

# Executive: London Safeguarding Children Partnership

## Annual report - February 2023

### Introduction

Over the past year there has been a transition in leadership for the London Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) with Ade Adetosoye, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Bromley and the Chief Executive London Committee Lead Advisor for Children, joining as the new chair of the LSCP Executive. The priority for the Executive has been to maintain focus on the key challenges facing safeguarding in London, particularly resetting after the pandemic and providing oversight to the system. This has included improving communications between the Executive and the local partnerships, as well as wider networks which it supports.

### Thematic priorities:

The LSCP has focused on two key priorities over the past year, in line with the most pressing challenges facing safeguarding services in London post-pandemic:

#### 1. Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

- The LSCP commissioned the CSA Centre of Expertise to roll out CSA training across London, following successful pilot activity across three local authority areas in 2021<sup>1</sup>. From September 2022 the CSA Centre has delivered one-day multi-agency training sessions on intra-familial child sexual abuse to pairs of local safeguarding children partnerships from across London. These sessions aim to equip professionals from across health, education, social care and policing with a deeper understanding of CSA including the scale and nature of CSA, the challenges and obstacles which can limit identification and response, understanding the child's experience and their role as professionals in disclosures. An evaluation of this training will be shared with the LSCP Executive upon completion.
- The LSCP set up the CSA Task and Finish group in April 2020 to address the significant issues in this area including gaps in service provision, lack of trained staff, lack of understanding of need and the inequitable offer for children across different partnership areas. The overall aim of the CSA Task and Finish group is to 'ensure that all children who are victims of sexual abuse receive the best possible medical, emotional and social support and advocacy to support them through their recovery and that they get justice for the crimes committed against them.' This group has led on work to improve datasets, referral pathways, workforce development, participation and prevention. It has an ambitious programme to take forward more work to tackle systemic obstacles including around medical response, improving health and wellbeing of children affected and the criminal justice response.

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<sup>1</sup> The evaluation for this pilot work can be accessed here: <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/training/evaluation-and-learning/improving-identification-and-response-to-child-sexual-abuse-in-london/>

## **2. Adolescent safeguarding**

- The LSCP Executive set up the London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (LASOB) to coordinate and draw together the range of partner activity around adolescent safeguarding. LASOB is chaired by Florence Kroll, DCS Greenwich, who regularly reports to the LSCP Executive on progress with this work stream. Activity identified within the LASOB work programme includes the implementation of the London Child Exploitation protocol and the development of a MACE workstream to improve the understanding and consistency of structures and processes across MACE meetings in London. The MACE review was presented at the September meeting of the LSCP Executive and was agreed, recognising the need to ensure consistency across the system and to make the best use of staff time.

### **Other work streams:**

## **3. Children in Custody**

- The Children in Custody Group, which reports into the Executive, was set up to produce a London Protocol on Children in Custody, alongside the Home Office Concordat. The group is now focusing on tackling delays in getting children to court on the day of charge, the number of children being held overnight, the services provided in custody suites including health services and the provision of alternative accommodation. Martin Pratt, Chair of ALDCS, chairs this group and regularly reports back to the LSCP Executive on this work stream.

## **4. Pan London safeguarding children training programme**

- The London SCP commissioned Emma Rodriguez to organise a Pan-London training programme on behalf of Local SCPs. The appointment was made in consultation with the chair of the Training Sub-Group and Emma worked closely with this group to design and run the training programme. The programme aimed to support local SCPs to meet their objectives, share learning from safeguarding reviews, increase consistency in safeguarding practice across London and promote work on issues that are likely affect a small number of children in each borough but are of significance across London (e.g. spirit possession). The programme has covered a wide range of different subjects including the identification of child exploitation under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, DBSs and safer recruitment, mental health and parenting, county lines and fabricated illness. The training group will share the full evaluation with the LSCP Executive upon completion of the programme in April 2023.

## **5. London Safeguarding Children Procedures**

- The London Safeguarding Children Procedures Editorial Board oversees the development and updating of the procedures on a regular basis. The London SCP has commissioned Steve Liddicott to support the Editorial Board and update the procedures on the advice of the Editorial Board and in consultation with key networks and partners. Steve provides regular updates to the London SCP on progress and emerging issues that need addressing in the procedures.

## **6. Child Q case and strip searches**

- In March 2022 Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership published a Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review into the Child Q case which involved a Black female child of secondary school age (Child Q), who was strip searched by female police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in 2020. The LSCP Executive held a special meeting following the publication of this review to discuss how to ensure lessons have been learnt from the review with key regional safeguarding

partners. The Executive then wrote to all local safeguarding partnerships to suggest that they engage with and consider their own response to the review.

- One feature believed to have a significance to the experience of Child Q is that of adultification bias. This concept is where adults perceive Black children as being older than they are. It is 'a form of bias where children from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities are perceived as being more 'streetwise', more 'grown up', less innocent and less vulnerable than other children. This particularly affects Black children, who might be viewed primarily as a threat rather than as a child who needs support'<sup>2</sup>. The Executive has agreed to explore and commission training at a regional level on adultification to address the concerns raised in the Child Q review.

## **7. London Safeguarding Children Dataset**

- The Executive has agreed to support the development of a London Safeguarding Children dataset which will provide a high-level overview of the scale and nature of child abuse and neglect in London, how this changes over time and how it compares with other regions and all of England. The Executive brought together children's social care data (collated through the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance) and the MPS' newly developed dataset on intra-familial child abuse for a discussion at its December meeting. The Executive will review these datasets every six months with the aim of creating a regional overview of the key challenges facing the safeguarding system, which will inform its work going forward.

### **Influencing government reforms of children's social care**

Members of the LSCP Executive have undertaken considerable activity aimed at influencing key stakeholders, particularly the Department for Education (DfE) in their response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care by Josh McAlister<sup>3</sup> and the National Panel's review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson<sup>4</sup>. With the recent publication of the DfE's long term plan for reforming children's social care<sup>5</sup> the Executive will be exploring further opportunities to build on these conversations as well as the activity and expertise built up across London's safeguarding sector and supported by the LSCP, to continue to improve the system and achieve better outcomes for children.

### **Networks**

The London Safeguarding Children Partnership has continued to support networks for the following professional groups over the past year:

- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Chairs and Scrutineers
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Managers
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Training Development Officers
- Child Protection Managers
- London MASH Stakeholders
- Editorial Board for the London Children Safeguarding Procedures
- Children in Custody
- London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board

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<sup>2</sup> [Child-Q-PUBLISHED-14-March-22.pdf \(chscp.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-review-into-the-murders-of-arthur-labinjo-hughes-and-star-hobson>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love>

The chairs of each of these networks has been invited to attend an Executive meeting on an annual basis to provide an update on the current priorities for their network and to escalate any issues for the Executive to address.

### **Conclusion**

The London Safeguarding Children Partnership has supported a wide range of activity over the past year aimed at improving safeguarding practice and policy across the capital. This report captures the main activity undertaken by the LSCP over the past year.