

# Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2020-2021



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## 1. Executive Summary

**“I have found a strong partnership that is open to scrutiny and challenge and one that strives to continually learn and improve practice.”**

**Alan Caton OBE, Independent Scrutineer, 2021**

This report provides an overview of the activity of Hillingdon’s Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board. The report provides assurance around the effectiveness of our local safeguarding arrangements and evidences the impact of these arrangements in ensuring the safety of Hillingdon residents irrespective of age.

The annual report 2020-21 covers a period of unprecedented challenge for residents and those agencies that provide support and safeguarding services throughout the coronavirus pandemic. Inevitably there has been the need to adapt and refocus services to ensure that the immediate needs of children, adults, their families, and carers were prioritised and met. It is to the credit of Hillingdon Safeguarding Partners that the children and adults remained safe and supported in having their needs met and being safe. An overwhelming majority of ‘core business’ continued to be progressed throughout the lockdown periods, in the context of key members of the partnership being redeployed to meet the need in frontline services. The capacity of partners to be dynamic in response to challenge and to develop innovative solutions reflects positively on the effective implementation of our Safeguarding Arrangements and the underpinning principle of shared and equal responsibility for safeguarding.

Between January and April 2021, our safeguarding arrangements were the subject of scrutiny by an independent expert with experience of both adult and child services. The Independent Scrutineer found that the local partnerships are meeting the statutory responsibilities and did not identify any areas of poor practice or weakness in the safeguarding arrangements, noting key strengths in partnership working and that ‘the partnership is one that is built on high support, high challenge and where difficult conversations are encouraged’.

The Safeguarding Partnership has continued to make progress against all priority areas, focussing on those with greatest impact for residents. The Safeguarding Partnership has evidenced the capacity to adapt in all areas of service delivery, from frontline services to training, strategic planning and coordination of services. All agencies have risen to the

challenges of the last year, and the commitment of frontline staff across the Partnership is to be commended.

A key duty of both the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board is to consider any serious cases against the statutory criteria for review set out in legislation. In 2020-21 there were no statutory reviews commissioned by the Safeguarding Partnership.

In the next year the Partnership will continue to embed the use of data in the analysis of practice, and for the purpose of strategic planning. We will continue to ensure that the voices of children, adults, their families and carers are heard and prioritised and that this is well evidenced across all aspects of partnership work.

In response to local and national learning we have identified new areas of priority and will be developing our response to these through the creation of targeted subgroups addressing child sexual abuse, mental health and safeguarding and self-neglect. In addition, supporting the effective implementation of Hillingdon Council's innovative model of early help, Stronger Families, will be a key focus for the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

## 2. Independent Scrutiny

In January 2021 Hillingdon Executive Leadership Group commissioned Independent Scrutiny and Review of the Adult and Child Safeguarding Arrangements. This task was fulfilled by Alan Caton OBE, an experienced independent safeguarding professional and retired senior police officer. The terms of reference for scrutiny were developed in line with the 'Six Steps to Independent Scrutiny' model developed by the University of Bedfordshire. The review took place over 7 days and focused on systemic safeguarding arrangements. To inform the process meetings were arranged with representatives across the adult and child safeguarding networks. The Outcome letter is published in full on the Safeguarding Partnership Website, and the Safeguarding Adults Board website, a summary is provided below.

'The Hillingdon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for both children and adults comply with their statutory responsibilities. The arrangements for both children and adults are clear and have been published in accordance with statutory guidance.

I found that good relationships have been built between partners, both statutory and non-statutory, and that there is a real willingness for the safeguarding partners to work together to seek out vulnerable children and adults and to provide them with the best possible services. It is apparent that there is a strong sense of partnership across Hillingdon and a desire to continually improve services. There is a clear meeting structure and delivery model which is supported by multi-agency subgroups.

During the review I found a number of areas of good practice. Communication links between the partnership is good with the regular distribution of the PSW Practice Briefing Newsletter which highlights key safeguarding issues and operational updates. In addition, I also found the 7-minute briefing tools which are available to provide practical and accessible information to practitioners to be an excellent resource. A number of these briefings are available on the Hillingdon SCP website and cover key issues around particular themes that are important and relevant to safeguarding children and adults, including briefings to highlight the learning from serious case reviews.

Areas for consideration:

- Chairing arrangements for the Safeguarding Adults Board
- The publication of a local threshold document for Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Partnership
- To consider how best to ensure all relevant partners provide clearly analysed data as requested by the Children's and Adult's Partnerships
- To consider developing a formal process to ensure the voices, views and needs of children, families and vulnerable adults are captured
- To consider how best to build strategic relationships across the safeguarding system

There is strong leadership from the ELG and a clear sense of joint and equal responsibility from the three safeguarding partners. The partnership is one that is built on high support, high challenge and where difficult conversations are encouraged.

Attendance at both the children's and adult's partnership Boards and associated subgroups is good and has good representation from the wider partnership. There is excellent engagement from leaders across the partnership who set a culture which drives improvement activity. There is a clear structure and good links between the children's and adult's partnership arrangements, however improved links with other strategic boards would enhance effectiveness.

In conclusion there are, in my view, many strengths to the safeguarding arrangements for both children and adults across Hillingdon. I have found a strong partnership that is open to scrutiny and challenge and one that strives to continually learn and improve practice. I have not come across any areas of poor practice or weaknesses in the safeguarding arrangements. The areas I have outlined for the partnership to further consider, are there to help the partnership on its journey to improve collaboration and coordination and therefore consequently, to improve outcomes for children, families, and adults in Hillingdon.'

Alan Caton OBE

Independent Scrutineer

### 3. Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership: Safeguarding Arrangements

This report provides an overview of the activity of Hillingdon's Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board. The report seeks to provide assurance around the effectiveness of our local safeguarding arrangements, and to evidence the impact of these arrangements in ensuring the safety of Hillingdon residents irrespective of age.

The annual report 2020-21 covers a period of unprecedented challenge for residents and partner agencies that provide support and safeguarding services due to the coronavirus pandemic. Inevitably, there has been the need to adapt, and refocus, services to ensure that the immediate needs of children, adults, their families and carers were prioritised and met. It is to the credit of Hillingdon Safeguarding Partners that the overwhelming majority of 'core business' continued to be progressed throughout the lockdown periods. The capacity of partners to be dynamic in response to challenge and to develop innovative solutions reflects positively on the effective implementation of our Safeguarding Arrangements and the underpinning principle of shared and equal responsibility for safeguarding.

In September 2019 the Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Partnership was launched in line with the statutory requirements set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. Under these arrangements the Local Authority shares responsibility with our statutory partners, the NHS North West London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Metropolitan Police, to safeguard children and young people in Hillingdon.

The vision of the Safeguarding Children Partnership is for every child and young person to be and feel safe, enjoy good physical, emotional and mental health, have pride in their unique identities, feel that they belong and have opportunities to thrive. The three statutory partners work alongside other relevant agencies in achieving this goal.

The Safeguarding Adult arrangements set out how the Safeguarding Adult Board will discharge the council's duty to work collaboratively to optimise the safety, wellbeing, and quality of life of adults with care and support needs, their carers and families. In order to achieve this the Board must raise awareness, minimise the risk of abuse, neglect or self-neglect occurring, and ensure our response is timely, proportionate, effective, and

underpinned by the key principles of safeguarding adults when it does occur. The Safeguarding Adult Board's vision is for Hillingdon citizens, irrespective of age, race, gender, culture, religion, disability or sexual orientation to be able to live with their rights protected, in safety, free from abuse and the fear of abuse.

To ensure the success of the shared arrangements we have a joint Executive Leadership Group (ELG) that provides governance, leadership, oversight and challenge to both Boards. The ELG consists of the Local Authority's Chief Executive, the Chief Nurse of Hillingdon NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and the Metropolitan Police Service Borough Commander. This group has joint and equal responsibility for safeguarding in Hillingdon. Each partner is subject to internal scrutiny in accordance with their internal governance structures. In addition to this, the ELG has commissioned independent scrutiny of the Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership arrangements for both children and adults to provide independent critical challenge and appraisal that will support future developments.

The main engine of the safeguarding arrangements for children is the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and, for adults, the Safeguarding Adults Board. The Boards have oversight of safeguarding practice and performance, resolving issues as they arise. Where this is not possible, the issue will be escalated to the relevant organisation(s) via the Implementation Unit and if the individual organisation(s) still cannot resolve the matter, it is escalated to the Executive Leadership Group to resolve. To reflect the vision of joint and equal responsibility the Boards are chaired on a yearly rotating basis by a representative of the three statutory partners. In the second year of the arrangements the Children's Partnership Board has been chaired by a representative of the Local Authority, and the chairing arrangements for the Safeguarding Adults Board remained unchanged, this decision was made due to the need for consistency and in recognition of the pressure faced by partner agencies in response to the pandemic. The Boards steer learning and development for the safeguarding environment across the London Borough of Hillingdon, and are informed by subgroups, as well as task and finish groups, as required.

The Safeguarding Partnership Implementation Unit provides support and drive to both the Adult and Children's Partnerships. The unit consists of a Quality and Implementation Manager, a Project Support Officer and three Advanced Social Work Practitioners. A key focus of the team is to facilitate, develop and reinforce links between the Safeguarding Children



Partnership and The Safeguarding Adults Board. The team also seeks to develop links and coordinate activity and delivery with the other strategic boards across the council and in the Pan-London Safeguarding context.

#### 4. Progress against Safeguarding Priorities

Over the year 2020-2021 Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership has focussed work on the key priority areas agreed by the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and Safeguarding Adult Board. As might be anticipated, at times, it has been necessary to be flexible in response to the demands placed on key partners particularly those with frontline health responsibilities. It is to the credit of the partnership that in the face of extraordinary pressure progress has been made against all priority areas.

The Safeguarding Partnership has been responsive to developments within the local, national, and international context. Senior Leaders across the three statutory partners met regularly to identify, address, and respond to any issues as they arose.

Throughout the pandemic agencies have been alert to the impact of isolation on children, families, adults, and their carers. Awareness raising activity has been undertaken in recognition of the increased risk of abuse and neglect on children, and the impact of isolation on mental health and domestic abuse. Parallel working with other strategic groups including the Community Safety Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board has further supported the effective coordination of safeguarding across a wide range of services and need.

Central to the work of the Partnership is to ensure that we seek out, listen to and respond to the voices of Hillingdon residents. In 2020-21 this has been made more complex due to the limitations placed on face to face contact. To mitigate this the Partnership has sought feedback and input from our Children's Participation Service and is contributing to the Pan-London Voice of the Adult Programme. The importance of the voice of the individual is reflected in the focus of partnership quality assurance activities, both single and multiagency, and is threaded through the work of all subgroups. In the next phase of the partnership this will be formalised into an overarching engagement strategy.

To reflect our ethos of shared and equal responsibility for safeguarding the children's subgroups are chaired by a diverse range of partner agencies, with support provided by the implementation unit. This approach carries the additional benefit of ensuring that each subgroup is chaired by a strategic safeguarding lead with the most applicable professional expertise. Subgroups are well attended across all aspects of partnership work, statutory partners are represented in all, with relevant agencies attending according to the focus of the subgroup. It is recognised that there is an opportunity for more diverse chairing arrangements for the subgroups focussed on safeguarding adults.

#### Safeguarding Children Partnership Priorities:

- working with young people at high risk of exploitation,
- neglect,
- children with complex needs and disabilities,
- safeguarding in education,
- early help.

#### Safeguarding Adults Board Priorities:

- financial abuse and exploitation,
- domestic abuse,
- making safeguarding personal.

#### Shared Priorities

- modern slavery,
- Joint strategic safeguarding and trafficking.

#### 4.1. [Safeguarding Children Partnership Priorities](#)

The Strategic High-Risk Panel is co-chaired by the Metropolitan Police and Children's Social Care, the Panel focuses upon the risks faced by young people in consequence of extra-familial harm through the adopting a contextual safeguarding approach. The tasks of the Panel are developed from data provided by the Operational High-risk Panel, and any themes or developing issues identified through the analysis of data across all agencies. The focus of the subgroup is to coordinate action across the partnership in reducing the risks that children and

young people could suffer harm due to criminal and/or sexual exploitation or involvement in serious youth violence.

Neglect has continued to be a focussed area of practice for the Safeguarding Partnership, the neglect subgroup is chaired by one of our Named Nurses for Safeguarding. In 2020-21 the subgroup coordinated the relaunch and delivery of Graded Care Profile 2 training to a multiagency group; over 4 sessions 80 practitioners across social care, health, early years and education service became licensed to undertake Graded Care Profile assessments. The Partnership also made a successful application to participate in an NSPCC led pilot for the development of Graded Care Profile 2 Antenatal (GCP2a). Training will be provided for midwives and social workers in completing GCP2a pre-birth. The GCP2a pilot was due to start in January 2021 however this has been rescheduled due to the pandemic. The neglect subgroup has achieved all stated aims for 2020-21. A baseline audit of the use of GCP2 within child protection plans was completed in December 2020, this will be repeated towards the end of the financial year to allow us to measure the impact of focussed work around Graded Care Profile.

In 2020-21 work has continued to refine the partnership offer around early help services, with the development of the Hillingdon's Stronger Families approach. The Stronger Families model is based on the principle that children and their families receive support at the earliest stage, to reduce the impact of any difficulties, promote familial wellbeing and ensure that children are supported to thrive and meet their full potential. The Stronger Families model is locality based, with three geographical hubs, each supporting their local community. The new model will be launched in the summer of 2021.

The Safeguarding Children with Complex Needs and Disabilities subgroup formed in the summer of 2020 with a remit to understand, influence and develop the partnership response to safeguarding children with additional needs. It is recognised that children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect and, often, less able to seek help and support where needed. The group is chaired by the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding at the North West London Clinical Commissioning Group. Since its inception, this group has led on the identification and dissemination of communication tools and strategies to support practitioners in listening to the communication of children with additional needs. The group

has drafted multiagency practice guidance and commenced a multiagency audit. These tasks will conclude in the next financial year.

In recognition of the additional risks faced by children who were not able to attend school during the lockdown periods an Education Safeguarding Task & Finish Group was developed. This group is jointly chaired by the Child Protection for Schools Advisor, and the Head of Access to Education. During the reporting period the group has reviewed and updated key policies and procedures in respect of children who are missing from education, and unregulated provision. This work has successfully built links with health services to improve the tracking and safeguarding of children who are not attending school.

#### 4.2. Safeguarding Adults Priorities

The Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) subgroup is chaired by Adult Social Care as the lead agency with responsibility for adult safeguarding. Progress against the stated aims of the subgroup has been mixed, in large part due to the impact of the pandemic on frontline services. A practitioner briefing was produced and circulated, and assurances sought around single agency training and the inclusion of MSP principles within agency policies, procedures, and practices. Following discussion at the Safeguarding Adults Board in November 2020 the Implementation Unit reviewed and refreshed the action plan to ensure a sharper focus with measurable outcomes. The principles of Making Safeguarding Personal are woven through the approach of all adult subgroups, this is demonstrated in the creation and dissemination of easy read guides to domestic abuse, and information about staying safe during the pandemic. The Making Safeguarding Personal multiagency audit has started and will conclude in the first quarter of 2021.

The Financial and Material Abuse subgroup is chaired by the Implementation Unit. This subgroup first met in January 2021. The group has a diverse representation to reflect the complexity of Financial and Material abuse and has developed a comprehensive plan to raise awareness of issues, prevent abuse from taking place where possible, develop a framework for individuals to seek support, and to ensure that services respond appropriately where abuse is taking place.

The SAB's Domestic Abuse priority has been progressed by the Implementation Unit in conjunction with the Hillingdon Community Safety Partnership. To reduce duplication and ensure coordination of services for those affected by domestic abuse, the work around adult safeguarding was incorporated into the existing Domestic Abuse Steering Executive. This included a review of recommendations highlighted in the London Domestic Homicide Review and Case Analysis published in September 2020. The recommendations within this report were used as a framework to understand local practice in Hillingdon and will be incorporated into the updated Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Strategy. In recognition of the additional risks victims of domestic abuse faced due to the pandemic the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) lead produced monthly briefings for professionals, these were widely circulated. The Implementation Unit also identified and circulated easy read guidance to seeking help and support and developed an easy read guide to local support services. This joined up strategic approach will be further developed in the next year with a joint subgroup across the Community Safety Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership.

#### 4.3. Shared Priorities

The Joint Strategic Safeguarding and Trafficking Subgroup (JSSAT) is unique to Hillingdon and reflects our specific needs as a 'port' authority due to the location of Heathrow Airport in our Borough. The subgroup coordinates the multiagency response to the risk of children and adults arriving in the borough and being victims of trafficking and exploitation. The group spans across the two partnership boards, it is chaired by a senior officer of the UK Border Agency and member of the Safeguarding Partnership Implementation Unit and works closely with the wider partnership to provide proactive and reactive responses to safeguarding matters related to the airport.

During the pandemic there was a huge reduction in air traffic, and consequently a reduction in the number of people accessing the airport and presentation of acute need. As lockdown eased and air travel restarted there was an increase in presentation of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The subgroup has identified the need for improved coordination of the various safeguarding processes that are in place, these are manifold due to both the scale of the airport, and the wide range of individuals that use it with a variety of needs. The subgroup has worked with Border Force to develop information for airlines to support in the

early identification of trafficking and exploitation. This is sensitive work due to the potential to inadvertently increase risk to individuals in their country of origin. Training has also been made available to all airport staff.

The shared Modern Slavery Subgroup is chaired by the Implementation Unit. The subgroup has a remit to promote awareness of issues of modern slavery across all partners in Hillingdon, to develop a referral pathway that is consistent and applicable across the partnership and to identify resources and supports available for potential adult and/or child victims. In 2020-21 the subgroup has driven practice in this area and a consistent referral pathway has now been finalised. In addition, the group linked with national centres of expertise to develop briefings, an eLearning module, resource guide and local multiagency practice guidance. The modern slavery subgroup has achieved all agreed aims for 2020-2021.

## 5. Learning from Practice

Learning and embedding change into practice is one of the key principles of the two partnerships. We acknowledge that learning can be gained from recognising good practice but also from those circumstances where we, as a partnership, could have responded differently to a child or adult's circumstances. Systemic learning and practice improvement is not only based on local experience but includes that which stems from regional and national research, policy and practice. This approach seeks to ensure that safeguarding practice in Hillingdon is research informed and evidence based and that our residents receive services that are of a high standard delivered by a partnership that strives to continuously improve.

A fundamental duty of both the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board is to review those cases that may meet the criteria for a statutory review of practice. This review process is undertaken in line with the statutory guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2014.

### 5.1. Serious Cases: Children

A notification to the notification to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the National Panel) is made when a child has suffered serious harm, and that abuse or neglect is known or suspected. For each serious incident notification, a multiagency Rapid Review is

convened to bring together and consider information known about the child by all agencies involved and to identify any areas of learning. The Rapid Review is held within 15 working days of the notification, with a report detailing the circumstances of the child, the actions of involved agencies, any learning identified and a decision around Local or National Child Safeguarding Practice Review. The full information about the case, the notes of the meeting and the Rapid Review decisions are shared with the National Panel which has the function to review and scrutinise and ratify the decisions made by the Rapid Review.

During 2020-21 there have been five cases that have met the criteria for a serious incident notification to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. The number of notifications made by Hillingdon is in line with the national picture, where Local Authorities have most commonly made between five and seven serious incident notifications. Of the Rapid Reviews convened by Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership 100% occurred within timescale with 100% of recommendations ratified by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. This is dissimilar to the national statistics which show that overall, only 29% of the Rapid Reviews happen in time and only 69% of the decisions are ratified by the National Panel. The successful implementation of the Rapid Review process reflects the widespread commitment across our partnership to reflect, learn and improve practice where needed. This shows strong professional relationships in a partnership which, as described by the independent scrutineer, is “built on high support, high challenge and where difficult conversations are encouraged.”

In four of the five cases the criteria for a child safeguarding practice review were not met. Where areas of learning have been identified through the rapid review process these are progressed by the most appropriate subgroup of the Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Rapid Review process also highlights areas of good practice, both within individual agencies and in respect to multiagency working.

One case was assessed as meeting the criteria set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. In this circumstance the Partnership considers the benefit of undertaking a local child safeguarding practice review. For this case, comprehensive information had been gathered and analysed at the Rapid Review stage. This meant that the areas of learning were identified quickly, and action could be taken to implement the recommendations. An action plan is in place to implement the recommendations of the Rapid Review. It is anticipated that this will conclude in the first quarter of 2021-22.

## 5.2. Serious Cases: Adults

The Hillingdon Serious Case Panel is chaired by a Metropolitan Police Detective Superintendent with responsibility for safeguarding. It has a core membership of senior representatives from key agencies, with others mandated to attend according to the specific requirement of the case. The purpose of the Panel is to review those serious cases that may meet the criteria for a Safeguarding Adult Review as specified in the Care Act 2014.

Where the criteria are met for a statutory review, the Serious Case Panel will set the terms of reference, monitor the progress of the review and quality assure the final report. The decision to undertake a Safeguarding Adult Review is agreed by the Executive Leadership Group. Where it is identified that a learning review would be of benefit this task is passed to the Practice Development Forum. Depending on the specific circumstances of the case learning reviews can be undertaken locally, or with the appointment of an independent chair.

The Serious Case Panel has considered 15 cases during 2020-21. It is important to note that during this period several “legacy” cases have been progressed, alongside those that reflect current practice. Of those 15 cases, 1 is a Safeguarding Adult Review lead by another local authority that members of Hillingdon Safeguarding Adults Board are contributing to. 6 cases have progressed to a form of learning review, 3 cases have required learning identified at panel to be disseminated across the partnership. 4 cases have been assessed as not meeting the criteria for further review and 1 case requires additional information to progress.

Of the cases considered by the Serious Case Panel 66% were adults who had significant mental health issues. 40% of cases featured self-neglect/neglect as a contributory factor. For this reason, a recommendation was made to the SAB that Mental Health & Safeguarding and Self-Neglect are focussed areas of work in 2021-22. A review of the Serious Case Panel process is currently being completed, with the aim of refining our local system and supporting our colleagues in Public Health to develop and implement a process for identifying learning from cases of suspected suicide.



### 5.3. Practice Development Forum

The focus of the Practice Development Forum is to ensure that learning from any statutory or non-statutory review, local or national, is disseminated across the safeguarding partnerships as required. The Practice Development Forum also considers learning from audits and other statutory reviews. The group has a core membership across both partnerships, in recognition that learning from serious cases usually has applicability across both sectors. There are two affiliated Task & Finish groups, one for child focussed cases, and one for adults. These groups complete learning reviews, and ensure the implementation of recommendations, and progression of actions arising from Rapid Reviews and the Serious Case Panel.

In the last year the children's group has developed the Hillingdon Paediatric Strategy Discussion Protocol. This protocol provides guidance to practitioners and managers around the inclusion of relevant health professionals, and other involved agencies, in strategy discussions. The development of the protocol included negotiating the availability of paediatricians to attend strategy discussions in specific circumstances. The group also complete a learning review in respect of the partnership response to neglect, and a learning review regarding child sexual abuse in the family environment.

The adult focussed Task and Finish group has concluded two learning reviews in the same period and revisited the recommendations made in the AA BB SAR that was published in 2018 to provide assurance that these had been both implemented and sustained. Our Task and Finish Group also considers the transferable nature of learning arising from single agency reviews. We have one learning review ongoing in respect of this.

The Implementation Unit has adopted the use of "7-minute Briefing" documents to share key information, learning and research with busy frontline practitioners. These briefings are designed to provide a high-level overview of the key issues, and to promote conversation, reflection, and practice improvement across the partnership. Safeguarding Leads are asked to disseminate these within their agency, and they are made available on the SAB and Safeguarding Partnership websites.

## 6. Safeguarding Training Programme

The purpose of the Safeguarding Partnership training programme is to ensure that practitioners have the most relevant and up to date opportunities for ongoing professional development.

Training courses are offered in the following areas:

- Initial Working Together to Safeguard Children (and Refresher)
- Adult Safeguarding
- Core Groups and Child Protection Plans
- Trauma Informed Practice
- True Honour: Female Genital Mutilation
- True Honour: Modern Slavery
- True Honour: Forced Marriage
- Reducing Parental Conflict – for practitioners and ‘train the trainer’
- Domestic Abuse: Awareness and Impact on Children and Young People
- Domestic Abuse: Intimate Partner Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation: A Trauma Focussed Approach
- Child Sexual Exploitation: Boys and Young Men
- Traffic Light Tool: Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Preparing for Mandatory Relationship and Sex Education
- Sex Pressures and Social Media
- Walking in Our Shoes Training
- Neglect
- Graded Care Profile

All face-to-face training sessions booked for the first quarter of 2020 were postponed in consequence of the need to ensure the safe and effective transition to remote learning. The Quality and Implementation Unit worked with training facilitators to modify and redevelop their offer. By the second quarter of the year all training was provided remotely, and this timely and efficient shift to a new delivery model led to a total of 1,139 practitioners attending safeguarding training during the year a number that is only 7% lower compared with the pre-covid year

The Quality and Implementation Unit also completed a review of all training provided by the Safeguarding Partnership, quality assuring content and implementing a feedback system for ongoing assurance. An analysis of training evaluation shows that the training had the right content, was relevant to people's roles, was accessible, and clear. Some of the feedback analysed indicated that:

- 97% of delegates rated their understanding of the topic after training as very good to excellent
- 92% rated the quality of the training as very good to excellent
- 94% of delegates agreed or strongly agreed that they could apply learning from the training to their practice area

## 7. London Borough of Hillingdon – Children's Services

In response to COVID-19, we had to rethink how to operate and continue to provide services for those most in need of care and support. Children and young people who have an allocated social worker remained one of the most vulnerable groups before and during the pandemic. Whilst our statutory functions remained the same, we needed to, very quickly, adapt our service delivery and find ways to fulfil our duties in very different circumstances. Our response commenced in early March 2020, initially operating with many unknowns whilst waiting for national and sector guidance.

Our response focussed on safeguarding our vulnerable children and discharging our duty of care to our staff and colleagues. Risk assessments considered the potential of a decreasing workforce due to Covid infection. Cover and duty arrangements were put in place at all levels as well as the reviewing of the operational procedures by practice leaders and the principal social worker.

Social Workers and Managers in Children's Social Care have experience of working in a flexible way, as a lot of the work undertaken occurs in the community, therefore the shift to working from home was not as problematic as it potentially could have been. Safe working practices were addressed both on individual and service basis (for instance guidance on safely completing video meetings with families and children).

All children were risk assessed by the people who knew them best (Team Managers and allocated workers) and the type and frequency of contact was decided for each child. Most children subject to a Child Protection plan continued to be visited face to face. 92% of the Child Protection visits were carried out in time during this time.

COVID-19 risk assessments were conducted by social workers prior to the visit to determine if anyone in the family was symptomatic or shielding and actions were taken as required except for those instances where it would be inappropriate to contact a family in advance (Safeguarding Investigations). Some of the visits were completed in open spaces (front door, gardens) and PPE was issued as it became available alongside clear guidance developed by the service on how and when to utilise it.

During the lockdown period we kept in contact with all children who have an allocated social worker and/or key worker. Most children subject to CP Plans continued to be seen in person

alongside some other children subject to both CIN and LAC Plans based on assessment of risk and need. Other children where risks assessment indicated that visits could be scaled back for a period were contacted via video and telephone calls, many as often as once per week.

The feedback from our children was positive regarding engagement and they appreciated being in touch with their Social Worker and their Independent Reviewing Officer. Increased concerns were acknowledged for some of our care leavers who were living independently on their own and with reduced family networks were struggling with social isolation more than others. Increased contact with their Personal Advisors was put in place via phone and video call.

Child in Need meetings, Child Protection Conferences and Looked after Reviews were moved to virtual platforms. Feedback from families, children, partners, and our staff has been positive. 98% of the Child Protection Reviews took place in time as well as 97% of the LAC reviews. The engagement of other agencies increased due to the virtual nature of the meetings, many families and young people were more engaged as they were not in the sometimes-intimidating environment of a formal meeting with the professionals in the room.

As part of the recovery planning, it is acknowledged that virtual meetings work well but at the same time there are clear benefits for the Social Worker and/or the chair of the meeting to meet with young people, carers and parents and therefore moving forward we will be adopting a blended approach that will allow for some participants to be present in the room and others to join in virtually.

Our Looked After Children who have direct contact with their families either in the community or in our Contact Centre had contact moved to virtual platforms during lockdown periods. Covid Secure risk assessments of our contact venues were undertaken to ensure face to faced contact where that was appropriate. One of our Children's Homes for children with disabilities promoted contact with parents in a specifically developed place in the garden of the unit whilst ensuring both social distance and the use of PPE as required. We found and following feedback from children themselves, that virtual platforms to have contact often fits better into the children's routines and gives them more control and therefore the use of virtual contact going forward will continue alongside the use of face-to-face contact.

Courts have operated a system of virtual and hybrid hearings and the social workers and managers worked closely with our legal colleagues to ensure effective hearings took place. It is a positive that the hearings during this period were effective and orders continued to be granted. However, as a result of Court capacity there is a backlog of hearings awaiting to be concluded.

Our Children in Care Council continued to meet during this time using Zoom and they kept in contact with one another and with the Children's Rights and Participation Team. Amongst some of the things that were provided by the team, were fortnightly newsletters in which the young people would interview senior managers in Children's Services on their experiences of lockdown, would run various competitions for our young people and provide very helpful information about activities and resources available during the lockdown.

Supervising Social Workers and children's Social Workers provided support to Foster Carers and residential units during this time in the form of advice, guidance and visits to support placements. Increased focus was placed on weekly identification of those placements which were at risk of breaking down. Three Heads of Service met every week with relevant managers and practitioners, Foster Carers and providers, to identify bespoke solutions to vulnerable placements and to ensure that our children remain stable in placements and both them and our foster carers are safe and well supported.

The service proactively reached out to all the children in LBH who were shielding to ensure they had access to food, medication, etc. staff members were redeployed from other parts of the service to support this work and the children contacted included those who were not opened to any services. Support, advice and signposting was provided as needed to the families.

Social workers and managers identified all the children who needed a laptop or access to internet to study and they received the support offered by DfE in form of Laptops and/or wireless internet. More than 800 children benefited from these so far and in majority of cases the Social Workers have delivered these to our children themselves.

In order to provide support to children and families and to reach out to those families who were supported by universal and targeted services which were not available during the summer, our Adolescents Development Service launched the #DoSomethingThisSummer

programme. This was offered over the four weeks in August. A range of programmes were developed to offer vulnerable young people positive recreational and educational activities that support personal development, offer the chance to gain new skills and learning.

There was a total of 110 individual programmes with 848 individual spaces on offer, split between online sessions and face to face open air activities. These programmes were divided into sessions for young people in school years 4-6, 7-9 and 10+. A variety of activities were offered including arts, crafts, sports, cookery and targeted issue-based sessions. Alongside these we offered a number of targeted online sessions in order to provide more intense support on a range of issues affecting young people such as trauma and bereavement, stress and anxiety, county lines, and CSE.

100% of the parents that provided feedback said that they would recommend the programme and advised that they were very or somewhat happy with the activities on offer. Parents found that the activities had a positive impact on young people's confidence and self-esteem as well as developing new skills and knowledge *"Do something this summer was a great activity that helped give my son something new and challenging but also helped as a confidence boost for him"*. One young person found that *"I was learning as well as improving my social skills"*. Feedback from young people was very positive with all who responded stating that they were very or somewhat happy with the programme offer and over 80% saying that they would definitely recommend the programme to others. One young person noted that *"I love it so much and I didn't want it to end seriously. I hope I can join again in the future. I was more than happy doing my session and sad when it came to the end"*.

During the lockdown periods, extra attention was paid to the young people who were living independently and did not have access to support networks during the lockdown. For our Care Leavers, Personal Advisors continued to keep in touch with them and for a minority of care leavers who had to shield we arranged delivery of food and medicines.

Extra staff were redeployed from other areas of service to contact all the families whose children were shielding. A specific questionnaire was applied to ensure the children were safe and the families had the support and the means of ensuring a good level of care during the period. A pathway was developed for referring any situations where safeguarding concerns have been identified

In April the Metropolitan police launched Operation Pan Pan. This was work previously undertaken but reinvigorated as a key piece of work during Covid. This operation ensured that the relevant Safer Neighbourhood Officers were aware of children on CP plans within their wards. Police Conference Liaison Officers (PCLOS) create briefings on the police system that cover Reasons, Outcomes, Admin and Risks (ROAR). This is then flagged to the relevant Neighbourhood Officer. The expectations of neighbourhood officers, were to be aware of the most vulnerable children in their communities, observe whilst on patrol, intervene as appropriate and report any concerns or issues to children's social care via the usual provision of Merlins via MASH.

In summary, the pandemic has been the biggest leadership challenge many of us faced. The service has risen to the challenge and crucial services have been delivered during the lockdown periods and beyond. Important lessons and new ways of working have been developed, implemented and now ready to be taken forward.

We saw a significant increase in number of referrals in relation to Neglect and Physical abuse and an increase in the impact of families living with Domestic Abuse, isolation, poverty and mental health. In the next financial year these continue to be priority areas of activity

Our aim is to continue to keep our children and their experiences at the centre of our work and our service development. We are asking and we are listening, and the words of our young people remind us of the distance travelled by us all during these unprecedented times.

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

Work has continued throughout the year, we have further invested in our Axis service provision, both in analytics and in Early Help offer by doubling the size of the team. Adolescent Development Services have been reviewed and new practice models implemented to enable us to meet emerging needs of Young People. We have continued to use Axis intelligence to deploy our Mobile and detached team to areas of greatest need and to support multi-agency response to risk.

In 2019 a young adult (HS) was killed in a knife crime incident within Hillingdon Civic Centre whilst attending an intervention. Over the last year we commissioned a bespoke review to the review the circumstances and consider any learning for the Council and/or partners. This



was completed March 2021 with publication and action plan monitoring taking place in the year ahead.

We have strengthened our response to children in custody and their safe resettlement, ensuring community based multi agency response to emerging hot spot risk areas

We provided a virtual masterclass on safeguarding adolescents and the Hillingdon approach to over 100 social workers across West London neighbouring authorities.

Commissioned Brilliant Parents to deliver bespoke support to parents whose children are at risk of contextual harm, this has include the recruitment and training of parent champions in our local communities

### **Neglect**

We participated in the multi agency neglect audit and as a result have commissioned and delivered refresher GCP2 training for all frontline staff. We are also partnering with NSPCC to pilot GCP – Antenatal assessment tool.

### **Safeguarding Children with Complex Needs and Disabilities**

We have updated and published our short breaks offer, which includes commissioning for Mencap as a provider. We have and published our personal budgets policy and aim to deliver flexible help to families at point of need that increase choice and empowerment.

We have undertaken prototyping with CAMHS/CCG to strengthen early help offer to children and young people with mental health needs.

We are actively engaged in the Learning Disability risk register process to support children and young people most at risk of entering care as a result of their complex needs.

### **Early Help**

We have spent this year transforming and laying the foundations of our early help offer which will go live in 2021/22. This includes, but is not limited to, moving to a 24/7 Stronger Families hub, locality based key working, doubling the provision of Axis and redesigning adolescent development services.

Whilst the transformation launch will take place in 2021/22 the early help offer has been essential in supporting families throughout 2020/21. Key workers have provided support for vulnerable families including the provision of practical and emotional support. Adolescent Development Services continued to deliver a range of support to young people virtually and within our communities, covering but not limited to counselling, sexual health, substance misuse, emotional and mental wellbeing, activities and personal development.

Brilliant Parents continued behalf of the Council to offer virtual parenting support to parents throughout the pandemic period.

Axis early help and mobile and detached team continued to reach out to young people at risk of exploitation and violence, providing effective diversionary services to safeguard.

## 8. London Borough of Hillingdon Adult's Services

There has been a significant increase in the number of Safeguarding Adult referrals, including Police Merlins, sent to Adult Social Care during the pandemic. From April 2020 to April 2021, the number of referrals sent to Adult MASH increased by 93% (to 1418 referrals in April 2021). During the same timeframe, the total number of referrals that progressed to a Safeguarding Adult Concern increased by 91% (to 485 referrals in April 2021).

There has been an increase in referrals related to Domestic Abuse, Self-Neglect, Mental Health problems, Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation. Adult MASH activity, including a daily multiagency high-risk meeting, enabled partners to focus on risks, to minimise the risk of abuse occurring and ensure our responses to concerns were timely, robust and effective. To support the staff during the pandemic specific guidance was shared relating to Domestic Abuse and Self Neglect.

While the lockdown and Covid 19 restrictions required us to adapt practice related to Safeguarding Adults activity, essential visits continued throughout the pandemic in accordance with Covid 19 guidance. The guidance was developed to support staff in relation to undertaking home visits safely, having multi-agency meetings via video calls, and, where appropriate, meetings with residents via video calls. It is recognised that there are positive and negative aspects to using video calls and going forward this is an area of practice we will

retain as an option as it facilitates collaboration and enabled participants to convene quickly to share information and agree actions.

The pandemic also reinforced the dedication of our skilled and caring workforce, showing flexibility and resilience during the year to optimise the safety, wellbeing, and quality of life of our residents.

Lockdown and Covid 19 restrictions had a significant impact on care and support at home and in the community as it increased the time individuals remained at home many times on their own. Staff were reminded to review safeguarding plans and were creative and flexible in minimising the risk of abuse, neglect and self-neglect to respond to this unique situation

### **Domestic Abuse**

Minimising the risks associated with Domestic Abuse is a key priority for Adult Social Care. Adult MASH review high risk referrals at daily high-risk multi-agency meetings and this includes referrals related to Domestic Abuse. Adult MASH has strengthened collaborative working and information sharing pathways with our local Independent Domestic Violence Advocates. Adult Social Care are core members of the Domestic Abuse MARAC and have embedded in the operational practice the need to share information with relevant agencies, consider others who may be at risk, and complete a DASH risk assessment and refer to MARAC as required.

Adult Social Care continue to be dedicated to working collaboratively with The Metropolitan Police, The Children's MASH and The Safer Hillingdon Partnership to explore the creation of a Domestic Abuse One Front Door - the vision is for the creation of a single point of contact for all concerns related to Domestic Abuse in Hillingdon which would sit alongside our Adult MASH.

Adult Social Care are core members of the Domestic Abuse Steering Executive and the MARAC Steering Risk and Review subgroup.

As outlined above, guidance on Domestic Abuse during the pandemic and shared with staff to support practice in these areas and staff were reminded to review safeguarding plans in place due to the increased time individuals were at home together during the pandemic.

### **Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)**

Adult Social Care are the lead agency in relation to ensuring the outcome(s) the adult wishes to achieve are established/recorded and achieved (where possible). In 2020-21 83% of adults were asked what they wanted to achieve. When the individual's view was established, 95% of outcomes were either fully achieved or partially achieved. The updating of our Adult Social Care case recording system was delayed due to the pandemic; however, this work is near completion and the key principles related to MSP are enhanced throughout. An Adult Social Care member of staff is the chair of the MSP sub group and Adult Social Care have been instrumental in supporting the completion of a multi-agency audit related to MSP, due to take place imminently. The vision is for Adult Social Care to embed MSP guidance, policies and procedures into the safeguarding adults framework and case recording system. This will see the safeguarding referrals reflecting the key principles of MSP as well as embedding MSP best practice guide into each stage of the work recorded in a resident's file. In addition to recording the work undertaken we aim to provide guides to help residents understand meeting agendas and minutes and to feel supported to attend safeguarding meetings. Other guides will provide information on what happens when a crime is reported to the Police (to optimise access to justice) and how to access advocacy. Also, the group are considering a way in which the views of the adults can be captured through questionnaires and other methods.

The principles of MSP are central to the work we undertake, and they are also reflected in our Safeguarding Adult Quality Assurance Framework and the regular audits undertaken.

Feedback has been sought independently by the Implementation Unit as part of the multiagency audit. Below are some of the comments received from adults:

- *"The safeguarding team were very good and told us exactly the process they would follow."*
- *The mental health nurse eventually referred to adult social services. This started a safeguarding enquiry and then I got held. I wanted space and a safe place for my children. The SW asked me lots of times what help I wanted and what I wanted to achieve"*

- *“I knew that the police and SW were trying to help. I got so many calls and text messages offering me support I didn't know it was called a safeguarding enquiry but I knew that people wanted to help.”*
- *“It [the safeguarding help] changed my environment and the atmosphere. I was helping my mum but felt trapped because I felt I had to be in the flat the whole time with my mum. I've now got a sense of freedom now that I've got my own flat.”*

### **Financial and Material Abuse**

Adult Social Care have been central to the development of the Financial Abuse subgroup action plan, enabling the work of the subgroup to be underpinned by areas identified through practice experience.

Establishing how an adult manages their finances and minimising the risk of financial or material abuse occurring in the first place will always be a key priority for Adult Social Care.

Wherever possible we support adults to manage their finances independently, however, where this is not possible, due to the risk of abuse and/or due to physical and/or mental health issues, we ensure the adult's view are central to any action taken to ensure finances are safeguarded/managed appropriately.

We will continue to be a core member of the financial and material abuse subgroup and embed the outcomes of the group into our operational procedures.

### **Think Family**

Adult MASH is now co-located with Children's MASH, and this has strengthened our collaborative approach to safeguarding and “think family”. Children's MASH attends the Adult MASH daily high-risk meeting to ensure an “whole family” consideration and planning as required.

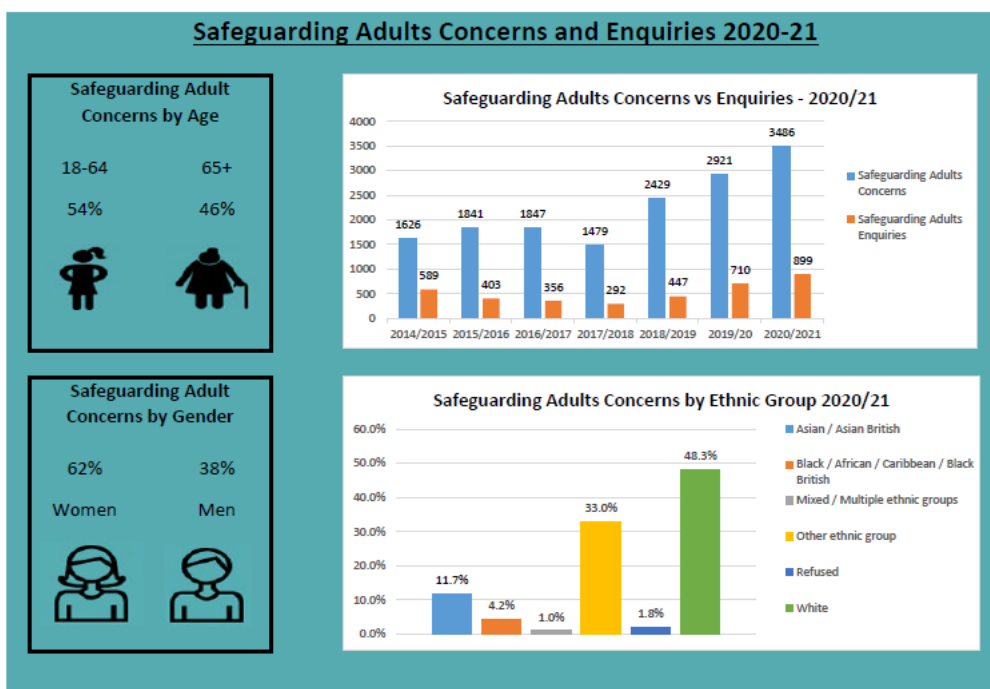
We have developed our response to transitional safeguarding and the need to apply our safeguarding adult framework where children have experienced abuse or neglect but are now 18 years of age or older. This is to enable continuity in care, support and protection plans and a seamless transition from Children's Services to Adult Social Care where this is required.

Adult Social Care work in partnership with Children’s Services in relation to children with disabilities and their families to ensure that care and support for the child, their parents and/or carers is seamless, therefore minimising the risks of harm occurring.

**Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking**

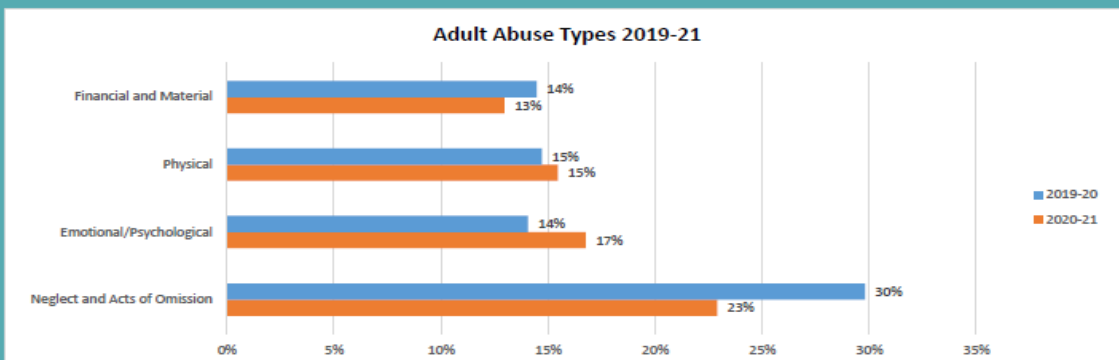
We have a designated lead for Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking within our Adult MASH Team and have embedded local operational procedures in accordance with our statutory duties to ensure appropriate action is taken to safeguard individuals when concerns related to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking are received.

8.1. Adult Social Safeguarding Data



**Reported Safeguarding Adult Concerns**

The graph below outlines the four most common types of abuse reported to Adult Services in both 2019-20 and 2020-21. There has been an increase in Emotional and Psychological abuse 2020/21. Safeguarding concerns with a recorded abuse type of Neglect and Acts of Omission has fallen to 23% in 2020/21.

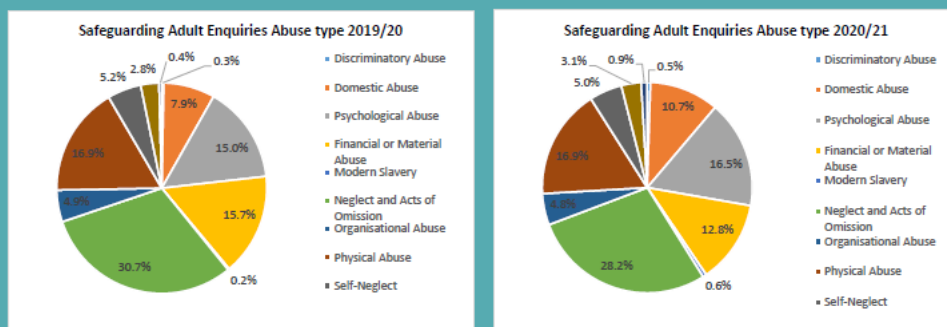


**Safeguarding Adult Enquiries**

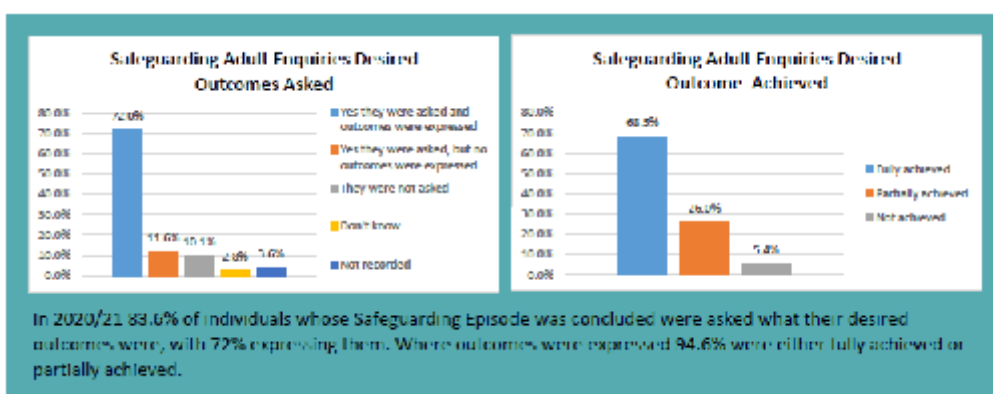
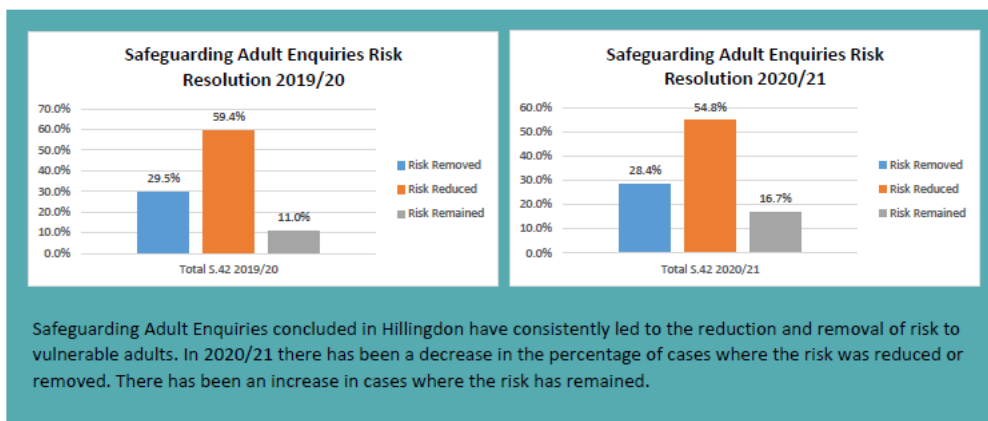
Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities to carry out a Safeguarding Adult Enquiry when it has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there)

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting those needs)
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect;

- as a result of those care and support needs the adult is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.



The largest proportion has remained as neglect or acts of omission. This has decreased slightly by 2.5% from 30.7% to 28.2% in 2020/21. Conversely there has been a 2.8% increase in the percentage of cases where the abuse type is recorded as domestic abuse, 7.9% to 10.7%. A 1.5% increase can be seen in cases where the abuse type is recorded as Psychological abuse. These increases are likely linked with COVID-19.



## 9. Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Across the Health Economy, a sharp increase in mental health difficulty, resulting in self-harm and suicidal ideation in Children and Young People, has been noted. The situation is compounded by the scarcity of Tier 4 mental health beds which is a well-documented national and, consequently, local issue. An increase in parental mental health and substance misuse presentation to health services has also been demonstrated across health providers. A rise in inflicted injury for babies under 1 year was seen nationally during the early part of the Pandemic and remains a fluctuating situation.

Due to national lockdown measures, Hillingdon has also been subject to national trends in adults safeguarding such as increased levels of concern relating to domestic abuse, financial and online exploitation, etc. In addition to adult related concerns children services have also seen an increase in criminal and sexual exploitation, on-line grooming and domestic abuse has been apparent among older children and young people. Together there remains great



concern for the past and current experience of children and young people and vulnerable adults in the family home.

NHSE London region safeguarding sub-cell meetings (set up at the commencement of the coronavirus pandemic) ensured the collation of information relating to safeguarding risk management across North West London, consequently supporting local systems for planning for any predicted change in virus status. Learning from the pandemic has been instrumental in informing safeguarding support required for commissioned services, the Safeguarding Partnership and multi-agency partners. Engagement with regional and national safeguarding networks has ensured timely dissemination of pertinent information. The adaption of training and support programmes toward virtual platforms has been vital in maintaining links with Primary Care and related health partners.

To ensure continuation of health assessments for Looked After Children a blended approach of face to face and virtual contact, guided by a risk assessment/triage document, was employed by the Looked After Children's team. This method of assessment proved popular for some children and young people, especially those of teenage years. Additional support for those children transitioning to adult services has been evident throughout this reporting period and has resulted in a number of initiatives to support children during this period, led by the health provider's Looked After Children's Transition Nurse.

The CCG is a panel member of the Partnership and as such sits on the LSCP and SAB Board(s), representing the Accountable Officer or Chief Nurse, informing the health aspect of policy and procedure.

In Hillingdon, Designated Professionals attend and contribute to all sub-groups, compliment multi-agency training, auditing, reviews and identify emerging themes or needs assessments to inform service and practice.

The Designated Nurses have been closely involved in the establishment and development of improvements to local safeguarding systems including the introduction of the new Adult Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Safeguarding Children with Complex Needs and Disabilities Group, associated multi-agency audit, review of local practice guidance and future plans for dissemination of related learning. In addition, there has been robust collaborative working practice in the roll out of the Early Help Model.

Over the past year the Designated Lead for Safeguarding Adults also partnered with adult colleagues from across North West London to deliver an online training series (accessed across NWL) to hundreds of GPs aimed at improving knowledge and visibility of safeguarding adult issues and Mental Capacity Act related functions.

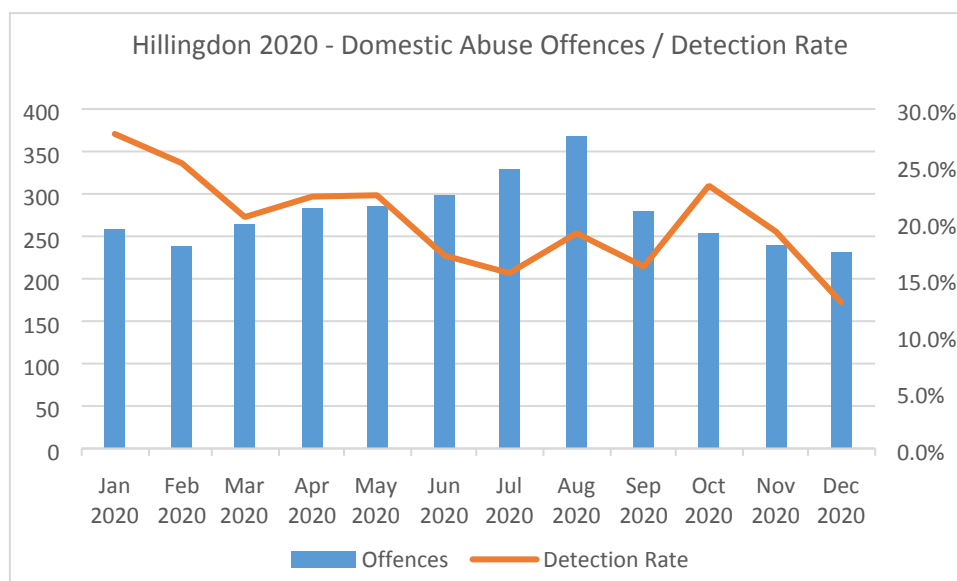
## 10. Metropolitan Police Service

The police service has risen to significant challenges over the past year, not least Covid 19, which has meant that we have had to use our resources creatively and effectively to meet the safeguarding needs of Hillingdon residents and adapt how we work with our partners. The use of technology has ensured that the essential services and meetings have been able to continue in a positive way with no detriment to the vulnerable adults and children we work with. Our specialist units continue to investigate incidents and offences of domestic abuse, child abuse, child exploitation and crimes and incidents involving vulnerable adults.

### **Domestic Abuse**

In 2020, the three Boroughs that make up West Area BCU had the highest recorded offences of domestic abuse across the Met, with 10,509 offences investigated, accounting for 11.2% of MPS domestic abuse offences. Hillingdon borough has 31.7% of the offences (3332) within West Area. West Area also manages the highest number of domestic incidents across the MPS, 18,034 recorded in 2020, accounting for 11.5% of total MPS domestic incidents.

Bearing in mind the large demand on the Community Safety Unit, West Area manages to achieve the second highest positive outcome rate in the Met at 17.3%. This compares to a Met average of 14.3%. Hillingdon performs particularly strongly in this area, with an overall positive outcome rate of 18.9% which is underpinned by the strong partnership working arrangements that continue to flourish between our Community Safety Unit and partners.



### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

During 2020, West Area BCU's CSE has continued to focus activities on working with hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfasts, with a bespoke training package to help those working within the sector to be able to identify suspicious behaviour relating to child sexual and other criminal exploitation and how to report those concerns. A number of exercises have been undertaken to 'test' the safeguarding response under Operation Makesafe.

The CSE team have also made sure that the details of any accommodation provider who does not have appropriate mechanisms in place to recognise and report safeguarding concerns are brought to the attention of partners to ensure they are not used to accommodate vulnerable families or adults.

The Met have significantly improved around response to CSE and this has led to an increase in reporting to Children's Services.

October 2019 saw the inception of our Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Team (OCSAE) team, which comprises of 1 Detective Sergeant and 8 officers. The team proactively target those who exploit children on-line and have completed over 170 investigations since they were set up, the majority of which were undertaken in 2020.

**Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

This area of public protection is currently managed by our CSE team and they are responsible for investigating incidents where a child is believed to have been exploited by people involved in criminal activity. This could involve organised criminal networks and gangs who groom and exploit children to hold and transport commodities, such as weapons and drugs.

Our Safer Schools officers have worked really hard to promote awareness around child criminal exploitation within Hillingdon schools. They are also working in partnership with Trading Standards, testing the due diligence of knives being sold to children from commercial premises.

**Predatory Offender Unit (POU)**

November 2020 saw the launch of our new POU. These units have been introduced across the Met in order to reduce the safeguarding risk & harm to adults and children posed from high harm offenders by adopting an enforcement approach. This unit has been created through an uplift in officer numbers. Their main work includes supporting our Community Safety Unit, Sapphire team, Child Abuse Investigation team, CSE team with a view to arrest high harm offenders who are outstanding suspects or wanted.

They also prevent and disrupt offending by developing intelligence and conducting proactive operations against high harm offenders. In addition, they enforce breaches of judicial & non-judicial restrictions for high harm offenders and ensure there are consequences for non-compliance, pursue high-harm offenders by reviewing undetected cases and exploring whether arrests/prosecutions can take place and also disrupt high harm offenders by working in collaboration with other agencies.

Since the POU started they have arrested 142 offenders and conducted a number of search warrants in relation to online child abuse investigations. They have been particularly effective in high risk manhunts ensuring timely arrest of a number of individuals wanted for stalking, rape, attempted murder and assisting suicide.

**Missing Persons Unit (MPU)**

Our Missing Persons Unit work closely with our local authority Children's Homes to act swiftly when children go missing. Relationships with Children's Services remain strong and the police provide daily updates to our children's social care colleagues. Officers are trained to conduct return interviews and these are shared with social workers to ensure appropriate safeguards are put in place where necessary and any concerns acted upon in a timely manner.

The team also work very closely with the CSE team due to many of the children who do go missing are also at risk of or have been subjected to CSE/CCE.

The MPU managed 3,236 missing people investigations in 2020, involving 2,428 people. 95% or those that go missing are found within seven days. West Area account for the third largest volume of missing people within the MPS.

**Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT), Sapphire**

We continue to see the benefits of a more integrated approach to public protection investigations following the move of CAIT and Sapphire teams back in to the Basic Command Unit (BCU) of West Area. This has worked well, and this alignment continues to ensure expertise and knowledge in specific areas is shared across the different strands, which ultimately enhances the quality of the investigation and promotes more effective and cohesive safeguarding.

**Mental Health**

Our dedicated mental health team continue to work hard to support those most vulnerable, who are in mental health crisis and need support and intervention. Since 2019, across West Area BCU as a whole, we have seen a 5% increase in the number of people who have been subject of S136 Mental Health Act. Between the same time parameter, we have seen a 4% decrease in the number of people in Hillingdon, where police have invoked S136 Mental Health Act.

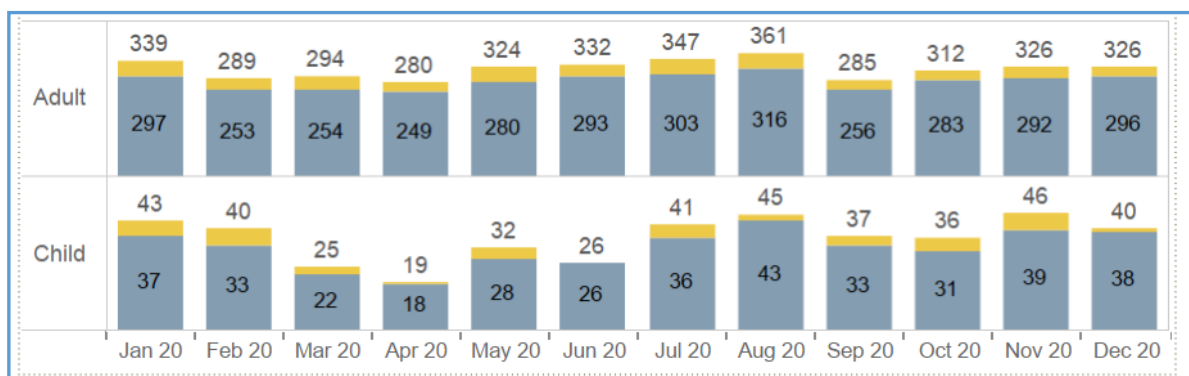
For Hillingdon, 11% (1,700/year) of all emergency calls to the police are to someone experiencing a mental health crisis. 8% (4,600/year) of all non-emergency deployments are to an incident that has a significant mental health element.

Based on those numbers the demand on policing is very significant and the Mental Health team take a pro-active approach in identifying risk and repeat demands, with close partner liaison with Approved Mental Health Professionals, Mental Health Trust, Local Authority and the London Ambulance Service.

The team continue to work with police colleagues and external partners to focus on risk management and reduction. They have developed an excellent Mental Health toolkit which has been promoted across West Area BCU and is available to every officer.

Breakdown of Adult/Child involvement in all Mental Health incidents during 2020 on WA BCU

(Blue is unique individuals, yellow is repeats)



### Safeguarding Hub

The co-location of our CAIT referrals desk and Police Conference Liaison Officers (PCLO) in the MASH has really improved the effectiveness and timeliness of joint working. Due to the global pandemic, we have seen a move to remote working where possible, in order to protect our colleagues and the public. Every MERLIN notification continues to be assessed by the MASH team. Hillingdon MASH were dealing with on average, 1000 notifications per month which has increased over the year and continues to present challenges.

## Looking forward

Training - Like many organisations, the Met has experienced a delay to training programmes due to Covid 19. However, the public protection courses have been refreshed and are now being rolled out again in a Covid compliant format. The challenge going forward will be to ensure that all staff are trained to required standards on an initial safeguarding course which will provides valuable inputs around some of the fundamental safeguarding principles, including the referral process, strategy discussions and meetings.

Increase disruption activity around high harm offenders – the Predatory Offender Unit was expanded in March with a further two Detective Constables to ensure there are more resources targeted towards our highest harm offenders who pose a safeguarding risk to both adults and children. The POU provides our Public Protection teams a much need proactive capability to focus on such an important area.

Increase provision for repeat victims of domestic abuse - we are looking to bring together a team to focus on DVPN / DVPO's, Stalking Prevention Orders, injunctions and restraining orders, working closely with our MARAC team with the overall aim to reduce risk for our most vulnerable residents. The team will work closely with the Predatory Offender Unit and our Community Safety Unit teams.

Historic Sexual Offences/Child Abuse – we hope to create two additional teams starting in the coming months to focus on historic reports of sexual offences and child abuse. This will ensure that these lengthy and complex investigations have the focus and resource they require whilst freeing up the current teams to investigate the recent cases which often hold more immediate risk.

## 11. Safeguarding Partnership Agency Contributions

### 11.1. Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL)

CNWL provides a range of services to both adults and children in Hillingdon. In the first wave of the pandemic staff from health visitors, school nursing, paediatric therapies and one member of the safeguarding children team were redeployed to ward settings as they were

registered nurses, with the priority to save lives. The Named Nurses for Safeguarding Children were not redeployed and, with their team, continued to provide advice and support for staff on protecting children.

In the second wave of the pandemic all these staff remained in their post in children's services. The impact of lockdown and school closures led to an increased risk for some children. Children became hidden during covid, as some families were isolating and, in the lockdowns, they were not attending school. This was demonstrated through the identification of safeguarding concerns within CNWL services and consequently increased referrals to Children's Social Care.

To ensure our staff were vigilant in identifying risks the Safeguarding Children Team raised awareness about these areas through supervision, briefings, and training. Safeguarding Supervision for our staff continued to be offered during Covid. This was invaluable in ensuring that concerns were discussed, and support was given to staff. Our Safeguarding supervision offer (depending upon staff role) is delivered through groups or 1:1 session. In order to adapt to Covid restrictions this has been delivered through virtual sessions.

The development of the virtual world has meant that our staff have been able to easily access case conferences and other meetings. There have been positive improvements to health representation at strategy meetings and the development of the health pathway. CNWL services have adapted to providing virtual contacts for families and children where accessing the home has been difficult. Health visitors continued to offer face to face contacts where possible. The school nursing team adapted their services and used video or phone contact to maintain contact with children when the schools were closed.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services have been extremely busy in recent months – specifically the Urgent Care team who have been utilising extra resources to support the crisis pathway and offer brief intervention work to divert away from A and E attendance where possible and relapse prevention work to manage crises. ACTs (Assertive Community Team) have continued to operate across all of the boroughs to provide intensive treatment at home as an alternative to an inpatient admission. Earlier on in lockdown the majority of crisis presentation were by those young people who were already known to CAMHS but in the final quarter of 2020-21 there has been a twofold increase across all CAMHS urgent presentations



– young people who are both previously known and unknown. CAMHS continue to receive high numbers of referrals needing ‘urgent’ assessment (as opposed to routine), reflecting a higher acuity of presentations – increased self-harm and suicidality – in the last few months.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the CNWL Hillingdon Safeguarding Adults and Mental Capacity Act (SA and MCA) Specialist has remained working from Beaufort House. Their role has remained the same and they continued to provide support to staff. However, one change is that the annual visits they normally made to each team were put on hold but have recommenced virtually in 2021. In addition, all face-to-face training sessions were discontinued, and all training was provided by e-learning. From March 2021, virtual SA training sessions were provided.

#### **Learning from the Pandemic:**

CNWL Hillingdon reported more Safeguarding Adult concerns in comparison to other Boroughs where CNWL provide services. Throughout and after the pandemic, CNWL have noted an increase in SA concerns. This is in line with other areas and has been recognised as being one of the impacts of poor mental health on the general population. CNWL recognises the importance of communication and information sharing across all aspects of practice, and particularly in respect of domestic abuse concerns. Virtual meetings were held to maintain contact with clinical services, and for the purpose of staff supervision and training. Weekly covid meetings were held for managers and staff to ensure that the latest information was shared.

Where patients had declined access to their homes virtual methods of maintaining contact were implemented, along with the promotion of self-care and training family members to deliver care where appropriate.

CNWL has maintained its position as a core member of both SAB and SCP, including representation from the Director of Quality, and contributions to the Independent Scrutiny Process. All CNWL staff are required to complete mandatory safeguarding adult training every three years, this training includes the priority areas highlighted by the SAB.

CNWL has a Trust-wife Domestic Abuse Lead. In addition, a Domestic Abuse (DA) Co-ordinator started in the service in August 2020. There is a dedicated DA page on our intranet, which staff can easily access for information and advice. Domestic abuse is included in generic SA training, which is mandatory for all staff to complete every 3 years. The Trust's third DA annual conference was held virtually on 26 November 2020, during the White Ribbon period. This was the best attended DA conference so far, with over 340 staff signing up.

CNWL have a DA Ambassador role, which staff volunteer for and over 82 staff have signed up so far. DA Ambassadors are expected to attend a 3-hour induction session and 4 forums a year as part of the role, which involves providing advice and support for staff in their services in relation to DA. DA Ambassadors also provide Train the Trainer sessions, so that staff can then provide DA training in their own services. CNWL are in the process of putting together guidance for staff impacted personally by DA and HR and Occupational Health are involved in this process.

Our SA & MCA Specialist visits each of the CNWL services in Hillingdon annually, to refresh staff regarding SA and MSP is discussed. Whenever staff contact the SA & MCA Specialist for SA advice, they are asked to confirm if they have gained consent from the service user to raise a SA concern with LBH. Even though MSP should always be considered before making a SA referral, there are certain circumstances that staff will need to raise a SA concern without a patient's consent e.g., public and vital interest.

## 11.2. London Fire Brigade

As LFB's service delivery was largely uninterrupted by the pandemic, we were still interacting with Hillingdon's community with safeguarding concerns identified and raised in the same manner. Home Fire Safety Visits were restricted to those most at risk/vulnerable, however new ways of delivering these remotely are being developed as a result of the pandemic. LFB has continued to play a key role in the Safeguarding Partnership, attending Boards and contributing to the multiagency audit.

Organisational learning from the pandemic is being captured centrally, to deliver pan-London improvements where required.

### 11.3. Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO) and Education Safeguarding

The LADO, CP lead and DA lead offer advice, guidance and share resources to all schools in Hillingdon (including independent schools) relating to safeguarding and LADO queries. This includes the creation of specific guidance and resources when need is identified for example the creation of a separated parents and domestic abuse guidance for schools and a PowerPoint, staff briefing and KCSIE quiz highlighting peer on peer abuse.

Due to the impact of Covid, the LADO Team responded by developing new ways of working, including carrying out LADO Allegations against Staff & Volunteers Meetings, staff training and cluster meetings online.

The LADO Team also redeployed its staff to support frontline services – the Domestic Abuse Lead supported the IDVA Team, and the Child Protection Lead supported the Placements Team, both of which saw an increase in demand. This agile way of working demonstrates the commitment and supportiveness of the team to ensure children and families were prioritised.

#### LADO

The LADO service saw a decrease in the amount of referrals received this year, mainly due to schools offering on-line learning with only a limited number of students receiving face to face lessons. This offered less opportunity for inappropriate actions to be undertaken, although new allegations relating on-line issues have been made. This has resulted in fewer referrals being received from school but an increase in referrals relating to people, in their private lives, who work or volunteer with children and young people. This is against trend as our referral rate has steadily increased for the past three years. Referral statistics for the past four years:

- 2017-18 – 157
- 2018-19 – 188
- 2019-20 – 190
- 2020-21 – 147

Whilst Education staff remained the largest cohort of staff referred, there were significant increases in referrals relating to Health staff and Foster Carers. Of the 147 referrals received, 33% (44 referrals) were substantiated.

Complaints – Any complaints/Concerns, raised by the public, Ofsted, NSPCC or the Education Skills & Funding Agency are triaged by the LADO and Child Protection Lead, who, if a safeguarding concern is identified, lead on responding to these complaints.

### **Child Protection Lead for Education**

The LADO and Child Protection Lead for Education continue to provide training to school staff, and other services including foster carers, voluntary settings, faith settings and other establishments, around issues of LADO processes and level 1 safeguarding training. Training is updated yearly in line with changes to guidance and procedure, and best practice. The Level 1 Safeguarding Training slides are circulated to all Designated Safeguarding Leads to enable them to deliver to staff within schools.

### **Services offered**

Safeguarding Cluster Meetings – significant increased attendance due to meetings being held on-line. Moving forward, a hybrid method will be explored of on-line and face to face meetings.

This year, safeguarding training was delivered to School Governors over three sessions, resulting in 160 Governors receiving Safeguarding Level 1 training.

S175 & 157 Safeguarding Audit has been completed with 92 returns, 100% return rate from Local Authority Schools. The audit has been used to identify any themes across the borough where schools may require additional support from the team. One of which – Safer Recruitment Training has been devised and will be rolled out from June 2021. This course is fully booked with 60 attendees.

### **Domestic Abuse Lead for Education**

The Domestic Abuse (DA) Lead for Education has embedded Project Encompass with access made available to all schools. Project Encompass is an information sharing system that enables police to notify schools securely and directly that a child has been present in the home when there has been a domestic abuse incident. 78 schools are part of this project.

The DA Lead has an agreement with Hillingdon Women's Centre workplace safespace to work collaboratively and for schools to be directed to the DA Lead as the single point of contact for DA related issues and to attend their conference as a guest speaker regarding DA and schools.

The DA lead works with faith organisations including creating an advert on the Sikh channel, to reach the Sikh community.

The DA lead provides DA awareness training to schools, social care, Youth Offending, Stronger Families, as well as providing workshops directly to young people about Health Relationships and impact of DA.

#### 11.4. Uxbridge College

Uxbridge College provides further education mainly for 16-18's but also provides services to adults. The designated safeguarding lead for the College is a member of Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and the Strategic High-Risk Panel.

In February 2021, the college commissioned an external audit for its safeguarding practices. This was conducted by Dr Dan Grant an HMI safeguarding inspector who is respected in inspecting safeguarding in schools, colleges, and local authorities. The report was incredibly positive and stated the following:

'The college safeguarding arrangements are fully compliant with all statutory requirements.'

'The college has clear comprehensive and effective safeguarding policies and procedures which all staff understand.'

'Uxbridge College (HCUC) has very well-established and effective arrangements to ensure all decision-making processes relating to safeguarding matters remain independent from wider-college or other interests. The DSL and safeguarding officers operate within a clearly defined structure which is transparent and open to scrutiny.'

The College experienced high levels of safeguarding needs during lockdown. Increased levels of domestic violence and mental health were witnessed. Positives that arose were the use of online platforms to get professionals together and continue to effectively support young people.

The College has retained its kitemark 'Leaders in Safeguarding' in 2021 which recognises the quality of the work it does to safeguard its young people.

### 11.5. The Hillingdon Hospital

Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides services from both Hillingdon Hospital and Mount Vernon Hospital. The trust has a turnover of around £222 million and employs over 3,300 staff. They deliver healthcare to the residents of the London Borough of Hillingdon, and increasingly to those living in the surrounding areas of Ealing, Harrow, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, giving them a total catchment population of over 350,000 people.

Hillingdon Hospital is an acute and specialist services provider in North West London, close to Heathrow Airport for which it is the nearest hospital for those receiving emergency treatment. Providing the majority of services from the trust, Hillingdon Hospital is the only acute hospital in Hillingdon with a busy Accident and Emergency, inpatients, day surgery, and outpatient clinics. The trust also provides some services at Mount Vernon Hospital, in co-operation with a neighbouring NHS Trust.

A strengthened safeguarding structure was implemented as a pilot from October 2020, with the development of our Safeguarding Families Team. The focus of this team is for safeguarding to be at the forefront of our clinical care. This includes engagement of frontline staff, provision of training and engagement and representation across local, national, and strategic partnerships. The Trust is a fully engaged member of the Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership, attending all subgroups, Boards and contributing to learning and practice improvement locally. The Trust has seen a notable increase in presentation of young people with mental health needs during the pandemic. We have increased the frequency of Trust led multiagency meetings to ensure that a broad spectrum of professional expertise is available to consider individual cases, and we access the Partnership escalation procedures as required.

The Trust submitted a paper entitled 'Safeguarding Families in an Acute Health Trust during a Pandemic and Beyond' to demonstrate the impact of Covid-19 and how the service adapted in response. We are finalists for the HSJ patient safety 'NHS Safeguarding Award 2021.

### 11.6. London Borough of Hillingdon: Tenancy Management

Our service forms part of the Tenancy Management Service, we work with tenants and leaseholders who cause Anti-Social Behaviour, or who may be experiencing Domestic Abuse where there are underlying issues including mental health and substance misuse. Our role is to address, support and change behaviours to sustain a person's tenancy and prevent homelessness. On occasion where ASB is so serious we will also look to take Enforcement Action alongside support. We also support victims of Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Abuse and take the relevant action to risk assess, safeguard the victim, and implement support and safety measures.

During 2020-21 the service received an increase in domestic abuse referrals and an increase in the number of referrals regarding vulnerable adults being subjected to 'cuckooing'. All referrals are risk assessed and prioritised accordingly. Staff have worked throughout the pandemic from the civic centre and have continued to carry out visits to people's homes where necessary.

## 12. Priorities for 2021-22

The last year has seen considerable progress in the implementation of Hillingdon's Adult and Child Safeguarding Arrangements.

It is acknowledged that all safeguarding partners have faced a period of exceptionally high demand and pressure caused by the global coronavirus pandemic. The focus of all has now turned to recovery planning and both the Safeguarding Adult Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership have met to consider the multi-agency response needed and to identify safeguarding priorities for the coming year. The pandemic response has served to highlight the importance of effective multi-agency work, at all levels and across all services. The support of partner agencies, and residents, in our continued recovery from the pandemic will be intrinsic to the work of the Safeguarding Partnership in the next year, and beyond.

1. The Safeguarding Children Partnership has identified the following priority areas for 2021-22:
  - a. Neglect
  - b. Contextual Safeguarding

- c. Children with Complex Needs and Disabilities
  - d. Early Help Services
  - e. Child Sexual Abuse
2. The Safeguarding Adult Board has identified the following priority areas:
- a. Making Safeguarding Personal
  - b. Domestic Abuse
  - c. Financial Abuse and Exploitation
  - d. Mental Health and Safeguarding
  - e. Self-Neglect
3. To continue with shared strategic priorities across the adult and child safeguarding partnership where appropriate, The Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adult Board will have 3 shared subgroups:
- a. Practice Development Forum,
  - b. Joint Strategic Safeguarding and Trafficking
  - c. Domestic Abuse