

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

Cabinet Member & Portfolio	Cllr Susan O'Brien – Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education
Responsible Officer	Julie Kelly – Corporate Director Children Services
Report Author & Directorate	Senay Nidai, Children's Services
Papers with report	Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>The Safeguarding Annual Report summarises the work undertaken by Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership to support and safeguard Hillingdon's residents: vulnerable children and their families.</p> <p>The report summarises the work of the strategic partnership in 2024-2025, providing an overview of progress against the agreed priorities, the impact of learning from practice, and the findings of quality assurance activity.</p>
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Be / feel safe from harm</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Thriving, Healthy Households</p>
Financial Cost	There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.
Select Committee	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Ward(s)	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

1. the Annual Report 2024-25 and the assurance that the partnership continues to provide leadership and scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements for Hillingdon residents, be noted;
2. the way in which the partnership has responded to the challenges posed by changing local, national and international contexts, be noted and;
3. the strategic priorities for safeguarding for 2025-26, be noted.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To inform the Cabinet of the way in which safeguarding partnership performed the year before and which are the safeguarding priorities for the year ahead.

Alternative options considered / risk management

None.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. In September 2019 the Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership arrangements were launched in line with the statutory requirements set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. In December 2023 an update to Working Together to Safeguard Children was issued. The local authority shares equal responsibility with our statutory partners, the NWL NHS Integrated Care Partnership Group and Metropolitan Police, to safeguard children and young people across Hillingdon.
2. The report provides an overview of the actions taken across the Children's Safeguarding Partnerships in response to the key priorities set the previous year and sets out how the safeguarding partnership have discharged its duties to ensure learning from practice and provide strategic leadership that strives to continuously develop safeguarding practice in the Borough.
3. There is shared and equal responsibility for safeguarding between the three statutory partners, the Local Authority, Metropolitan Police Service and NHS Northwest London Integrated Care Board. This approach is reinforced by the rotation of chairing responsibility across the three senior strategic Boards, the Executive Leadership Group, Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

4. The 2024–2025 reporting year reflects a period of significant progress, scrutiny, and innovation across the safeguarding system. The Partnership has continued to respond to increasing complexity of need, financial pressures, and the evolving national safeguarding landscape.
5. Children and young people have played a central role in shaping safeguarding arrangements. The “Walking in Our Shoes” programme, co-designed and delivered by care-experienced young people, trained over 1,000 professionals across health, education, and policing. Their contributions have informed strategic planning, enhanced professional understanding, and strengthened the voice of the child within safeguarding systems.
6. Strategic priorities for the year included Child Sexual Abuse, Contextual Safeguarding, Education Safeguarding, and Transitional Safeguarding. The NSPCC Talk PANTS campaign reached over 12,000 children and parents, resulting in direct safeguarding referrals. The Safer Hayes Project engaged 279 young people in community-led safety initiatives. The Education Safeguarding Subgroup strengthened links between schools and safeguarding partners, contributing to a reduction in permanent exclusions and supporting the development of a borough-wide approach to educational neglect.
7. Transitional Safeguarding work has progressed through a cross-partnership framework, supporting young people aged 14–25 through key service transitions. This work is aligned with national best practice and reflects the borough’s commitment to safeguarding adolescents and young adults who may fall outside statutory thresholds.
8. Quality assurance activity included a comprehensive Section 11 audit, with 93% of agencies demonstrating compliance with statutory safeguarding duties. Reflective learning reviews were undertaken in response to serious incidents, and a suicide prevention strategy was developed to address national and local concerns. The Partnership has also reviewed its escalation policy and refreshed its Learning from Practice Framework to ensure that learning is embedded and informs system development.
9. The Independent Scrutineer, Alan Caton OBE, concluded that the safeguarding arrangements across Hillingdon are strong, transparent, and open to challenge, with a clear culture of high support and high challenge. The Partnership continues to demonstrate shared leadership and accountability across statutory partners.
10. The Safeguarding Partnership has embedded a hybrid training model to support accessibility and reach and continues to promote an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory approach across all functions. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion audits showed positive engagement and commitment across agencies, with a continued focus on addressing structural inequalities and amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups.

11. Looking ahead to 2025/26, the Partnership's forward plan includes:

- To ensure continued assurance and strategic focus, the Safeguarding Children Partnership will prioritise the following areas in 2025–2026:
- Strengthening the multi-agency response to Child Sexual Abuse, including audit activity and targeted training.
- Embedding the borough's approach to Transitional Safeguarding, with a focus on service integration and risk mitigation.
- Enhancing the safeguarding response to harm outside the home, through the development of the Multi-Agency Risk Outside the Home (MAROTH) framework.
- Improving the consistency and quality of multi-agency data, to support strategic decision-making and assurance.
- Continuing to amplify the voice of children and young people, ensuring their lived experience informs service design and delivery.
- Aligning partnership activity with the anticipated outcomes of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), ensuring readiness and responsiveness to inspection findings.
- The Partnership remains committed to delivering safeguarding arrangements that are responsive, inclusive, and informed by both local need and national developments.

Financial Implications

This report details the work being undertaken by the Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership and has no direct financial implications. The costs of the Safeguarding function delivering the work are contained within existing resources.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

To continue to provide effective safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable children and their families and ensure that the safeguarding partnership continues to respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of residents. This will support residents and children living in Hillingdon to feel safe and supported within the community.

Consultation & Engagement carried out (or required)

The Annual Report has been endorsed by the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and the Executive Leadership Group.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Legal

There are no legal impediments to the recommendations set out within the report.

Comments from other relevant service areas

Comments and updates from various agencies with a role in safeguarding residents are included in the appended report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Working Together to Safeguard Children, Department for Education, 2018/2023
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

The Children and Social Work Act 2017
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>