, supporting the young person to obtain an annulment and to work towards their goals for training and accommodation, as well assisting in obtaining a Forced Marriage Protection Order.”- **Adult Social Care***

*“We regularly hold supervision sessions both psychological and safeguarding based and so these are opportunities to reflect and review cases and ensure that we are continuing to have the voice of the child and mother at the centre of the care that we provide. We ensure that our priority is the safety of the mother and her child and so all the work we do, strives to ensure this.” - **Barts Health Midwifery Service***

*‘Voice of the Child’ is discussed heavily in training and supervision, helping practitioners to critically reflect on the child’s welfare, their lived experience and the impact of their decision making within clinical practice. The most recent audit has focused on several areas of supervision and safeguarding practice including the specific question of ‘Did the safeguarding supervision capture the voice of the child/the lived experience of the child?’ The response was very positive and cited as one of the most useful things about safeguarding supervision. The responses were from both child and adult facing services;*

- *“To see things from the child's perspective as well as the mothers”*
- *“It gave me the opportunity to explore safeguarding concerns if a young person I am working with and how to keep the young person and the family safe”*
- *“The need to consider about the lived experience of the child”- **East London Foundation Service***

*Voice Of The Child has been a primary focus of periodic Safeguarding training for both experienced officers and those newly recruited to the MPS. Reporting templates have been updated to ensure VOTC is a mandatory field when completing initial investigation of Domestic Abuse and is a repeat area of focus in periodic quality assurance exercises tasked by our central Data Integrity Team. – **Metropolitan Police***

*The team have a caseload of high risk/high harm children. The aim is to offer high support and intervention to these children being harmed through exploitation and/or violence. They work jointly with young people to build enduring, positive and trusting relationships. A Youth Advisory Board has been developed for young people/adults (16–21-year-olds) to ascertain their views around service delivery and assisting to implement new policies and strategies. The team have been trained to offer the ‘Your Choice’ programme to young people being harmed or at risk of being harmed through violence and/or exploitation and deliver Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) skills and techniques with young people. A significant aspect of this programme is that the young person remains the centre of this approach, including enabling them to set goals for themselves and to be supported by the practitioners throughout this programme to achieve these. – **Exploitation Service***

*The Holiday Childcare Scheme encourages all children to have a voice through their choice of play opportunities and by sharing their opinions and feelings with scheme play workers and with each other. Welcome meetings take place each morning at the scheme, children can find out about activities for the day and new children are introduced to staff and their peers. Staff briefings each morning enable staff to share and understand the needs of individual children particularly those who may be vulnerable and / or have SEND. Our main priority is to ensure a child’s safety and wellbeing, staff follow our safeguarding policy and report any concerns to the DSL team. - **Holiday Childcare Scheme***

# Children and Young People at the Centre of THSCP

The THSCP makes it a principle to consult with children and young people when implementing decisions, such as setting the priorities, but throughout the year we ensure our partners keep the voice of the child/ young person at the centre of their care, some examples of this are below:

*“Through internal and external partnerships with schools, families and organisations we receive regular insight into children and young people’s voices. Keeping Children Safe Online sessions delivered in schools by the Parental Engagement Team have been developed and updated regularly in response to feedback from schools, parents and young people. The St Paul’s Way Trust School held morning and twilight sessions for parents of every year group. Sessions were tailored to specific issues and concerns raised in advance by teachers, for example the number of young people in Year 8 using Discord, a chat and video APP. Content was added into the session for Year 8 parents attending to ensure they were aware and could have informed conversations with their children.” -*

**Parental Engagement Team**

*“Every decision we take at LEAP is based on the principle of ‘What is best for this child’. This is woven through the bespoke curriculum all students have, as well as all behaviour management and therapeutic interventions we offer. We have an extended multi-disciplinary team in which all students are discussed and can be allocated to wellbeing professionals on site such as music therapy, CAMHS, counselling and an onsite social worker. Every discussion we have about any child at LEAP is based on this principle. In addition, all pupils have key workers, who speak to their key students every day, which opens lines of communication between children and adults. We have scheduled weekly, but often daily safeguarding meetings where a child’s issues are addressed and discussed. We have a student council who meet and are able to talk about changes that they feel are needed in the school. All students go through a rigorous assessment on entry which takes into account mental health and well being” –LEAP.*

*“Pupil voice is planned for within our tiered approach which includes, Play and art therapy (targeted individuals), Mentoring (targeted groups and individuals), Restorative conversations (involved groups and individuals), Class circles (class issues), School council (school issues), Open door and listening staff culture, Antibullying awareness work with parents and children , Multiagency work, E1 Schools Pupil Parliament (local issues)” –*

**William Davis Primary School**

*“ We encourage families to engage with the MPACT Programme which helps parents to understand the impact of substance misuse on their children/ wider families. The team attend statutory meetings and hearing the views of the children shared by social workers/parents/schools.” -* **RESET Treatment**

*“Safeguarding issues are specifically referenced in several places in our annual Team Plan and form and are also reflected in the Performance Indicators for the team.” –* **Trading Standards**

*“We have excellent joint working between Children's Services and VAWG including representation in operation and strategic realms. We offer extensive training on VAWG, including healthy relationships, drive to push for trauma informed approach, this features in our VAWG Strategy, have a Whole School Approach to VAWG to ensure earlier intervention, multiple borough wide campaigns etc. Domestic Homicide Review learning often includes recommendations which are cross cutting in relation to VAWG and children.” -* **Violence Against Women and Girls Team**

*“The voice of the child is consistently at the center of our work which includes but isn’t limited to, Child Protection Chairs speaking with children and young people (CYP) before conferences to seek their views and where required CYP are supported to attend the conference. The IRO service also meets with CYP through their review and seeks feedback from the Children in Care Council. An example of the effort and dedication displayed by the advocates with a child with non-verbal autistic spectrum disorder; the advocate visited the child at the school he attends and worked with teacher to understand how best to communicate with him. With the use of an Ipad, the child was able to communicate that his home situation made him sad, by using that icon on the Ipad. This was powerful information for the CP conference and his parents. The LADO ensures children and young people’s voice are captured at the point of referrals being made to the LADO. Staff are asked to capture what children say in their own words and this is clearly stated on the front page of the referral paperwork.” –* **Supporting Families**

# Engagement Activity, Training and Events

During this period, Covid 19 continued to impact globally, engagement activity was held mainly online moving towards hybrid and in person towards the end of the year. The goal for 22-23 is to prioritise certain events, such as multi-agency audit workshops, being face to face, to ensure partners can come together in the same space.

November 2021 was Safeguarding Month and the THSCP presented five awareness sessions for partners. The sessions were also led by various agencies the sessions included:

**A Domestic Abuse joint conference** with the Safeguarding Adults Boards, this included external speakers to raise awareness nationally and locally. One speaker focused on the impact of Domestic Abuse on Bangladeshi families, which many practitioners reported back as being very helpful to their practice. The join up between the Safeguarding Adults Board and the THSCP promotes a Think Family and Think Community ethos, it ensure that both strategic groups are on the same page regarding the topics. We look forward to more join up in the year 22-23.

**Online Safety Awareness Event** was held by the police and informed practitioners which applications, browsers and sites to watch out for and be wary off. Information was distributed after the event with the list of current apps on the police radar and how they impact the safety of children and young people.

**Home Safety and Prevention of Accidental Injuries Event** was held as this was a key theme within an on going CSPR. The session was led by the Early Help team and demonstrated ways practitioners could help parents and carers ensure their home was safe for infants and small children.

**Rapid Reviews: the Process Event** was led by the chair of the Rapid Review Group, to disseminate information on how the process works around Rapid Reviews and CSPRs, the session also included the learning from a published CSPR 'Asif'.

**Exploitation Awareness** was chaired by the Exploitation Team, this session showed how to spot the signs of exploitation and discussed the implementation of the Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy.

**Throughout the year other engagement took place which included:**

- THSCP Bulletins which were sent out with key decisions, feedback from the Executive and training dates (including training held by partners open for any agency to join).
- CSPR learning event was held as soon as the CSPR was published to disseminate the information and learning from the review.
- The Executive Q&A Event was held to gain feedback from partners on the priority subjects and planning for the year ahead
- NSPCC Safeguarding Training; six sessions were commissioned and held for either an Introduction to Safeguarding or Designated Lead Training.

## Training Needs Analysis

In compiling the analysis, information and evidence from the following forums was collated:

- Priority Task & Finish Groups
- QA&P subgroup including Data Dashboard
- Statutory Review Action Plan
- Multi-Agency Audits
- Rapid Review Panels
- Local CSPR workshops and CSPR reports
- Education Safeguarding Forum
- Wider Partnership Engagement events
- Children and Young People Engagement
- National Panel Annual Report 2020
- National Panel CSPR reports Pan London Safeguarding Partnership Training Subgroup
- Monitoring of partner requests for specific training
- Learning from DHRs
- Learning from relevant National Reports including 'Everyone's Invited' and IICSA

Area's Identified in the Training Needs Analysis which will form the training plan for 2022-23:

- Online Safety Training for Practitioners working with Children and Young People
- Training for practitioners on managing Mental Health in both Children and Young People and their Parents/Carers
- Supporting children and young people in relation to the impact of Domestic Abuse
- Thresholds Training for Partners outside of Supporting Families
- Information sharing and multi-agency working
- Harmful Sexualised Behaviour, predominantly within Primary School age children



# Partner Commitment to the Implementation of Learning

- *“We have agreed for the ASC Safeguarding Service Manager to co-chair the Vulnerability Violence & Exploitation Sub-Group which sits under TH Safeguarding Children’s partnership, and will be co-chaired by Children’s, Adults and Community Safety, which will be a positive partnership. We have planned to set up a Modern Day Slavery Board in 2022-2023 involving key partners across the borough. The first joint SAB and THSCP safeguarding conference was held in 2021-2022 and was well received.” -Adult Social Care*
- *“All staff are provided with mandatory Safeguarding Training. All Mental Health staff are required to complete Safeguarding Training at Level 3. Training is provided weekly. Learning is also disseminated through supervision, provision of workshops. Seven Minute Briefings where learning is shared across the whole Trust and Safeguarding Team Newsletters. The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Bulletin is shared across services working in TH. ELFT participates in the Safeguarding Month providing information and raising awareness.” - East London Foundation Trust*
- *“Exploitation Screening Tool has been developed for partner agencies to complete to enable partners to screen/assess children where are the concerns around exploitation, and include as part of any MASH referral. Exploitation Risk Assessment has been developed – these are completed by social workers to enable them to identify and analyse the risks or harm. There are support workers in the team engaging with children being harmed through exploitation or at risk of this. We are a co-located team with the Police – information and intel are shared regularly between partner agencies, which enables disruption around exploitation. The development of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Panel - MACE (has also been known as MARP – Multi-Agency Risk Panel). The Exploitation Co-ordinators in the team raise awareness and deliver training around exploitation to partner agencies and Children’s Social Care. They also assist with developing the workforce around identifying and assessing exploitation, and have a key role in improving practice for harm outside the home.” - Exploitation Service*
- *“Team leaders at the scheme and the Scheme Manager work with Local Authority colleagues in Social Care and the SEN Team also health practitioners and schools to ensure parents and children are supported and THSCP guidelines are embedded within practice. The scheme manager has worked closely with the MASH team and police in response to a recent Safeguarding concern with learning shared through team updates and staff briefings. All policies and procedures are available to staff in the staff break area and refresher updates are included in staff briefings, regular training and learning walks whilst the scheme is operating.” - Holiday Childcare Scheme Response*
- *“Staff are trained regularly in Child Protections and Safeguarding – we have regular slots in our professional development schedule to allow us to address any issues that might arise. Our CP Coordinator has weekly meetings with our support staff as well as students’ key workers to ensure all agencies and professionals involved are informed and that networks are communicating. We have employed our own LEAP social worker to further tighten our procedures and widen our students’ and parents’ access to immediate support. We are part of the DfE’s Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce pilot, which offers more comprehensive support to our students and parents by combining safeguarding measures with therapeutic interventions. We work closely with CSC, YOT, Early Help, our local school liaison officer and more. We hold regular meetings with all of the above to ensure that we don’t miss any safeguarding concerns and share any incidents with the professional network around a child in LEAP’s care. Our record keeping is comprehensive – we record all incidents and interventions” - LEAP*
- *“Through our safeguarding level 3 training, safeguarding supervision training and regular external meetings that we attend. We also have weekly team meetings where we discuss any current safeguarding cases, the plans and any learning that might be relevant to improving care.” -Barts Health Midwifery Service*



# Partner responses on the Implementation of Learning

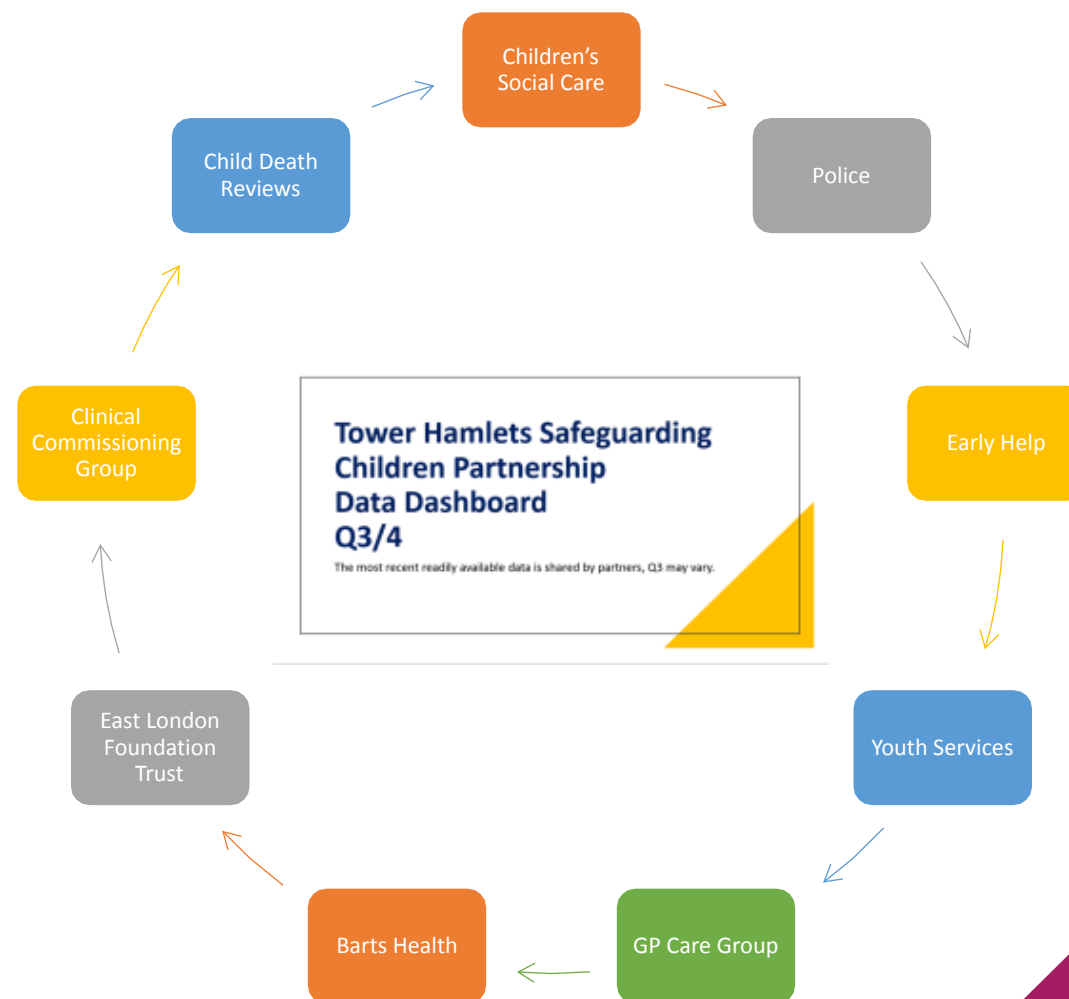
- *“By working with both internal and external teams, schools and family support agencies in Tower Hamlets. All staff have attended training and refresher sessions.” - **Parental Engagement Team***
- *“Working with the THSCP Education Sub Committee has provided me with greater insight into safeguarding systems across the education sector. As a result I have felt better positioned to engage with Managers in the Early Help Hub and Health + School Nursing Team in order to improve the outcomes for keeping children safe. An example being to seek clarification on changes to how Health Care Plans are written and managed.” - **William Davis School***
- *“As a statutory partner we routinely attend Safeguarding Children Partnership reviews and ensure any learning achieved is disseminated to all officers via internal messaging and embedded into training packages where appropriate. Internal MPS KPIs for safeguarding children include attendance and time frames around strategy meetings and ICPCs which we currently sit at close to 100% attendance (affected only by Covid sickness).” - **Police***
- *“Through the thematic review there has been lots of discussions about Serious Youth Violence. We have been committed to all training and learning from the CSPRs, Audits and Rapid Reviews.” - **Supporting Families Service***
- *“Monthly Safeguarding Meetings – discuss safeguarding, encourage team learning and engagement with partner agencies to support vulnerable adults and children linked to our service users. Joint MDT’s with Gateway Midwife. Support team attendance to professionals meetings/MARAC. RESET feel it would be beneficial that a representative from the service to sit on the MASH panel – to encourage better partnership working with Children’s Services and the Substance Misuse service.” - **RESET Training***
- *“Safeguarding training is mandatory. We are aiming for VAWG/DA training to be embedded or made mandatory too. We coordinate key VAWG/DA Boards which have active partnership working with THSCP. These include MARAC, MARAC Steering Group, VAWG Steering Group, Specialist Domestic Abuse Court, Sanctuary, multi agency training/outreach/campaigns etc. VAWG Team member is co-trainer for the Positive Change Bengali speaking programme. We commission and or contract manage/support most of the VAWG provisions which benefit multi agencies such as IDVA’s, Refuge, Floating Support, Economic Abuse, FGM projects etc (see VAWG Delivery Plan/Strategy for finer details).” – **Violence Against Women and Girls***

# Using Data to Inform Practice

Partners submit data and narrative to the THSCP to form the multi-agency data dashboard. Within the Quality, Performance and Assurance Group each partner discusses their data. Key trends and issues are then picked up and escalated to the Executive Group for action. Within this year the THSCP has tightened up the processes, ensuring it is available every quarter from all partners and allocating more time for data scrutiny. *All data is completely anonymised.*

## A few things we learnt from our data this year:

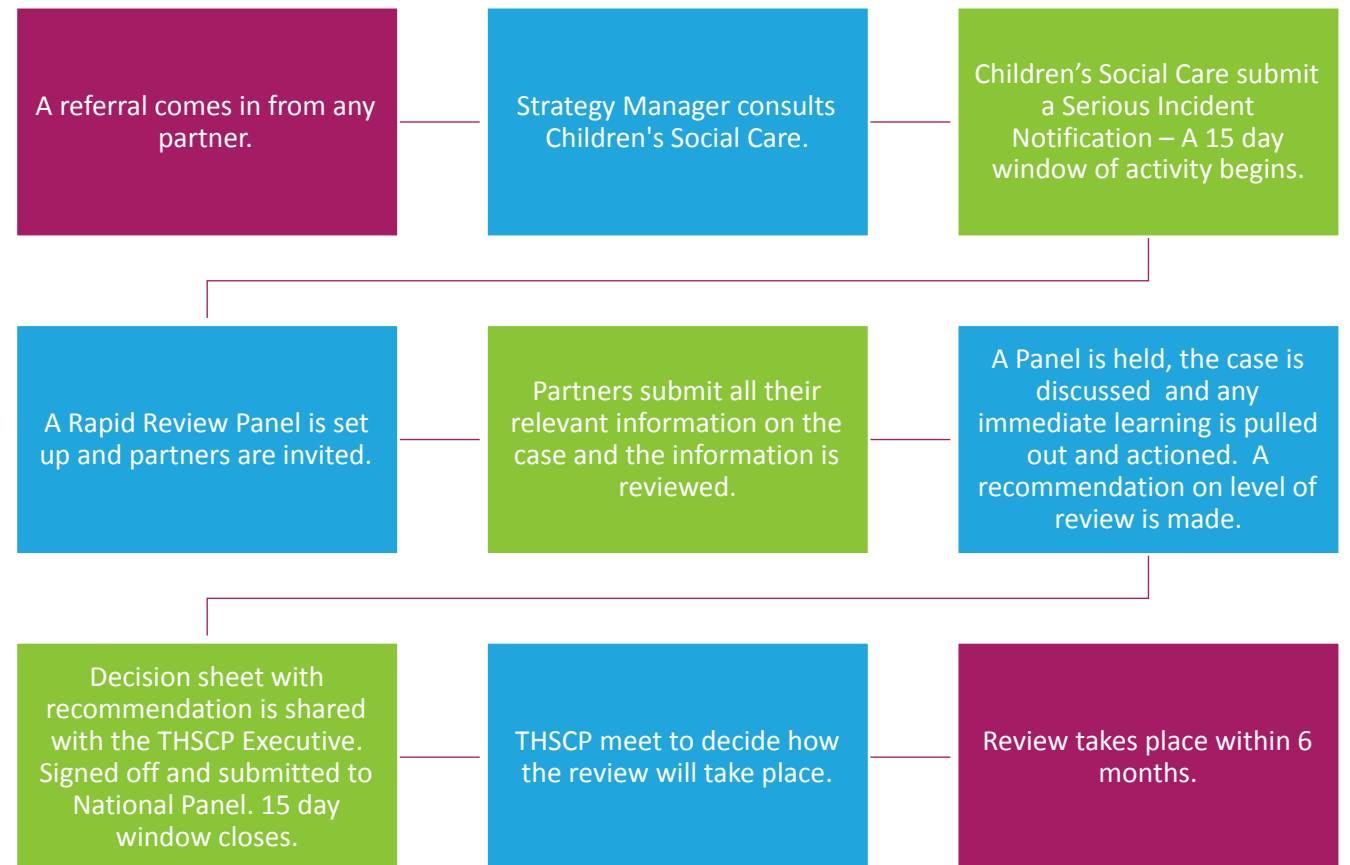
- Some of the most prevalent issues for referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub are the impact of domestic abuse on young people and mental health / wellbeing concerns.
- East London Foundation Trust reported themes from supervisions were primarily Parenting Capacity and Mental Illness, Parenting Capacity, 'Other' (e.g. older siblings with presentations of mental health impacting on younger siblings), Self harming and suicidal thoughts and Domestic abuse.
- The GP Care Group reported, themes from advice calls to the Safeguarding Team in Q.3 covered a broad range. Data is now collected as to the specific nature of individual advice calls and the top enquiries are for support to manage domestic abuse cases and cases where families are hard to engage or decline 0-19 services.
- There was an increase in Child Protection plans in October-November 2021, the most common categories were neglect and physical abuse.
- Barts Health reported their main reasons for referrals to the local authority was harm outside of the home, non-accidental injuries, mental health and domestic abuse.



# Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and The Learning Cycle

*The purpose of reviews of serious child safeguarding cases, at both local and national level, is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Learning is relevant locally, but it has a wider importance for all practitioners working with children and families and for the government and policymakers. Understanding whether there are systemic issues, and whether and how policy and practice need to change, is critical to the system being dynamic and self-improving. – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*

- Two CSPRs have taken place, one is currently in the final stages of the process and one is complete. Learning sessions were held to share the recommendations with all partners.
- The boxes to the right show the process from referral to Child Safeguarding Practice Review.



Recording the findings, and implementing the learning:

- The initial Rapid Review Panel is a key part of the reviews, the panel itself is a workshop that takes on any immediate action required.
- Previously each case was allocated its own action plan, actions that come out of Rapid Review Panels and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are now collated into one action plan. This ensures that there is no duplication and additional themes can be picked up from reviewing actions side by side. This action plan is held by the Rapid Review Working Group and the Quality Assurance and Performance subgroup has oversight, which ensures the recommendations are implemented.

# Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and The Learning Cycle

Once a recommendation has been made the Executive Group decide how the review will be carried out from the following options:

- Single Agency Audit and Assurance
- Multi Agency Audit
- Partner led Workshop
- Commissioned Independent Reviewer led Workshop
- Partner Authored Report
- Commissioned Independent Reviewer Report
- Independent Scrutineer Report
- Strategy Manager Report
- Family and/or Child Engagement
- Children and Young People Workshop
- Children and Young People Outreach Activities

More than one option is chosen to ensure a thorough review. The individuals within the THSCP who are chosen to carry out the tasks are of senior management level with no direct involvement in the case. The options are chosen based on what is best suited for each individual case and the main themes of the case.



Both CSPRs which were conducted this year were led by senior partners in the THSCP. They produced thematic style reports, which included auditing at least 6 cases with similar themes, reviewing any similar Rapid Reviews, 1:1 discussions with practitioners and managers involved in the case, consultation and feedback from the family, large scale workshops, national research, reviewing of CSPRs published in other areas with similar themes.

# Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Audits

During this year **Five THSCP Rapid Reviews** were held (two of which reached the threshold for CSPP). The following list demonstrates the key themes:

- Accidental injury was a feature in 1 case
- Gaming addiction and staying safe online was a feature in 1 case
- Child mental health was a feature in 2 cases
- Parental mental health was a feature in 2 cases
- Neglect was a feature in 3 cases
- Domestic abuse was a feature in 3 cases
- Child being a victim of violence was a feature in 3 cases
- The impact of covid was a feature in 2 cases

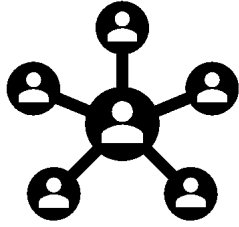
**Three Multi-Agency Audits** were held on the following topics:

- Infant Neglect
- Adolescent Neglect
- Exploitation

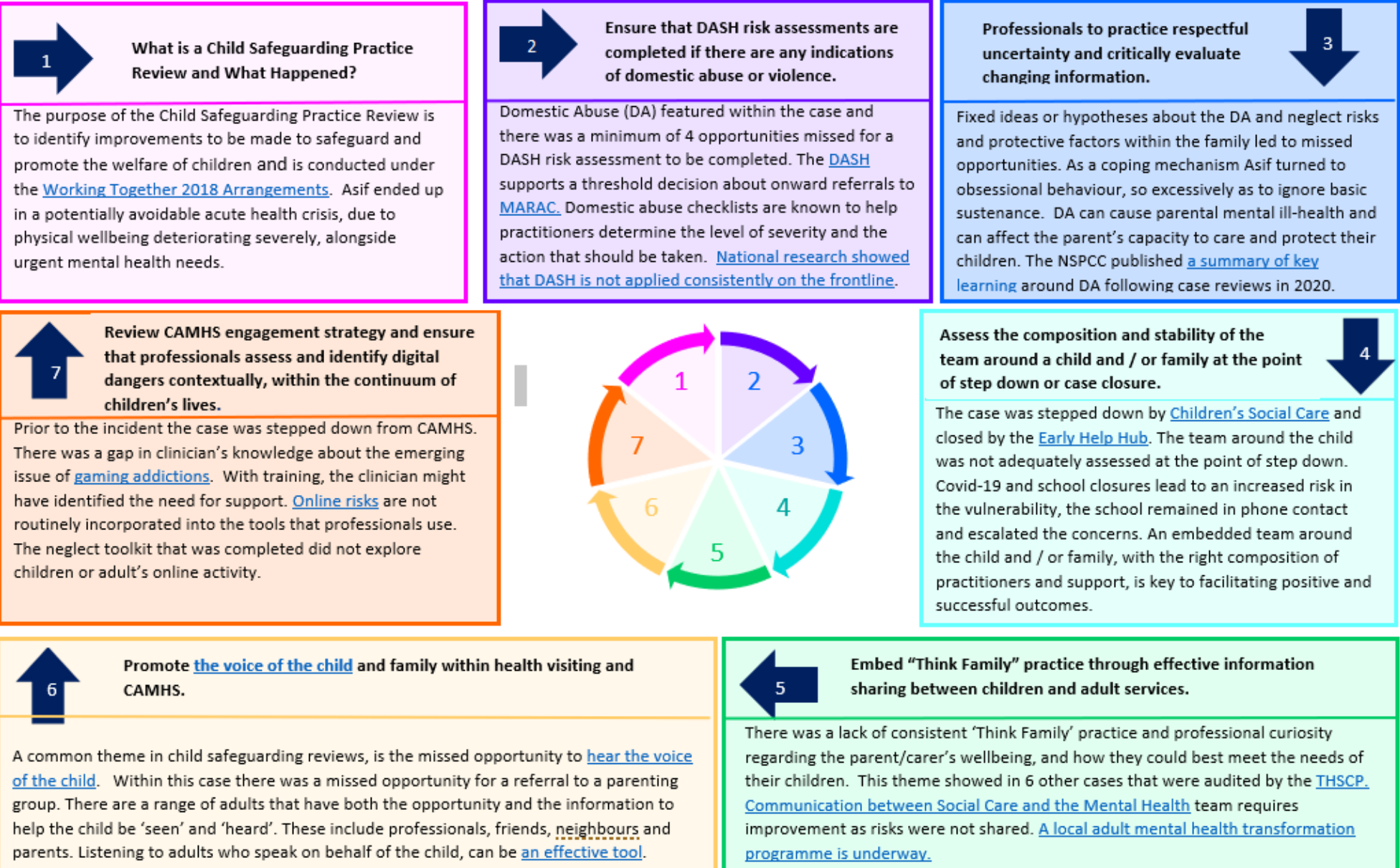
Some of the key themes identified were:

- Step down of cases due to non-engagement
- Parental mental health and vulnerabilities
- Exploitation and Adolescent Neglect audits showed high levels of trauma in early life
- A need to strengthen professional curiosity
- The role of fathers, limited information on fathers within cases
- Agencies not always invited to meetings and information sharing could be improved
- Excellence of practice showed by frontline workers who had grip on the cases and had built good relationships with young people. This included meeting with the young people in places that they were most comfortable

Impact: For a Rapid Review to be held, a Serious Incident Notification must have been made. This is the highest level of Safeguarding Concerns. The THSCP records the themes and ensures they are disseminated and acted on, as well as the specific recommendations that come out of the reviews. These themes have influenced the safeguarding practice week and work of the task and finish groups and subgroups. The more the THSCP understands about the cases the more prioritisation and focus can be aimed at prevention.



## 7 Minute Briefing: Summary from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review – ‘Asif’



As part of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review process a 7 minute briefing has been introduced for all reports. This is a one page document that shows all the key areas of the learning. This is published alongside the report and sent to all practitioners. To the right is the CSPR ‘Asif’ 7 Minute Briefing and the areas identified in the review.

# Strategic Boards and Partnerships linked to the THSCP

**Safeguarding Adults Board:** The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board is a statutory multi-agency board that is committed to protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It has overall responsibility for co-coordinating safeguarding adult matters and ensuring that partner agencies carry out safeguarding adults work.

**Children and Families Executive:** The Executive is chaired by the Director of Children and Culture for the Local Authority and is attended by the strategic leadership from across the partnership. It reports to both the Partnership Executive Group and Tower Hamlets Together and is a decision-making body to take the key decisions on behalf of the wider partnership. The executive also has several sub-group which report into it.

**Every Chance for Every Child Forum:** The Every Chance for Every Child Forum is a consultative group, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, it is attended by a range of partners, parent representatives and young people. It is a forum that enables partners to consult with and test ideas with a wide range of people prior to their implementation

**The Health and Wellbeing Board :** Having a Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory requirement for local authorities. The board brings together the NHS, the local authority and Health Watch to jointly plan how best to meet local health and care needs, to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population, reduce health inequalities and commission services accordingly.

**Community Safety Partnership Board:** The Community Safety Partnership Board is required by law to conduct and consult on an annual strategic assessment of crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and re-offending within the borough and the findings are then used to produce the partnership's Community Safety Plan.



# Strategic Plan for the Year Ahead

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

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Embedding learning

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Partner engagement

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Independent Scrutiny

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Multi-Agency Training

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Inclusion of young people

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Improvements to the THSCP digital presence

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