



Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025

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We are pleased to present the 2024/2025 Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report, which reflects the collective work and shared commitment of the safeguarding partners over the past year. This has been a period of significant change and reflection, marked by the publication of the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) statutory guidance and the call for strengthened local accountability, greater transparency, and a deeper focus on the experiences of children and families.

In response to Working Together 2023, our partnership undertook a comprehensive review of local safeguarding arrangements, and we are proud to have co-designed and agreed new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangement (MASA) that sets out a refreshed vision for how we will work together to protect children and their welfare and drive for better outcomes. This new MASA builds on the existing foundations of previous practice, keeping its clear structures, strong oversight and an embedded culture of learning and improvement at the forefront.

Throughout the 2024–2025 reporting period, our safeguarding work has remained firmly focused on four key priorities: addressing structural inequalities; supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs; tackling neglect and parental factors; and strengthening early intervention and prevention. These priorities have been consistently embedded across our safeguarding subgroups and forums, where they have informed strategic discussions and shaped multi-agency responses. They have also been central to our training programmes, ensuring that practitioners are equipped with the knowledge and tools to identify and respond to these issues effectively. By integrating these priorities into our daily practice and organisational culture, we continue to drive forward a proactive and inclusive safeguarding approach that meets the evolving needs of our most vulnerable children and families. These priorities will remain a focus for the Partnership through 2025/2026 and further reporting will be evidenced in our next annual report.

Our Chair and Independent Scrutineer, Alan Caton retired earlier this year after twelve years and we want to thank him for his dedication, vital independence and unwavering commitment to children and young people all of which has made a lasting impact in Islington. A key part of the revised arrangements has seen the appointment of a new Independent Scrutineer. Ben Mant will play a key role offering constructive and critical friend challenge and advice. His perspective will help us, as a partnership, to assess the effectiveness of local safeguarding practice, identify areas for development and ensure that our work remains focused on improving outcomes for children.

We have seen two “Outstanding” Inspections for Islington’s Children and Young People this year, the first was from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation for our Youth Justice Service and the second for the ILACS Inspection of Children’s Social Care, these gradings reflect the dedication and collaboration of our leaders, frontline teams and partners in delivering exceptional services for Islington children and young people.

For the year ahead, we are committed to delivering on the ambitions of the national safeguarding reforms and there is much work to do alongside considerable challenges and pressures faced within partner agencies, the increasing complexity of need and the ongoing impact of economic and social inequalities. Together, we will continue with our commitment to children, young people and their families; their voices, experiences and aspirations will continue to shape our priorities as we go forward with our aspirations for continual improvement.

Jon Abbey
Corporate Director of Children Services
London Borough of Islington



David Pennington
Director of Safeguarding & Looked After Children
NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board



Jason Stewart
Chief Superintendent,
Central North, Basic Command Unit Commander



The Islington safeguarding children’s partners, as part of their arrangements to safeguard children and promote their welfare, are required to demonstrate that they are open to independent scrutiny. In accordance with *Working Together 2023*, independent scrutiny should drive continuous improvement, add value and provide assurance that arrangements are working effectively for children, families and practitioners. It should also consider learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews, national reviews and thematic reports.

I was appointed as the independent chair and scrutineer to offer independent scrutiny of the Islington safeguarding arrangements. I have been the independent chair and scrutineer in Islington for 12 years and am soon to retire, as such this will be my final review of the annual report and assessment of how effective these arrangements have been over the past 12 months, highlighting areas of success and those needing further development.

Looking back over my time in Islington, I have found many strengths to the safeguarding children’s arrangements. I have found a partnership that is open to scrutiny and challenge and one that strives to continually learn and improve practice. There is strong leadership and a clear sense of joint and equal responsibility from the three safeguarding partners. The partnership in Islington is built on high support, high challenge and encourages difficult conversations to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and families.

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 families and to provide them with the best possible services. It is apparent that there is a strong sense of partnership across Islington and a desire to continually improve services. There is a clear meeting structure and delivery model which is supported by multi-agency subgroups.

I would like to congratulate Islington following their recent Ofsted ILACS Inspection of Children’s Social Care, and also the Youth Justice Service “Outstanding” grade from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation. Achieving an ‘Outstanding’ grade is testament to all the hard work of leaders, frontline staff and partners in delivering high quality services to improve outcomes for Islington’s children and families. It was very pleasing to see that Ofsted recognised Islington’s effective partnership. They stated in their report ‘...robust collaboration with partners to focus on achieving shared priorities for children remains strong’.

In conclusion, this yearly report showcases the outstanding work carried out by the Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership over the past twelve months. Their dedication, collaborative spirit and consistency in safeguarding have yielded excellent results. I am confident that the partnership will continue to develop, be ambitious and make meaningful differences in the lives of Islington’s children, young people and families.

As I bow out of Islington, I want to thank all the organisations and individuals in the public, voluntary and private sectors, that I have worked with over the past twelve years, who work tirelessly to improve outcomes for all of Islington’s children and families.

Alan C Caton OBE
ISCP Independent Chair/Scrutineer

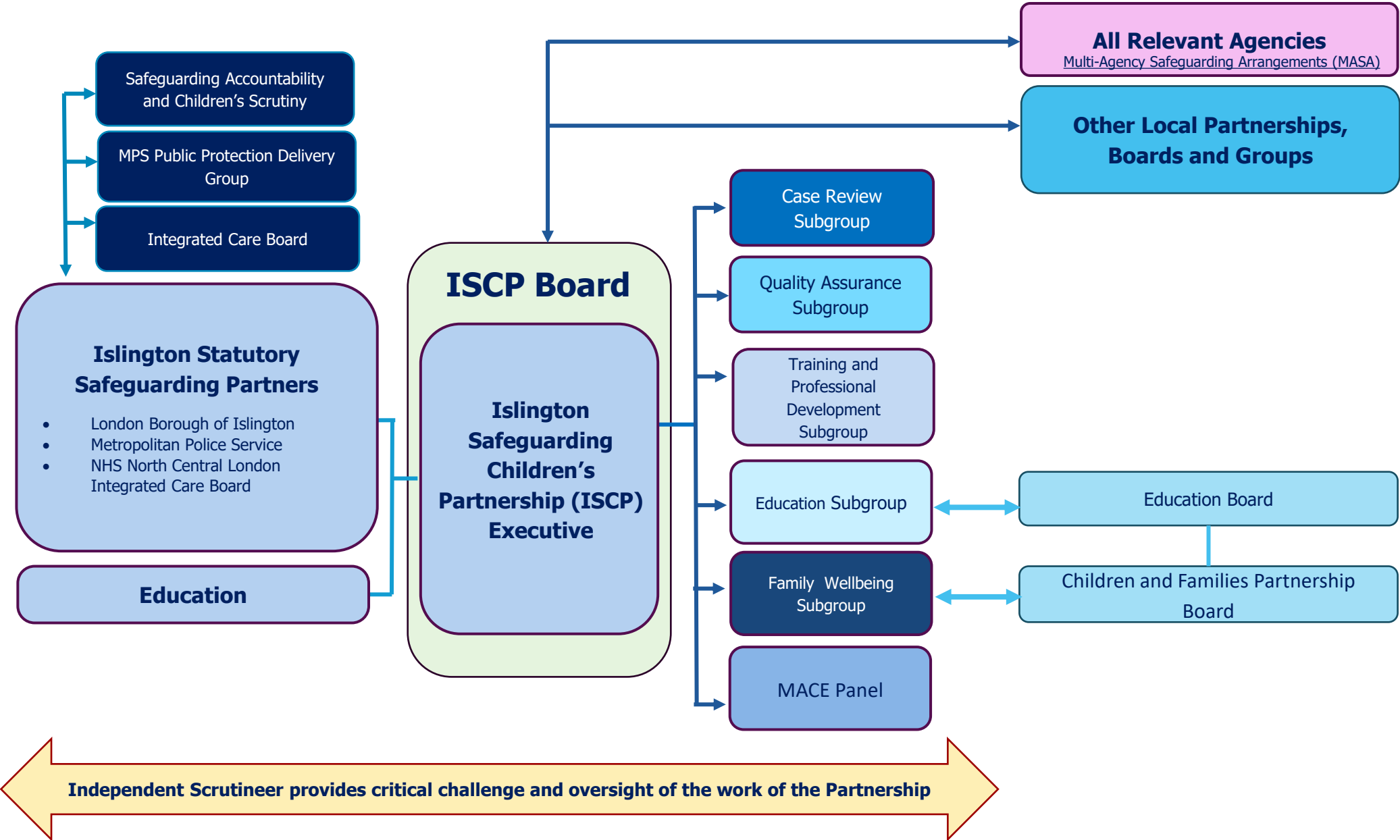


Introduction: Newly Appointed Scrutineer from April 2025.

"I'm honoured to join the Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership as the new independent scrutineer having retired from policing last year. I am extremely grateful to Alan Caton for his work in Islington over the past twelve years and I hope to be able to build on the foundation of support that Alan has clearly established. I would also like to thank everyone I have met so far for making me feel so welcome.

Having reviewed the ISCP Partnership Plan for 2024–2026 and the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, I will be committed to providing transparent, child-centred scrutiny of the partnership’s strategic priorities and associated outcomes. My focus will be on ensuring the multi-agency framework delivers measurable improvements in children’s safety and well-being in Islington, with the voices of children and families being heard at every stage of child protection. I look forward to working collaboratively to monitor progress, drive accountability, and continuously learn from what is happening locally, across London and nationally. This is particularly relevant at the moment with the financial challenges that the three statutory partners are facing."

Ben Mant
ISCP Independent Scrutineer



Partnership Plan Delivery Framework

Our Priorities are held throughout the Partnership and interweave amongst the Partnerships' functions with linked forward plans and action plans, progression and delivery of these are overseen by the identified subgroup, who report on progress to the Executive Group.

Subgroups are chaired by representations from across the partnership, who promote inter-agency collaboration and assist group members in innovative problem-solving to ensure the implementation of agreed action. Chairs also attend the Executive Group to:

- report on their progress;
- facilitate communication and collaboration across subgroups;
- ensure joint responsibility and oversight;
- provide a summary of data trends and key highlights relevant to the priorities;
- facilitate links to other partnership groups and strategic boards.

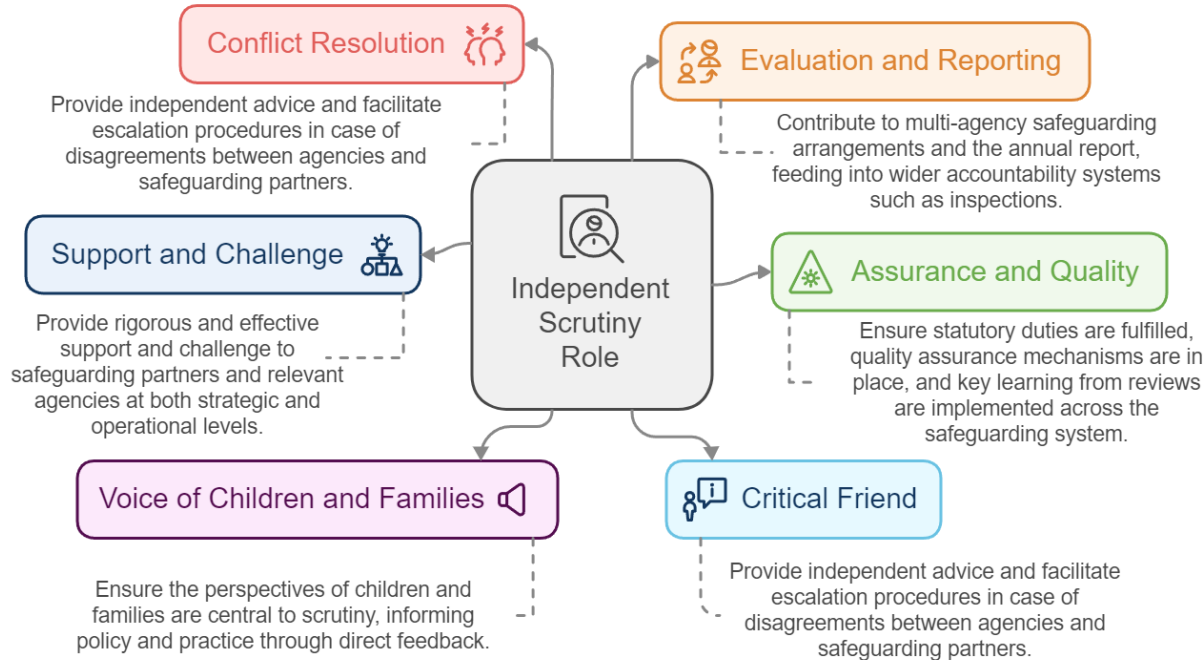
Alongside there is independent scrutiny that takes place to provide constructive, critical challenge and provide assurance to the effectiveness of our arrangements in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

The Partnership Delivery Framework is underpinned by our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA).

Independent Scrutiny

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 highlights the need to ensure continuous improvement and effective safeguarding arrangements for children, families, and practitioners through robust independent scrutiny. We are committed to ensuring independent, rigorous support and challenge to safeguarding partners and agencies at all levels via our independent scrutineer. Our scrutineer provides oversight and input to ensure that statutory duties are met, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that both local and national safeguarding reviews are analysed and implemented effectively. To support this, we have an evolving scrutiny plan, outlined below for 2024 - 2025 and 2025 - 2026, however this plan is flexible to evolve in response to the needs of the Partnership, reflecting the autonomy our Independent Scrutineer and need to explore the lines of inquiry as identified through scrutiny.

Over the period of this plan, we plan to enhance the voices of children and families in our Partnership partially via our scrutineer function, with the aim to inform policy and practice through direct feedback. Acting as a critical friend, our scrutineer will facilitate discussions between practitioners and leaders, provide independent advice during disagreements, and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and reports, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.



Purpose of this report

Legislation requires local child safeguarding arrangements to ensure that children are safe and that agencies work together to promote children’s welfare. Working Together 2023 states that an annual report should be produced to cover the period April to March and reflect what Multiagency Safeguarding partners and relevant agencies have done as a result of safeguarding arrangements within their area highlighting the effectiveness of these arrangements.

The revision of Working Together 2023 drew together a strengthened framework for safeguarding arrangements, placing a greater emphasis on shared responsibility, collaborative leadership and inclusive engagement with families. These changes have reinforced the importance of effective partnership working across safeguarding agencies. The MASA framework will inform future planning of the Partnership by guiding the development of our subgroups and enhancing the role of independent scrutiny. By aligning our Partnership priorities with the new guidance, we aim to strengthen and build on our existing safeguarding systems to continue support children, young people, and families across Islington.

Audience of this report

This report is intended to be readily available to children, young people and their families in Islington. The report will also be shared with those highlighted below;

- Children, Young People & Families.
- The Local Authority’s Chief Executive Officer and Leader of the Council
- Integrated Care Board
- The local Police and Crime Commissioner / MPS Borough Commander.
- The Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- What Works for Children Social Care.
- All practitioners and senior leaders from relevant agencies and statutory services outlined by the Lead Safeguarding Partners
- Individuals and Boards are asked to note the findings of this report, and to inform the Statutory Partners and Independent Scrutineer of any actions they intend to take in relation to findings.

Remit of this report

- This report follows on from the ISCP Annual Report September 2022 to March 2024 and covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

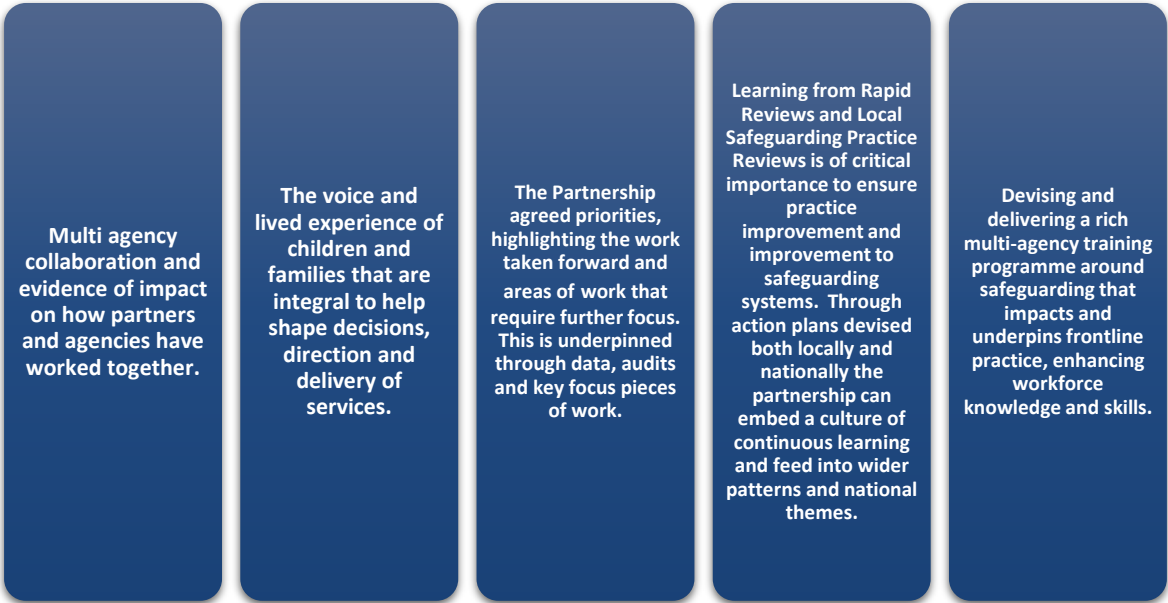
Publication

The report will be published as an electronic document on the Partnership’s website.

Methodology

In writing this report, contributions were sought directly from Partnership Members, Chairs of Subgroups and other Relevant Partnerships and Agencies. The report draws heavily on numerous monitoring reports presented to the Partnership and its sub-groups during the year, such as Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Report, Private Fostering Report, Corporate Parenting Board report, the VAWG and Youth Safety Strategy and impact of Islington Trauma Informed Practice in schools.

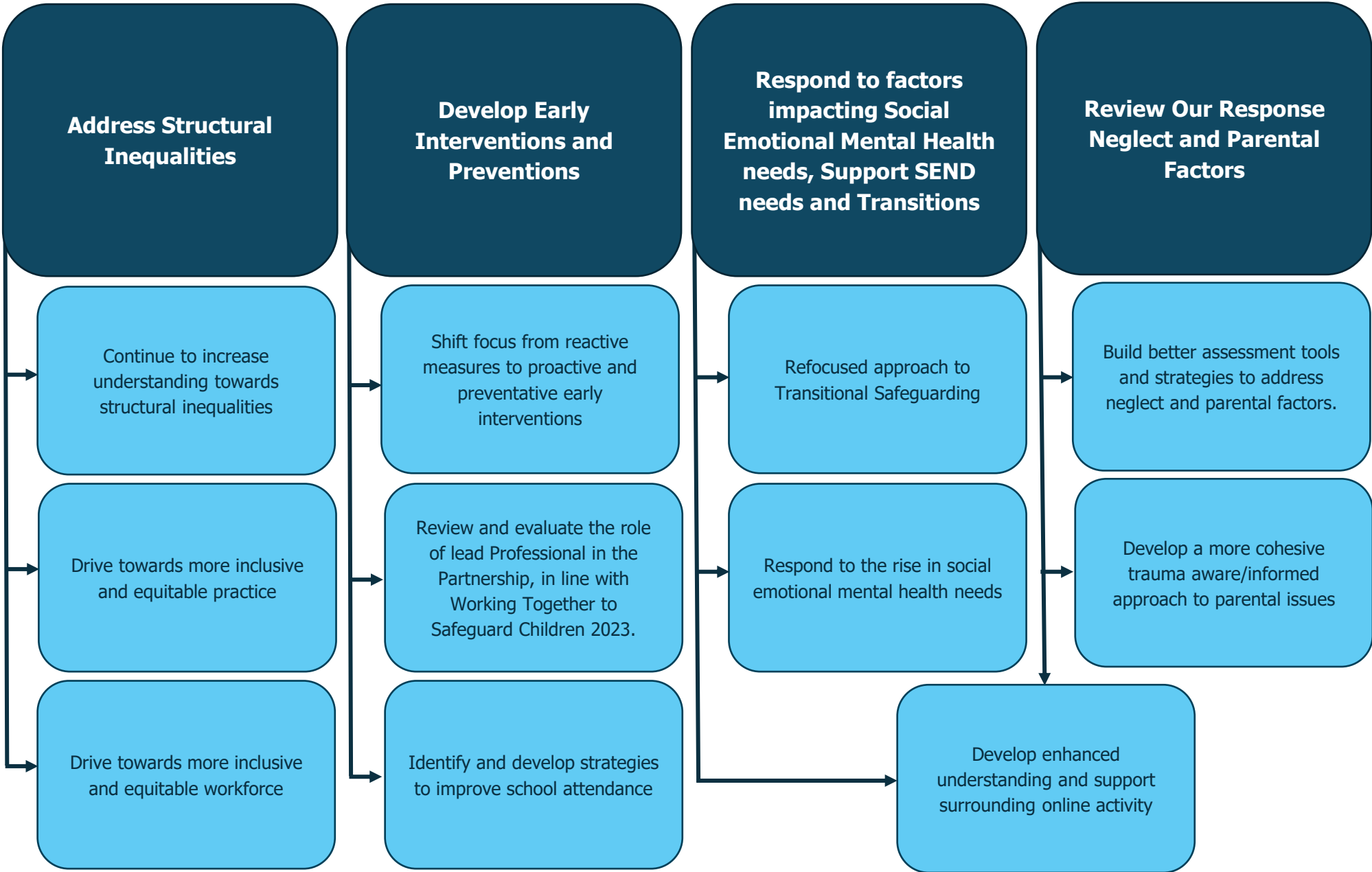
The report also demonstrates work done by partners pertaining to the Partnership’s core functions, for example, learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews, quality assuring partners in the form of audits and developing and delivering multi agency learning events.



This report will highlight progress on

The priorities of the Partnership were fixed for a two-year period following the 2023 Partnership Away-Day. They cover the period; 2024/2025 and 2025/2026.

The process for setting priorities beyond this timescale will begin in November 2025.



NCL ICB collaborates with commissioned health providers to ensure service quality and improvements that cater to local needs. Robust SG quality assurance processes are in place and as a result NCL ICB has actively contributed to supporting SG priorities withing the ISCP. This year several key initiatives and actions were undertaken to address systemic inequalities, improve SG responses and tackle the health related vulnerabilities of children at risk of exploitation, neglect and parental challenges.

Structural Inequalities (aligned with current Disproportionality and Inequality):

NCL ICB is the statutory NHS body responsible for planning and allocating resources to meet the four core purposes of the Integrated Care System (ICS), namely: [NCL Outcomes Framework | North Central London Integrated Care System](#)

- to improve outcomes in population health and healthcare
- to tackle inequalities in outcomes, experience and access to health services
- to enhance productivity and value for money
- to help the NHS support broader social and economic development.

Actions in response to ISCP need to be contextualised within the wider strategic priority and work of the ICB and ICS in addressing inequality. [NCL's Population Health and Integrated Care Strategy](#) sets out how the ICS will approach improving the physical and mental health of local people and reducing health inequalities.

Establishment of the NCL ICB Integrated Safeguarding Oversight Group, which ensures robust Safeguarding Quality Assurance processes are in place that demonstrate effective safeguarding practice across the health system to address the consequences / harm suffered as a result of inequalities.

NCL ICB has a system learning role in supporting responses to cases where children and young people and their carers have experienced inequality.

In July 2024 NCL ICB launched free prescriptions for care leavers, one of the priority areas for the Care leavers Compact. NCL has organised a sustainable programme to continue to support Care Leavers into NHS careers, apprenticeships, and work experience.

In February 2025, an Islington partnership Health Inequalities Programme Group was established to have oversight of the delivery of services and projects funded by the NCL Inequalities Fund in Islington. The overarching aim of the programme is to identify and address local healthcare inequalities experienced by deprived, marginalised and under-served populations in Islington through commissioned Health Inequalities projects and services. The objectives of the Group are to:

- Ensure that the projects and service are co-produced, of high quality and deliver the Ambition and Priorities of the Inequalities Fund whilst remaining closely aligned with the national Core20PLUS5 approach to reducing healthcare inequalities and unwarranted variations in care provision.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the projects in delivering improved service experiences and health outcomes for residents.

Development of health prototype response to non-fatal strangulation and suffocation (NFS/S) Tacking inequalities and improving health outcomes has been a key priority of local NCL NFS working group recognising that many of our underserved population, with often intersecting identities may be survivors of, and disproportionately affected by NFS.

Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH), Special Educational Needs Disability (SEND) and Inclusion:

There has been ongoing collaborative work with ICB and LBI following phase 1 and 2 to strengthen assurance in relation to the response to National Review of the Safeguarding of Children with Disabilities and Complex health needs placed in residential settings with jointly funded placements. The Designated Nurse for SGC/ CLA and CE attends National Panel which continues to look at best practice related to the National Review

Participation and engagement remain central to the ICB and LBI, we are committed to learning from our communities to inform service provision and delivery. A recent example includes parents and carers shaping new transition to adulthood guidance, which supports parents navigating services and the local offer at key times in their child's journey to adulthood. Work is underway to coproduce the action plan for delivering against 'I-Thrive' priorities identified for implementation over the next 12 months and Islington's All Age Autism Strategy. Early engagement activity with those with lived experience has shown the national priorities are also a priority for Autistic children and young people and adults in Islington.

Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS). Each ICB was required to commission local parent carer forums (PCFs) to engage with parents through online surveys, coffee mornings and develop co-production opportunities with schools. Nearly 600 parents returned PINS surveys and participated in engagement sessions. Key themes include:

- School / parent collaboration and communication
- Inclusivity Variation in Support for neurodiverse students
- Implementation of support plans
- Mental health and emotional support
- Diagnosis and assessment delays

The ICB commissioned community-based psychological interventions like Growing Together and the Youth Counselling & Substance Misuse & Alcohol Service (YCSMAS) to address these challenges. The programme also supports young people in care and those with mental health and/or substance misuse issues

Neglect and Parental Factors:

Development of health prototype response to non-fatal strangulation and suffocation (NFS/S), in line with The Domestic Abuse Act 2021. A key priority of the local NFS working group, recognising that many of our underserved population with often intersecting identities may be survivors. There is also active involvement in national work through the National Clinical Reference Group (CRG) for developing pathways to respond to NFS.

The ICB has continued to commission the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme, a specialist domestic abuse education, support and referral programme providing training for GP teams and a named advocate to whom patients can be referred to for support.

NCL ICB has a system learning role in supporting the health system response to cases the consequences / harm suffered as a result of domestic violence, parental mental ill-health and substance abuse

NCL ICB facilitated a joint adult and children's learning event in July 2024 focused on the learning from statutory reviews across NCL which have been identified through the review summaries from the NHS Safeguarding Case Review Tracker (S-CRT). The event was run with the support of the LSCP and SAB board managers. The focus themes for the event were Mental Health, Neglect and Looked after Children and transition. The event was well evaluated by all partners and feedback has been shared with all agencies involved.

Family Wellbeing (Early Intervention and Prevention):

Actions in response to ISCP need to be contextualised within the wider strategic priority and work of the ICB and ICS in addressing inequality. [Population Health in North Central London](#) sets out how the ICS will approach improving the physical and mental health of local people and reducing health inequalities

The designated professionals for safeguarding children have a health system wide role and actively engaged with public health commissioners for example providing advice, support and challenge regarding sexual health services, input to the joint LBI and LBC Prevention of Suicide Strategy.

The NCL Start Well programme, has led on a collective ambition is to make sure our services for BCYP maternity and newborns, deliver outstanding, safe and timely care for local people wherever they live in NCL. In partnership with NHS England (London) Specialised Commissioning, NCL ICB ran a 14-week public consultation on proposed changes to maternity, neonatal, and children's surgical care in north central London.

NCL ICB has a system learning role in supporting the health system response in cases where harm suffered by children and young people who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation has been a key feature.

An NCL CYP & Vulnerable Adults Discharge Protocol completed in collaboration with representatives from Mental Health, CAMHS, Adult, Children, Midwifery, GPs and LA colleagues. This protocol has supported provider organisations to have a consistent approach which results in improved partnership working and outcomes for children and young people.

NCL Integrated Care System (ICS) held the first ICS in person safeguarding conference for delegates from across health and care. The theme was 'Promoting Curiosity'. Presentations included the voices of service users, and new information to support health and social care practitioners to spot signs of abuse earlier, to ask the right questions and understand the context of people's lives.

The Designated Doctor for CLA chaired task and finish group to oversee the delivery of health-related actions by Children's Services in relation to a review.

NCL ICB Designated Safeguarding professionals have provided consistent health and wider partnership leadership and challenge attending the Missing and Child and Adolescent Exploitation subgroup, National Referral Mechanism panel (NRM) and relevant ISCP subgroups, to support both the health and multiagency response to the identification of children who are vulnerable to criminal and sexual exploitation.

Designated professionals are giving strategic leadership for the design and implementation of the Islington Families First work.

Work continues on increasing childhood immunisation uptake across NCL. Workstreams are focusing on efforts to reduce inequalities and provide equitable access to childhood immunisations, particularly in areas with the lowest uptake and highest rates of deprivation.

ICB Change

In March 2025, the government and NHS England outlined the required changes for Integrated Care Boards across England, setting out the need to make changes to the NCL operating model, inclusive of a significant cost improvement schedule and transformation of services. In the ICB 'model blueprint' released on 6th May 2025, ICBs were asked to consider functional changes in relation to Safeguarding. The guiding notes related to safeguarding include 'Test and explore options to streamline and transfer some activities out of the ICB (accountability changes will require legislative changes)'.

The ICB has a clear duty to safeguard, whether that be the service we provide or commission. Throughout the change, NCL ICB remains committed to meeting our statutory responsibilities within the borough and at scale. The change programme will have significant impact on the ICB during 2025/26, with teams likely being reorganised to meet the new arrangements.

Safeguarding remains a statutory function, and while our commitment to it is unwavering, we anticipate upcoming challenges. We're actively preparing to address these to ensure we continue to meet our statutory obligations effectively.

The Police, alongside local authorities, health and education partners have statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, identifying and responding to their individual needs. These are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Children Act 1989/2004. These responsibilities form the basis for the **Metropolitan Police Children’s Strategy launched in 2024** which is a pledge to work better with our safeguarding partners and children, to see the “Child First” and adapt our response to recognise their needs.

Around two million children live in London, or about a fifth of the population. In 2023 there were approximately 61,000 child victims of crime and 51,000 children who were suspected of committing a crime. According to the ONS domestic abuse is present in around 4% of households with a child under 16, rising to 19% for single parent households. Children can experience crime in a variety of ways and being excellent across this range of very different challenges is a strategic ambition for the Metropolitan Police.

We will keep children in London and Islington safe, build their trust and bring to justice those who abuse and exploit them. We will seek to build strong and trusted relationships with Islington’s children to strengthen confidence in policing.

We will increase our efforts to prevent and reduce crime committed against children. We will be more precise and proactive in identifying exploiters and abusers of children to mitigate the risks they pose and bring offenders to justice.

We will ensure children who engage in criminal behaviour have access to appropriate and effective interventions.

We will increase our efforts to prevent and reduce crime committed against children. We will be more precise and proactive in identifying exploiters and abusers of children to mitigate the risks they pose and bring offenders to justice.

As part of community crime fighting plans, Central North BCU has our own localised plan to tackle knife crime in their neighbourhoods, focused on preparation, prevention, protection and pursuing perpetrators. Using intelligence we map out gang associates to identify those at risk, **which includes children who may be vulnerable to exploitation**. This helps inform operational and partnership activity with the intention of protecting victims and preventing exploitation. We work with our partners and external agencies to ensure that all available diversionary and disruption opportunities are promoted and utilised by our teams who are working with those vulnerable to harm.

The recent **HMICFRS** inspection into the MPS response to child exploitation identified areas of concern in our practice. We have commenced a package of concerted action to address the priority issues raised in the report, including: assessing and investigating missing children and crimes involving exploited children; putting an audit process in place to identify victim-blaming language; introducing new crime management units, helping crimes to be assessed based on risk and harm and allocated to officers with the right skills.

As set out in the **New Met for London Plan** [A New Met for London | Metropolitan Police](#), public protection has been made a Met wide priority, committing to transform how we protect the public from harm and address longstanding concerns about keeping children safe.

We are also committed to improving our response to children who are missing. As part of this work we are in the process of introducing a **Local Missing Hub** in Central North BCU to overhaul our response to investigating missing persons, including children at risk of exploitation.

County Lines **Operation Orochi**, funded by the Home Office, tackles county lines drug supply by targeting individuals who directly control drug lines, and who may exploit children to run drugs. The team use data led investigations which enables them to charge modern slavery and drug supply offences without victim engagement.

Our approach to tackling domestic abuse is outlined in our **Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) action plan** [Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) action plan | Metropolitan Police](#) and we recognise the need to ensure that child victims are identified and are getting the specialist support they need. To deliver this requires effective partnership with schools and social care which is delivered through **Operation Encompass**; the statutory scheme that shares information about domestic abuse incidents with schools to ensure children who have witnessed DA are given support at school.

Address structural inequalities
Drive towards more inclusive and equitable practice

Our priority aims for building trust with children in London are to:

- **Tackle discrimination**
- **Improve our relationship with children**
- **Strengthen links between wider neighbourhood teams and education settings**
- **Deliver precise and proportionate stop and search**
- **Promote routes into policing careers and volunteering.**

The MPS has worked in collaboration with London communities to develop a **London Race Action Plan** (LRAP) [Metropolitan Police London Race Action Plan](#) that aims to create an anti-racist police service, improve service delivery to black people and trust. Key enablers to achieve this include improving cultural competence at all levels, improving our data and transparency and involving black people and black children in all that we do. LRAP will focus on black people, including black children, due to the disproportionate outcomes seen and lowest trust levels. The hope is to seek benefits more widely across all ethnic minority communities in London.

We have made changes to the policy for more thorough searches of children to take account of the safeguarding review for Child Q and identify potential exploitation risks that children subject to this type of search may be facing. We will ensure that the safeguarding of every child who is subject to a search is an absolute priority.

We have already more than halved the number of More Thorough Intimate Parts searches we conduct and we'll continue to ensure we get the balance right. We recognise the personal impact of strip searches on children, so we'll only use the tactic where the gravity of the crime under investigation, or the risk of harm to the child, outweighs that impact.

When custody is required to ensure public safety we aim to triage child cases, prioritising contact with children's services to share information and ensure they are fully sighted on any risk we are aware of.

When custody is necessary, steps have been taken to reduce the trauma for children by placing them in detention rooms and not cells wherever possible. All suites now have permanent youth workers for engagement at the earliest opportunity and the introduction of distraction items and kits. We will ensure charged children are released on bail whenever possible. If bail is not possible, we will endeavour transfer of the child to local authority accommodation unless exceptional circumstances apply.

It is worth highlighting the ongoing work of **Divert** in the context of custody. The second version of the app is being launched, although the original is still in use and referrals are being taken. Both Camden and Islington local authorities will be engaged with concerning procurement of the second version

Drive towards more inclusive and equitable workforce

Current data extracted from the CN workforce shows female comprise 35% of the workforce and those from BME backgrounds, 23%.

Through the MPS Culture, Diversity and Inclusion (CD&I) Directorate, Delivery and Interventions team work with the BCU to support us in addressing local challenges and to help promote and share successes and good work. Key deliverables are:

- **Analysis of cultural indicators and indices.**
- **Oversight of and support for the Cultural Maturity Assurance Framework.**
- **Creation and population of CD&I Dashboards.**
- **Oversight and coordination of Staff Survey.**
- **Central support for Equality Impact Assessments.**
- **Strategic Insight Units – Behavioural Psychology.**

The CN Local CD&I Boards will, chaired by the BCU Commander, follows a consistent framework and consistently and continually captures progress made. The board provides opportunity for contributions from invested workforce members whose views and experiences are pertinent to the matters covered.

The United Nations' HeForShe campaign is a global solidarity movement which focuses on the idea that gender inequality is an issue that affects all people. Launched in September 2014, it seeks to encourage all genders, but particularly men and boys, to help achieve gender equality by speaking up and taking action against negative stereotypes and behaviours. The MPS supports HeForShe which has a Chief Officer sponsor.

The three HeForShe policing commitments are:

- **To address the gender imbalances in middle management teams, in particular the ranks of Sergeant and Inspector.**
- **Address and remove sexism and misogyny, where it exists, in police culture.**
- **Support the annual reporting of gender equality information.**

Culture change will be delivered across the Met to embed the values of policing by consent and build a strong culture focused on delivering for London, maintaining high standards and learning from others.

We will ensure our officers have the capacity and capability to safeguard all children:

We will improve our partnership working, setting out clearly the role of the police in keeping children safe.

We will work with experts to improve our existing training provision focused on working with children. We will prioritise improving officers’ communication, observation and listening skills and their understanding of neurodiversity and how mental ill health can manifest in children.

We will develop tailored messages aimed at secondary aged children, using relevant platforms and channels to help us deliver messages about crime prevention and build their trust.

Adultification bias skews the perception of the capacity and capability of children, leading to others (including professionals) viewing them as more grown up or adult. This particularly affects black children, who might be viewed primarily as a threat rather than as a child who needs support. This can lead to missed opportunities to intervene with support and instead cause harm. It can also damage children’s confidence in the police. This is reflected in MOPAC’s recent public attitudes survey that shows that only 12% of young black Londoners agree the police treat everyone fairly.

The MPS is committed to better understanding how adultification bias occurs and to identifying practical ways of reducing it amongst our officers.

Develop Early Interventions and Preventions

Shift focus from reactive measures to proactive and preventative early interventions
Child First is an approach that has been developed using evidence of what works to reduce children engaging in criminal behaviour, achieve positive outcomes and create safer communities. Child First recognises that children are different to adults; they have different needs and vulnerabilities. Child First seeks to treat children as individuals and for professionals to understand the wider context of their lives. Child First ensures that work with children acknowledges their status as a child rather than treating them as adults.

Threading the Children Strategy across Neighbourhood Policing, we aim to build trust by increasing the breadth of officers and PCSOs to which young people become familiar. We have invested in an additional Neighbourhood Superintendent for every borough who will work with communities to agree their local Safer Schools Partnership plan. Alongside this, a wider range of officers will be trained in working with children, which will become a core function rather than a specialist capability. We will ensure we work with children from a diverse range of communities in the delivery of the Children’s Strategy and ensure that a wide range of children’s voices are captured in each Basic Command Unit (BCU) as part of our standard community engagement and fed back to the delivery group.

We have made structural changes to increase consistency and build expertise within our child exploitation teams. We have appointed a full time Lead Responsible Officer and Tactical Policy Advisor who are responsible for overseeing our response to child exploitation and they have introduced new process to better record children’s vulnerability. Our officers are trained in identifying exploitation, victim blaming language and perpetrator focused investigations. Training has been introduced for front line leaders, mid line leaders, inspectors, sergeants new recruits, custody, call handlers and schools officers. These changes are achieving results, since the HMICFRS inspection we have almost doubled the number of missing children being identified as high risk and there has been a 50% increase in the volume of the child exploitation concerns being identified by officers and then investigated by the child exploitation teams.

We are also working with local Multi Agency Child Exploitation groups engaging in multiagency planning to address child exploitation. It is vital that we work together to share data, analysis and devise strategies to support victims and tackle perpetrators who pose a risk to children.

Staffing levels within CN public protection teams has been increased to ensure there are enough resources to partake in strategy discussions when the threshold is met. New training has been rolled out, including a resource guide and toolkit to embed the new MASH model of working and the multi-agency London threshold policy.

The New Met for London Plan commits to introducing a new Stop and Search Charter. We are working on the development of the Charter working directly with communities to help define the principles of how stop and search should be conducted.

We are also developing a new toolkit that will identify early those who are children who are most searched to ensure we are recognising safeguarding concerns and making appropriate referrals. We already do significant work to monitor stop and search and we are reinforcing this by introducing a new process to systematically review selected body worn camera footage across London and use it to identify and address discriminatory practices.

Through the Serious Violence Duty we are committed to working with partners to share information, intelligence and knowledge on victims and those at risk to inform multi agency planning.

We have introduced a Violence Harm Assessment which is a prioritisation tool designed to identify adults and children who are at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence across a range of offending – including robbery, sexual offence, knife crime and firearms. This tool will help us better identify those at risk and provide suitable interventions.

There are a range of interventions police can deploy when responding to children engaged in criminal behaviour. To support consistency in officer decision making the NPCC has developed the Child Gravity Matrix. This is a triage tool to help officers decide the most appropriate outcome for children who offend. It reflects the breadth of options available including statutory (caution, conditional caution or prosecution) and non-statutory (community resolution, deferred prosecution, deferred caution, voluntary diversionary activity) case disposal outcomes.

We have upgraded our computer systems to make it easier for officers to improve access for officers making safeguarding decisions. The new system allows us to flag safeguarding concerns more consistently. We are aware of the need to improve our risk assessment processes and are therefore rolling out specific training on how to assess and grade safeguarding risks. We are also improving supervision to ensure those who audit and inspect officers’ work are skilled in understanding safeguarding risks and issues. We are also committed to reviewing policies, guidance and toolkits relating to children to ensure officer’s responsibilities to safeguard children and protect their welfare are clear.

Respond to factors impacting social, emotional mental health needs, support SEND needs and transitions

Refocused approach to Transitional Safeguarding

We are committed to fulfilling the police roles and responsibilities within the Protocol for London – Reducing Criminalisation of looked after children and care leavers. This includes exploring how to better record children looked after, as either victims or suspects on crime reports and exploring the development of a template for officers to assist in their decision making.

We understand that patterns of exploitation can continue into early adulthood and that young people aged 18-24 may also be victims of this harmful crime. We work in partnership to secure services for victims of criminal exploitation aged up to 24 and we will ensure our officers are equipped to use all available legislation where required to avoid a cliff edge of support when an individual turns 18.

We will actively support the London Protocol on reducing criminalisation of children who are looked after and those leaving care.

Respond to the rise in social emotional mental health needs

We are raising awareness across the MPS of the impacts of victim blaming language and the implications it can have on the given response. We are also revising all of our policies to ensure we include a distinction between how these policies should be applied differently to children instead of adults.

All officers are receiving new training in childhood vulnerability.

The Voice of the Child

Officers dealing with children need to understand the term ‘voice of the child’.

In practical terms this means that officers and staff should observe, listen to and be alert to the needs of the child and record the views of that child, the impact of the issues in the case and keep them appropriately informed throughout the investigation; this extends to any child taken into police protection. All children in custody should be seen by a non-policing professional (Custody HCP, L&D or ENGAGE workers) to assess for additional risk (physical or psychological) and undisclosed needs.

Review our response to neglect and parental factors

Build better assessment tools and strategies to address neglect and parental factors.

We have established a new Public Protection Referrals Desk to enhance our current provision, this team will identify children who are experiencing domestic abuse at home or in their family and consider whether their cases would benefit from a multi-agency discussion. This has expanded the CAIT referrals desk to cover a broader range of strategy meetings, where the S47 threshold is met, including:

- CAIT – CAIT Investigations, Sarah’s Law disclosure, requests for ICPCC
- CSU – Community Safety Unit - domestic abuse, stalking, racially motivated offences
- RMU – Risk Management Unit - Clare’s Law disclosure
- RASSO – rape, serious sexual assault, and any other offences within the Sapphire remit

The new process provides a single point of entry for S47 referrals and we have recruited an additional DS and DC to provide additional resilience.

Our CN Missing Persons Unit will be replaced by a Local Missing Hub in September 2025.

Our CET has been expanded and now investigates the following extra-familial abuse crimes:

- **Any Modern slavery crime, linked to exploitation, where the victim is a child and the offence has occurred within the UK.**
- **Section 2 Child Abduction Act 1984.**
- **Section 49 Children Act where the suspect is not a parent or other family member.**
- **Disruption Offences generated by the unit (more on this below).**

Develop a more cohesive trauma aware/informed approach to parental issues

We have trained officers to understand the impact of trauma on children, including refreshing our existing training and resources on trauma and ACEs.

The Victims Code of Practice affords victims who are under 18 (at the time of the offence) enhanced rights. Enhanced rights can include referral to a specialist support service, being contacted sooner after key decisions and having access to special measures (at the discretion of the court). Common special measures include having a screen/curtain around the witness box or giving evidence by live video-link, either from a separate room within the court or a dedicated live-link site outside the court building. Other special measures include: giving evidence in private with no press or public allowed in the court room; removal of wigs and gowns worn by the judge, and the defence and prosecution advocates in the Crown Court; the use of communication aids, having the help of an intermediary to understand questions; or providing evidence/being cross-examined through pre-recorded video, meaning the witness does not need to give evidence at the trial. We are also working to produce an information leaflet for children as victims of crime.

Develop enhanced understanding and support surrounding online activity

The MPS proactively targets offenders who use the internet to groom and abuse children online by using a variety of covert and overt methods. The MPS are part of the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) network and receive funding to specifically target the threat posed to children by offenders with a sexual interest in them; both online and through contact offending. The MPS both generates and receives intelligence relating to these offenders and works closely with regional, national and international partners to disrupt their activity and bring them to justice in a co-ordinated way; they routinely disrupt suspects attempting to meet children for the purpose of child abuse.

We work with the NCA and other law enforcement agencies both nationally and internationally to continue to tackle offenders online and identify victims Child Grooming and sexual coercion extortion ('Sextortion') of children is a growing threat online. We have seen an increase in reports relating to children that have been groomed and coerced into creating child sexual abuse material and then extorted. This is another underreported threat where there is inconsistency in approach to recording, reporting and investigating. We work regionally, nationally and internationally to tackle sextortion, to ensure that perpetrators are identified who are targeting multiple victims across different forces and areas. We have amended our toolkits to offer tactical advice for officers on recognising and responding to this threat and we are contributing to NCA led work to tackle the threat of Sextortion nationally, including sharing our analysis and toolkit.

We will continue to roll out continuous professional development to Neighbourhoods officers to upskill them in how best to respond to youth produced sexual imagery, including a toolkit specifically designed to assist officers when dealing with these incidents.

Useful Links:

LRAP [Metropolitan Police London Race Action Plan](#)

VAWG action plan [Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) action plan](#) | [Metropolitan Police](#)

NMFL [A New Met for London](#) | [Metropolitan Police](#)

Children's Strategy [The Met's Children Strategy](#) | [Metropolitan Police](#)

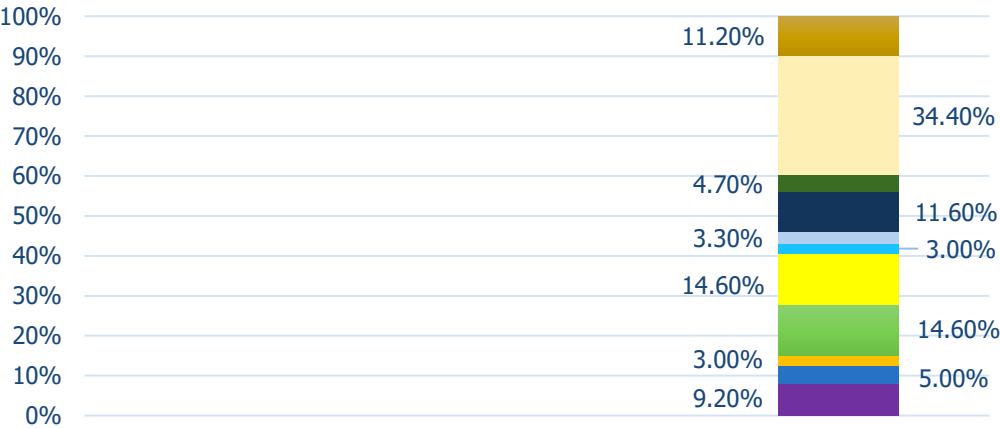
Divert: [DIVERT programme](#) | [London City Hall](#)



Islington is a small, densely populated inner London borough with a total population of 220,584 (ONS mid-year estimates, 2023), which is estimated to increase by 3.8% by 2041 using GLA 2025 population projections 5-year model figures. The borough is the second smallest in London in terms of area (after the City) and has the second highest population density in the country.

The population profile is on average younger than those for London and England, with 44% being young adults aged between 20 and 39 years. There are approximately 41,100 children aged 0-19 estimated to be living in Islington, and around 69,000, 0- to 25-year-olds with around 15,300 being aged 10 to 17. The proportion of children from an ethnic minority background (i.e. not White-British) is relatively high at 74 and a considerable proportion of children live in households where English is not the first language.

Ethnic Breakdown of Islington Under 18s, 2021 Census

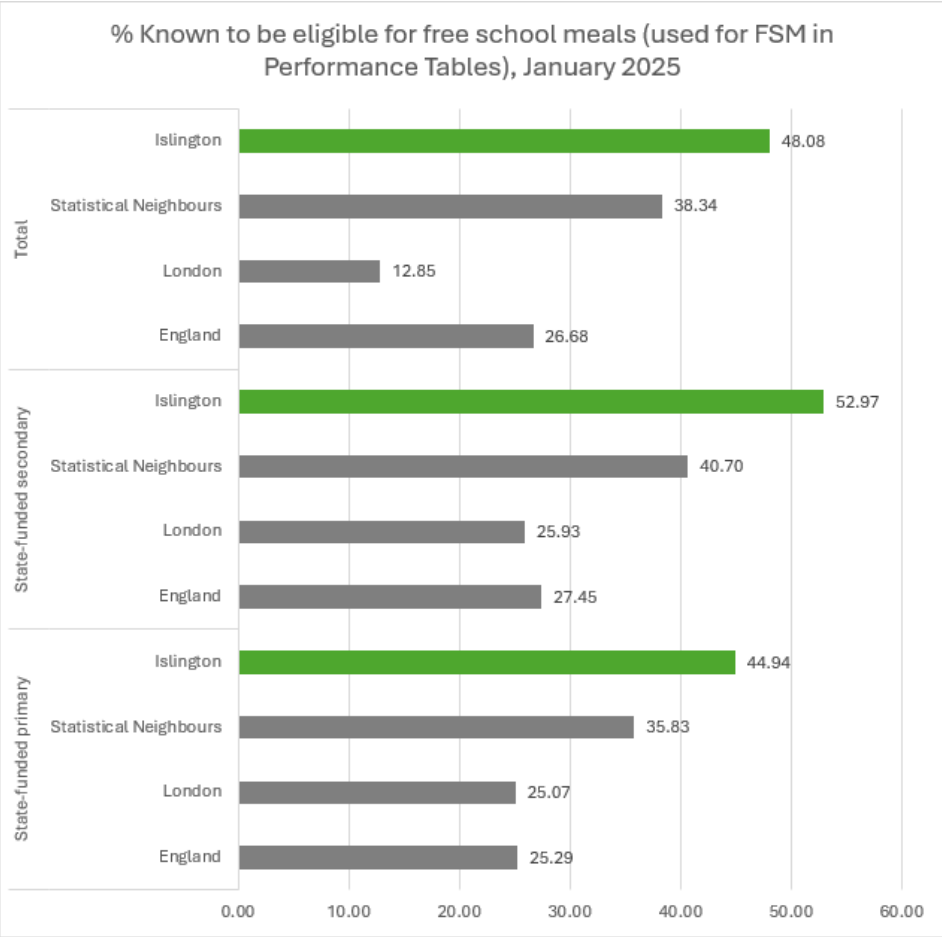


- Any other ethnic group
- Asian - Other
- Black - Caribbean
- Black - Other
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- White - Other
- Asian - Bangladeshi
- Black - African
- Black - Other
- Mixed - Other
- White - British



The borough is one of stark contrasts. In the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Islington was found to be the 53rd most deprived local authority in the country and 6th most deprived in London. Islington has England’s 10th highest level of income deprivation affecting children (IDACI – 2019) and highest IDACI score in London.

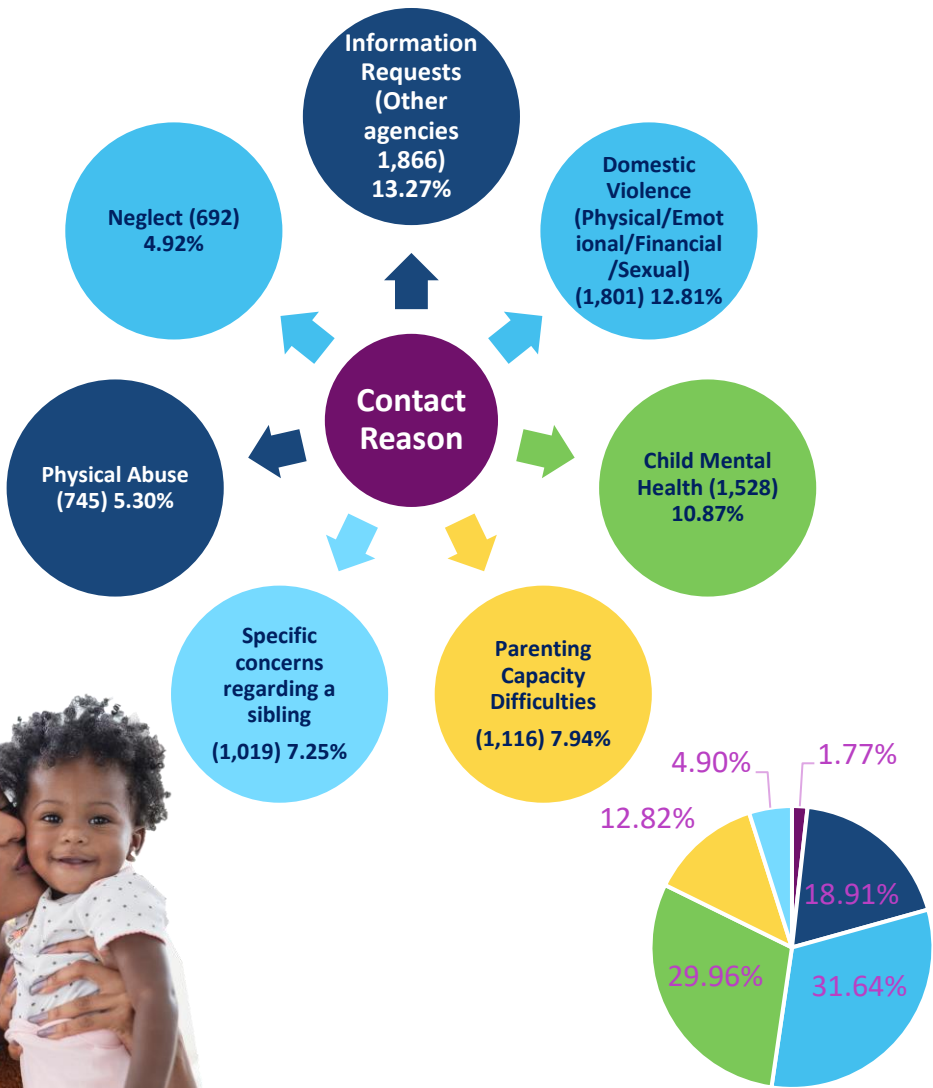
Islington has the second highest percentage of FSM eligible pupils in its schools in England. This is also the case for mainstream primary and secondary schools combined.



Islington **received 14,062 contacts** requesting a service for children in 2024/2025, a 1.85% increase from numbers in 2023/24.

Source

The most common source of contacts was from police at 23.9% followed by health services 17.9%, Schools 16.5% and LA Services 14.5%.



- 6,146 (43.7%) of contacts were progressed to receive a referral to targeted services, 2,343 (16.7%) received a statutory social care service, 4,362 (31%) received no further action, following oversight by Children's Services Contact Team and 1201 (8.5%) received information and advice.
- Islington had the 46th highest rate of children assessed as Children in Need (at any point during the year) in the country in 2023/24.
- Compared with statistical neighbours, Islington had a marginally higher rate of children subject to a child protection plan (at any point during the year): the rate for 2023/24 was 97 per 10,000 for Islington versus 95 per 10,000 for the statistical neighbours.
- Compared with statistical neighbours, Islington had a marginally higher rate of Section 47 investigations: the rate for 2023/24 was 219 per 10,000, versus 218 per 10,000 for the statistical neighbours.
- Islington had a higher proportion of repeat child protection plans (27%) compared to statistical neighbours (21%)
- Islington continues to have more children looked after per 10,000 than its statistical neighbours – 84 children per 10,000, compared with 71 per 10,000.
- Islington's proportion of looked after children with three or more placements during a year is marginally higher – 12% than their statistical neighbours – 11%

Assurances of effectiveness from Partner Agencies: Safer Workforce: Local Authority Designated Officer Report

There is a statutory expectation that relevant agencies recruit staff safely, however, there are occasions where allegations are made against staff or volunteers working with children. Relevant agencies should have in place clear procedures to explain what to do when allegations are raised. The LADO should be contacted when there is an allegation that any person who or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

These procedures are also applied when there is an allegation that staff:

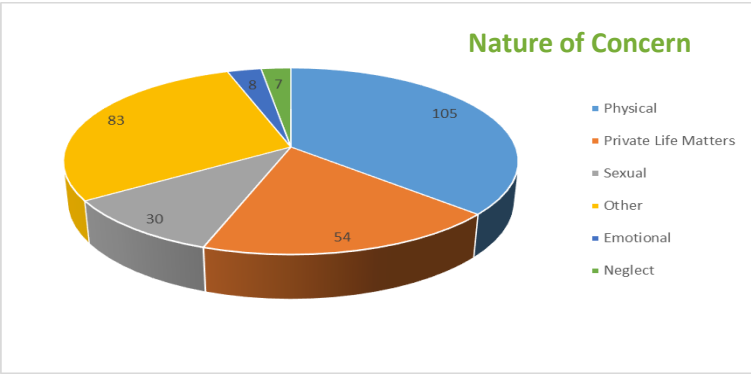
- Have behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns
- As a parent or carer, has become subject to child protection procedures
- Is closely associated with someone in their personal lives who may present a risk of harm to children.

The ISCP have arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of arrangements to manage allegations across the partnership. The ISCP received the 2024/2025 LADO Annual Report for scrutiny covering the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and concerns 287 contacts.

This is similar to 285 contacts in 2023/24 and the highest level of contacts to the Islington LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

There is a wide variety of referral sources across the network, with the highest referrers being Schools, Children’s Social Care and Early Years. There have also been referrals from Parents, and they are encouraged to use complaints procedures but the fact they are also aware of the LADO shows how well it is known and established.

Promotion and education around managing allegations against staff continues to be delivered via designated safeguarding lead training, which is held bi-monthly. In addition, LADO and Principal Officer Safeguarding in Education (POSIE) offer targeted training to schools once a term.



Most contacts were concerns about physical abuse (37%), mainly in relation to use of physical intervention in schools.

Summary:

Partner agencies continue to provide appropriate commitment to managing allegations and attend ASV meetings, often at very short notice in the interest of resolving matters as quickly as possible.

Employers seek consultation for low level concerns to ensure they are making safe decisions.

Contacts to the LADO are from a wide variety of sources, demonstrating a good knowledge among agencies working with children of the role of the LADO.

Progression and Impact:

Actions for 2024/2025	Status
Peer review of Islington’s LADO service	This was completed by Hackney LADO which contributed to the positive Ofsted inspection outcome
Peer review of Islington’s LADO service	More use of online referral enquiries has resulted in greater proportion of appropriate contacts
Develop audit and oversight of LADO role	This is in progress and is being considered along with other QA work across the service

Actions Going Forward 2025/2026

- The Principal Officer for Safeguarding in Education (POSIE) and LADO to ensure those schools who have not made contact with the LADO are up-to-date with training and those that contact frequently to be provided with additional support.
- To finalise the the QA framework for LADO work

Voice of Children and Families: Parental Feedback

Maybe have a break in the middle of the meeting. Also, make sure the time of the meeting is convenient for me. I spoke a lot but I wanted to say more although I appreciate the time constraints.

The chair was pretty neutral. She reassured me she would check midway to make sure agencies were doing what they said they would do.

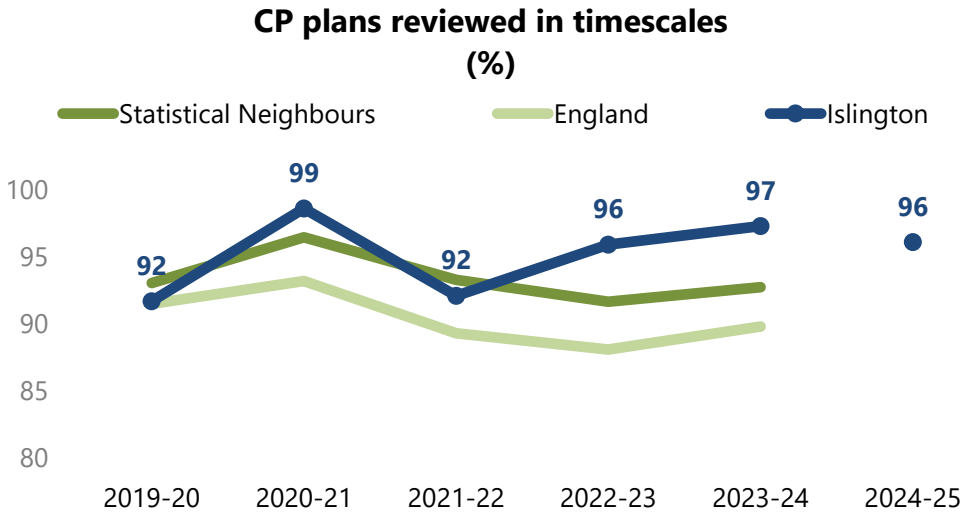
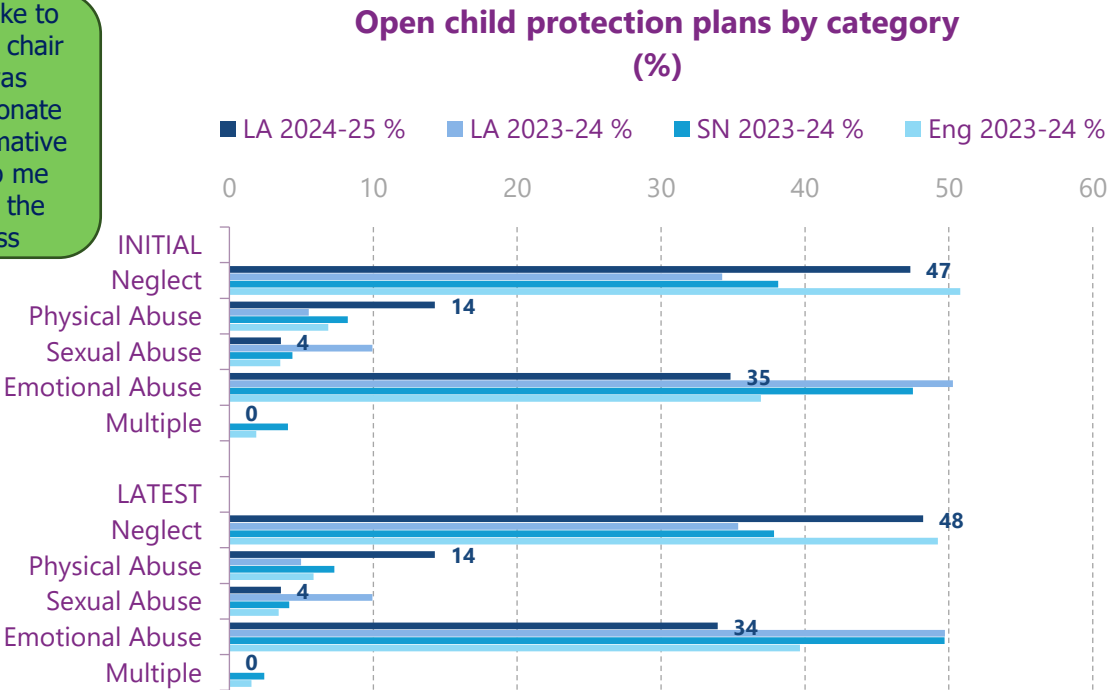
Parents are encouraged to provide anonymous feedback after a Child Protection Conference which provides a feedback loop to identify whether there were learning gaps for professionals and child protection chairs.

I would like to thank the chair who was compassionate and informative and help me through the process

We had so much happening in our lives at the time of the conference, I felt like I had space in the conference to think about things and problems. Before the ICPC we had no support. That changed.

Alongside chairing child protection conferences, the child protection coordinators (CPC's) play a critical role in their contributing to our wider quality assurance activity. The CPC's lead on undertaking a range of thematic reviews and audits with steer provided from our Practice and Outcomes Board. The P&O Board is held on a six-weekly basis and chaired by our Director of Family Help and Safeguarding. Any areas of performance requiring a further review will be tasked to those within the Child Protection Service to provide a deeper review of a specific area. Analysis and findings including any actions for driving improvement are shared at the Practice and Outcomes Board where actions will be kept under review to the point of completion.

CPCs are also able to contribute to learning reviews, both local and wider, through providing detailed and analytical chronologies of involvement.



Family Group Conferences (FGCs) in 2024-2025

Referrals from across the board (at any decision point):

- Front door – no other service taken up apart from FGC ('self-referrals')
- Early Help – referrals from Bright Start & Bright Futures services; schools; health visitors; outreach workers
- Families whose children are on CIN or CP plans
- PLO – pre-proceedings
- Care proceedings
- Reunification
- Lifelong Links – the young person may have an FGC with the people they are reconnecting with

Mediation offer:

- Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) funding was again used for mediation between parents in conflict. The service was able to expand the offer, using core FGC funding, to parents with their young people, and also offering conflict resolution coaching where mediation or an FGC is not agreed on. Mediators received further training in these two approaches.

Advocacy offer:

- The FGC service has continued to offer advocacy support in FGCs and in Child Protection Conferences, for parents/carers & children.

Ofsted report highlighted the effectiveness of FGCs in empowering families to make decisions and create plans that support the child's needs. It praised the collaborative approach, and the positive outcomes achieved

Referrals for FGC & mediation in 2024-25

- **113** Families referred to FGC Service
73 % 82 families were FGC referrals **62%** conversion rate for FGC referrals
27 % 31 families referred for Mediation



The year ahead:

- Delivering FGCs, family mediation & coaching as part of the Family Group Decision-Making component of the Families First Partnership Programme
- Being part of the 'FGC Collective' – working in partnership with Tower Hamlets, Camden & Southwark to reform our services & deliver FGCs to a high standard

Lifelong Links is a key element of Islington's strategy to support care experienced young people to reconnect with significant people from their past leading to a support network that they can rely on as they transition into adulthood. This innovative project has gone from strength to strength in the past year.

Its achievements include setting up and supporting a functioning steering group attended by 5 care experienced people and a wide range of managers from across Islington. Reaching all the teams that work with care experienced young people with care leavers delivering the presentations.

Developing data collection processes and cost benefit analysis demonstrating Lifelong Links can save money, leading to a collaboration with Family Rights Group Lifelong London project specifically for care leavers expanding and continuing the project post 2025.

Islington's care leavers coproduced designed and delivered a fantastic launch.

Development of podcast, lifelong links spoken word, leaflets for young people, fab merch and the option for young people to self-refer.

Since the start of the project 23 young people referred to Lifelong Links surpassing our target of 20 referrals for the year.

Data demonstrates we are reaching young people from the global majority in line with Islington demographics, and 39% of the referrals are young people with additional needs. April 25 – 14 young people are actively receiving support from Lifelong Links Coordinators

Working with young people in custody best practice was recognised at Kempe International Conference and Nicky Pallis Manage of Family Group Conference service was invited to present in Norway.

Ofsted were impressed and commented

"Young People are supported to stay in touch with people who are important to them. Some people have been able to re-establish their relationships with family members, due to changing circumstances, through the **support of the lifelong links service**"

Some Challenges have been delays with organising professional's meetings leading to delays starting the work with young people, we are streamlining that process and keeping referrals coming in.

Lifelong Links is already having an impact 6 young people had increased their support network and 4 young people increased their knowledge of family and have a stronger sense of identity.

One young person met his father, previously he did not know if his father was alive.

Another visited the nursery he attended in Islington, increasing his sense of identity and the ex-head teacher has become a lifelong link.

An LL Coordinator found a young person's siblings. The IRO commented that they had been waiting and hoping for years for this to happen, and the coordinator made it happen in a matter of weeks.

A Family Group Conference celebratory meal for a young person and her Lifelong Link (ex-social worker) clarified their relationship ensuring consistency and continuity.

Feedback from Social worker "I feel happier knowing that my young person will be having Lifelong Links and will have a wider network going forward other than just professionals."

Our Care experienced Lifelong Links ambassadors have grown in confidence in part due to their participation in the project demonstrated by their increase in skills leading to them obtaining paid work, applying to college, and creating their own social enterprise.



Our next year looks just as exciting:

- Focus on more referrals, particularly care leavers.
- Build on promotional work including creating a promotional video by, and for, care experienced people
- Review the service and ensure it is properly resourced
- Collaborations with CAIS and Virtual school

Private fostering remains an important area of safeguarding oversight in Islington. The Children Act 1989 defines private fostering as a situation where a child under 16 years old (or under 18 if the child has a disability) is cared for and housed by someone who is not a close relative, guardian, or a person with parental responsibility, for a period of 28 days or more. The responsibilities of Islington's Children's Social Care (LBI CSC) in identifying, assessing, and monitoring these private fostering arrangements were detailed in their annual report, demonstrating how they have adhered to the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering.

The most recent annual report period saw a total of **three active private fostering arrangements**, with **two new notifications** and **five cases closed**. While numbers remain low, the report highlights the importance of continued vigilance and awareness-raising to ensure all privately fostered children are identified and safeguarded.

Key Issues and Outcomes

Safeguarding and Monitoring

- All active arrangements were monitored in accordance with statutory requirements, with **89% compliance** for ongoing visits. However the initial visit timeliness has dropped to 50% and improvements need to be made.
- No children were found to be at increased risk due to delays, and all arrangements were assessed for suitability, including cultural, emotional, and educational needs.

Voice and Lived Experience of Children

- There is available for children, accessible information about their rights and the role of the local authority. Social workers offer contact details and advocate access, ensuring children can participate in decisions affecting their care.
- Visits include opportunities for children to speak privately with social workers, supporting their autonomy and safeguarding.

Support for Carers and Parents

- Private foster carers receive guidance on financial support, emergency contacts, and access to parenting resources.
- Parents are engaged early in the process and provided with written guidance and ongoing contact throughout the arrangement.

Awareness and Identification

- Despite proactive efforts, the number of notifications has declined compared to previous years (10 in 2021–22; 11 in 2020–21). This trend suggests under-identification remains a concern.
- Awareness-raising activities have targeted schools, health services, GP forums, food banks, and children's centres, with further expansion planned.

Impact of Ukrainian Refugees

- No Ukrainian children met the criteria for private fostering in this reporting year. Nonetheless, the local authority maintains readiness to apply the private fostering framework to unaccompanied minors under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Recommendations and Strategic Actions

- Update and publish the Private Fostering Statement of Purpose on the new fostering website.
- Introduce independent scrutiny of long-term arrangements via the Access to Care and Resources Panel (ACRP).
- Strengthen collaboration with Early Help and health services to refresh awareness.
- Improve timeliness and quality of initial visits through enhanced management oversight.
- Maintain a clear pathway for safeguarding Ukrainian children entering under private fostering arrangements.



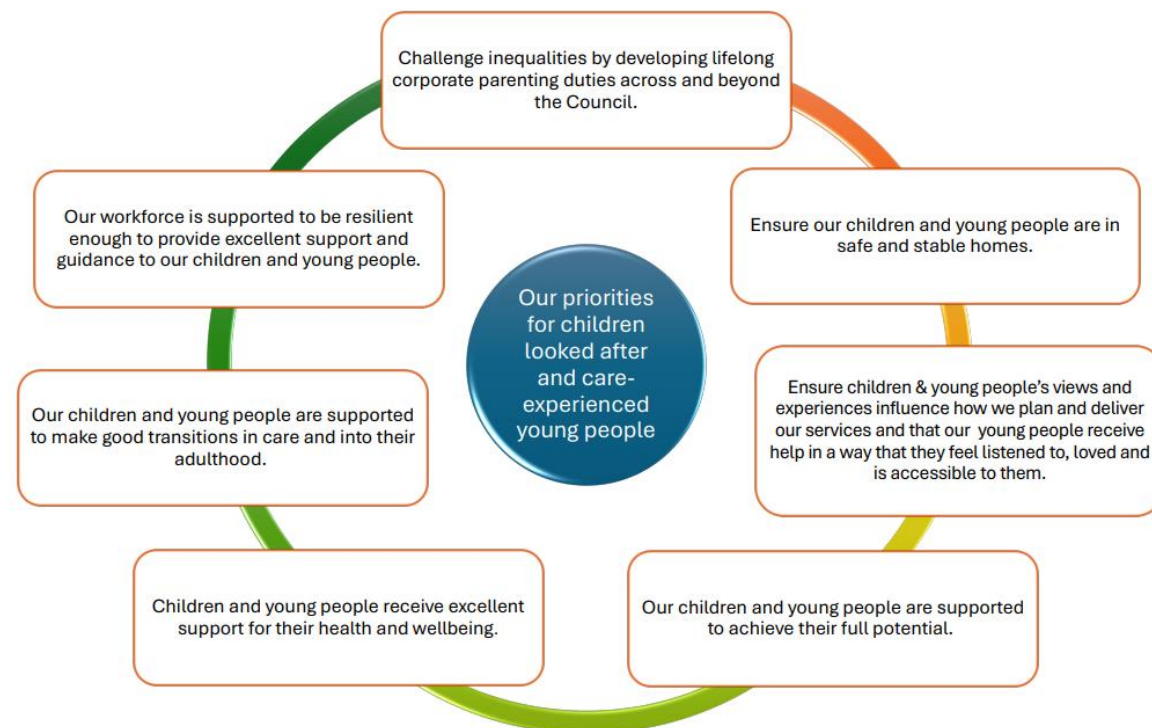
Islington has a simple vision for its Care experienced young people.

"These are our children, and we are very ambitious for them. Collectively, we care about them, as well as care for them. As with any good parent we want to provide our children and young people with the best possible start in life so that they can enjoy their childhood. As they prepare for adulthood, we want to inspire and support our young people to fulfil their own ambitions and dreams." *Corporate Parenting Annual report 2024*

This Corporate Parenting Safeguarding Annual Report, covering the period from April 2023 to March 2024, provides a detailed overview of the services, outcomes, and strategic developments relating to Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) in Islington. It outlines key achievements, challenges, and areas identified for targeted improvement. The report reflects the Partnership's unwavering commitment to promoting the safety, stability, and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people, ensuring they are supported within nurturing environments that enable them to thrive.

On the 31 March 2024, Islington Council's Children Looked after service was responsible for **298** looked after children, including **44** Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) and **481** Care Experienced Young People including **172** UASCs. The service also supported 94 mainstream foster carers, and **27** family and friends foster carers (23/24 fostering return). As of 31 March 2024, the CLA population had fallen by 8% compared to last year.

Percentage of BLA who were UASC: In Islington, this was 39%, whilst Stat Neighbours, Inner London and England were all at **21%** (22/23 figures).



Evidence of Impact

- Care Experienced Young People became a Protected characteristic in Islington in September 24.
- Targeted work experience, apprenticeship and internship schemes and employment opportunities within the council, partners & Local Businesses. 12 care experienced young people participated in work experience, e.g. in schemes with John Lewis, Housing and Your Choice. The Corporate Council work experience scheme is in place and 14 care experienced YP have expressed an interest in participating
- Bespoke offer provided by Early Help for parents with care experience. Charter of best practice and information leaflet detailing support for parents with care experience in place
- Joint Housing Protocol in place – no care experienced young person will be made intentionally homeless – quota of 96 permanent properties a year agreed with Housing and development of bespoke support to support young people post 25.



Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Myself in Mind, the direct work offer for young people aged 18-24, there are 21 young people receiving brief intervention support.
- 92% of children currently have a Health Assessment completed by Islington of excellent quality.
- Initial Health assessments for UASCs are completed with a Specialist Psychologist to include a mental health screen.
- Cohort Health assessments – 94% - in line with Stat Neighbour average - . Immunisations – 86% - above all comparator averages in 22/23. Dental checks- 76% - below Stat Neighbours in 22/23 but in line with all other comparators.
- Only 4% of looked after children were identified as having a substance misuse problem during the year, our lowest ever %. Below all comparator averages in 22/23 apart from England (3%).
- Healthy Smiles Pilot Project improved access to dental provision which increased from 19.9% in 2020/21 to 75% in 2022/23.
- Health summaries are completed for all Young people leaving care at 18 years.
- 19 young people attended Healthy Futures in 2020/21 and 30 in 2021/22., 9 in 2022/23 (clinic was briefly suspended) 39 for 23/24. There is repeated use of the service by some young people including those at risk of CSE.
- Free prescriptions for Care leavers (if not already eligible) across London has been launched following collaboration between boroughs and ICBs

1

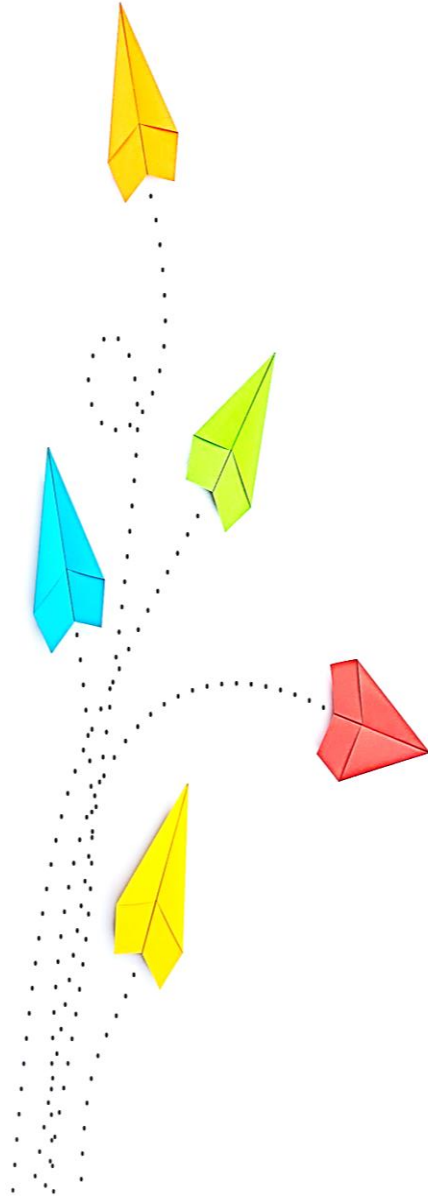
Safe and Stable Homes

- The House Project supports care experienced young people to make successful transitions to independence.
- We recruit 20 young people each year to join the House Project
- Young people are supported to complete a Learning Programme alongside a group of peers to develop their independence, social and wider skills. They are then supported to set up home in their own council property.
- Support provided to young people is long-term. Young people are offered intensive support for at least a year after they move into their homes, and opportunities to participate in House Project community events and social activities for as long as they want
- Next Steps team provide long term wrap around support – before during and after they live in Next Steps properties (i.e. relationship building with young people on waiting list for properties, during tenancy, and resettlement support)

2

Supported to Achieve Full Potential

- An effective Virtual School
- Rigorous focus on improving attendance
- A wide range of interventions in school, college and beyond
- At Key Stage 2 29% of pupils who were eligible to take the KS2 assessment achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths, an increase of 4%, despite a higher number of pupils with SEN
- At Key Stage 4 27% of pupils achieved a Grade 4 or above in English and Maths, a 1 % increase on 2023. 45% of pupils achieved a Grade 4 in any GCSE an increase of 8% on 2023. Average Attainment 8 increased from 20 to 21.8
- Average attendance for pupils increased from 87% in 2023 to 89.1% in 2024. The % of pupils persistently absent increased from 25% to 26%
- The % of young people in year 12 and 13 who were in not in education, employment or training decreased from 26% in 2023 to 24% in 2024
- The % of young people aged 19-21 not in education, employment and training decreased from 38% in 2023 to 31.% in 2024



Progression to Adulthood (PTA) Programme

In July 2024, the Progression to Adulthood (PtA) Board marked its first full year of operation, reinforcing Islington’s ongoing commitment to improving transitional support for young people entering adulthood. Although the PtA framework does not explicitly reference transitional safeguarding, its strategic direction and core priorities remain closely aligned with its principles. Over the past year, there has been continued focus on safeguarding young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, and other complex vulnerabilities. These individuals often encounter heightened risks during the transition from childhood to adulthood, underscoring the importance of a coordinated, multi-agency approach to ensure their safety and well-being.

The Programme has 5 key areas and tasks and finish groups where work is undertaken

<p>Operations</p> <p>Responsible for agreeing changes to our social care transitions processes and structures, including improving how we work together and considering options for service redesign.</p>	<p>Quality, Data and Finance</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring processes are in place to share info about the needs of YP in transition and costs and that, systems support the transitions process.</p>	<p>Local Offer</p> <p>Responsible for agreeing how we will update the info, advice & guidance about transitions on our Local Offer, and for coordinating our coproduction work with parents, YP and SEN schools.</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Responsible for developing health transitions pathways for young people with SEND, inc from secondary to primary healthcare and from children’s Continuing Care to Adult CHC.</p>	<p>Children’s and Adults Joint Commissioning Group</p> <p>This is an existing group which we will bring any commissioning-related recommendations to the programme board.</p>
<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transitions tracker and effective meeting• Pre-assessment screening tool• Working through the backlog• Universal pathway• Service redesign	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial tracker• Dashboard for medium to longer-term forecasting• Demand Management Strategy• Brokerage processes• Finance processes e.g. invoices and direct payments	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Offer that provides transition info, advice & guidance to YP and families• Link with pathways created by operations T&F group and communicate these to families (especially early universal support)	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual health checks for children with LD• Health checks for young people looked after• Developing a transitions Continuing Care pathway• Promoting the C&I CAMHS Transitions Protocol	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing strong commissioning relationships across children’s and adults• Identifying gaps in commissioning for people in transitions

- 2023 launch of the PTA programme in partnership with CSC and Adult Social Care.
- Improve how we deliver Transition support to YP from age 14+ years to ensure transition experience is seamless and joined up across the partnership
- PTA Programme Board chaired by DCS and DAS
- January 2023 rolled out of the Progression to Adulthood Outcomes Framework across CSC in Assessments, Plans and Reviews for CYP with SEND and an EHCP aged 14 – 25 years.
- 2023 launched the SEND PTA Transitions Tracker and monthly Tracker Meetings
- In April 2024 we launched SW Transition pilot to test a CSC SW undertaking transition screening and Care Act Transition Assessments
- Development of a SEND dashboard to support Strategic planning and forecasting.
- Programme has 5 key areas and tasks and finish groups

The Children's Active Involvement Service (CAIS) exists to elevate the voices of care-experienced children and young people across Islington. It makes sure young people are meaningfully involved in the decisions and services that affect their lives and that they are listened to, valued, and included. This year has been a time of exciting change. CAIS welcomed a new team, expanded its reach, launched creative projects, and deepened its commitment to inclusive practice.

Training

Young people have participated in several training sessions to raise awareness of their lived experiences, including AYSE Academy, STEP UP to social work, training for foster carers, and a new Train the Trainer course. 2 CAIS young people have recently become certified trainers on the Total Respect training course developed by the Children's Rights Alliance for England where they will go on to facilitate and deliver the training to professionals across Islington Council.

Interviews

Between 2024-2025 CAIS has trained 11 new young people to sit on recruitment panels and enabled young people to participate in the recruitment of over 50 new members across children's services. Since April 2025 the total interview hours conducted by young people is 237. It has received incredible feedback on the young people's invaluable input and professionalism.

Corporate Parenting Board

CAIS young people have actively participated in several strategic meetings with senior leaders including a Corporate Parenting Task and Finish Group led by the Chief Executive, a meeting of the Full Council to discuss whether care experience should be a **Protected Characteristic**, and an event hosted as part of Democracy Week with the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive to discuss key issues including housing, crime, and financial insecurity. Our young people planned and delivered an interactive session at the Corporate Parenting Board Away Day focusing on care experience becoming a protected characteristic, what that means locally and what more can be done as Corporate Parents.

Young people routinely attend and co-Chair the Corporate Parenting Board to provide their steer on issues being discussed and highlight emerging themes from their work.

A CAIS Council meeting called 'Table Talk' takes place online every 8 weeks ahead of the Corporate Parenting Board to provide opportunities for all children and young people, including those placed outside of the Borough, to read the summary reports, prepare questions and feedback as well as raise any issues they would like CAIS representatives to share at the board meeting on their behalf. This has been a success and enables young people to be included, engaged and have their voices heard in the meetings.

CAIS have recently hired a new CAIS Champion which is a 6 month work experience post within the team for a care experienced young person to grow, develop and shine! There were 7 young people who went through the application and interview process who are all keen to stay involved with CAIS.



New Role and New Space

The new Specialist Advocate and Participation Co-ordinator for neurodiverse and disabled children and young people joined the team in January 2025. They will spend two days a week visiting children in residential placements/schools and one day a week organising broader participation activities for children and young people who are disabled or neurodiverse. This will include group activities, training, and supporting young people's participation in recruitment panels. The advocate is currently working with 6 young people with 2 referrals pending. There has already been a positive impact on young people who have been referred for example one 16 year old young person attended his first CLA review and had his views heard.

CAIS have moved along with The House Project and Next Steps and found a new home on Goodinge road- The Hideout which was named by one of our young people!

Consultations

On the last Tuesday of every month CAIS host an in person 'Table Talk' consultation session for 15 - 25 year olds where any service who would like to consult the young people on their work are invited. Since last year CAIS have had 13 young people take part on topics that have included a study led by Oxford University exploring how outcomes for young people in care are measured, and a project to inform the commissioning of new supported housing provision in Islington, young people's experiences with their workers, mental health services for 18+, pathway plans, early help assessments, what's working and what needs improving in Islington. CAIS will be consulting on the LGBTQ+ supported accommodation provision in the coming months.



Young people organised and hosted CAIS fest in October 2024, a large and successful event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of CAIS and bring together partners working to support our young people. Alongside all the amazing work our young people have been involved in, CAIS have put on lots of social events and activities including a summer BBQ, winter party, a trip to Margate, pottery, cinema trip, afternoon tea, and a flower arranging workshop.

CAIS are planning another summer BBQ, an outdoor cinema trip and a t-shirt and tote bag tie dyeing workshop.

Looking Ahead: Future Plans

CAIS invited the charity **Become** to run a **Rights and Entitlements workshop** for care experienced young people aged 17-19 as this is the group preparing to leave care or have just recently become care leavers. CAIS plan for the charity to then train CAIS young people to run this workshop twice a year to reach more young people in Islington.

Plans are underway to further increase the reach and impact of CAIS. CAIS are recruiting new young people to join and are establishing two separate groups to develop new campaigns and activities to influence change. We plan for the first Tuesday of every month to have a creative session for The Change Makers aged 12-16 where we discuss different topics while taking part in an activity. This is the group we have had challenges in developing, and are thinking of ways to improve visibility and deepen connection with the Virtual School for under 16's, the Foster Carers and the CLA service.

CAIS will continue to run the Table Talk sessions at the end of every month for 16-25 year olds to consult on how to improve services.

Children and young people can also join the CAIS Community WhatsApp group and get involved in projects and activities on a flexible basis.

The Quality Assurance (QA) Subgroup has continued to provide critical oversight and drive improvement across the safeguarding partnership through a data-informed and collaborative approach. Over the past year, the subgroup has focused on enhancing the quality and accessibility of performance data, embedding trauma-informed practice, and progressing multi-agency audits aligned with ISCP priorities. The subgroup has also undergone a revision of its Terms of Reference to clarify roles, responsibilities, and governance.

A significant development has been the implementation of a new multi-agency safeguarding dashboard, now accessible to approved partners. This tool can integrate data from across the Partnership. It is currently social care and early help data predominantly, but work is being undertaken to strengthen input from across the partnership, data will be structured around the four ISCP priority areas. Colleagues from Data Performance team were fundamental to developing the Dashboard and led on a tutorial session to support effective use and ensure consistency in interpretation. The dashboard is expected to strengthen the partnership’s ability to monitor trends, identify emerging risks, and assess the impact of interventions.

The subgroup has also overseen a multi-agency thematic audit of physical abuse referrals. An agreed sample of 30 contacts from cases were reviewed. The audit revealed over-representation of Black African and Black Caribbean children in referrals, contrasting with a predominance of White British children in the audit sample. Limitations in ethnicity recording and the absence of strategy meeting minutes were noted as areas for improvement. Nonetheless, the audit found generally good adherence to multi-agency decision-making processes. These findings underscore the need for improved data quality and more consistent information sharing across agencies.

In parallel, the subgroup has advanced work on embedding trauma-informed practice. The Quality Assurance subgroup agreed the undertaking of a trauma survey which has been undertaken across multi-agency professionals to assess trauma informed practice more widely throughout the partnership. The subgroup agreed that this work is essential to ensure trauma-informed approaches are embedded and visible in both policy and frontline delivery. An analysis report of the survey findings, and identification of any considerations or recommendations for the Partnership will be shared in the next annual report.

Looking Ahead

The neglect toolkit was been revised in 2023 and the subgroup is preparing to assess the use of the toolkit with audits planned to assess its uptake and effectiveness. Planning is also underway for a new multi-agency audits, with attention given to avoiding duplication with other ongoing audits.

During a presentation from colleagues in the Data Performance Team, one area identified for further scrutiny was the high volume of cases where Children’s Social Care concluded with No Further Action (NFA). This observation made from partners of the QA subgroup prompted carrying out a deeper reflection on the decision-making processes involved. The findings of which will be shared in the 2025-2026 annual report.

In response, the Chair proposed that the subgroup undertake a preliminary analysis of a randomised sample of a selected number of NFA referrals, spanning a range of age groups. These referrals will be selected from decisions made over the past six months. To support this work, colleagues from the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team will conduct an initial review of the rationale and decision-making underpinning these NFA outcomes to establish appropriate reasoning.

Embedding the voice of Children and Families

In keeping with our Practice Week methodology of speaking with families who have been audited throughout the week, we will use a similar approach in our forthcoming QA subgroup multi-agency audits so we can be assured the findings of our audit activity is reflective of the child’s voice.



I also mentioned in last year’s report the need to develop an effective multi-agency data set to enable the partnership to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements along with the effectiveness of the services offered to children and families. I am pleased to report that much work has been undertaken to develop a multi-agency data set with input from all partner agencies. Currently data is only from the Local Authority but is accessible by partners and will expand to include partnership data in the near future. This has been a key piece of work and will greatly assist the partnership in achieving its core function.

Alan Caton, Independent Scrutineer

This summarises the findings from my independent scrutiny of safeguarding in the London Borough of Islington between November 2024 and January 2025. The focus of this aspect of scrutiny was to seek assurance about safeguarding practice and scrutinise the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements by getting the views of frontline practitioners. This work forms part of the ISCP Scrutiny Plan with a particular focus on Neglect. The scrutiny took the form of interviews, focus groups and observations. In particular, I sought feedback from a wide range of frontline professionals, which included, police, health, social care and education, including early years. I specifically sought feedback on their experience of multi-agency working in cases of neglect.

Neglect continues to be the most common form of child abuse across the UK, reflecting the position in Islington and as highlighted in local rapid reviews and LCSPR’s along with national reports, such as National Panel review of Interfamilial Child Sexual Abuse and the National Panel annual report. It is vital that there is an early recognition of neglect to ensure a timely and consistent multi agency response where necessary.

My advice following this scrutiny exercise is in no way meant to be prescriptive and is given for the partnership to consider for further investigation and analysis.

On 20 November 2024, I attended Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training to observe its effectiveness. During my observations I noted the importance of collaboration between frontline practitioners from different agencies which included social services, some health providers and education who were present on the day. The training highlighted how effective communication and shared responsibility are crucial in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns. I was pleased to see good engagement by the participants in discussions and case studies that really emphasised the importance of information sharing. Different agencies brought different perspectives which enriched the learning experience and underscored the complexity of safeguarding children and families. Overall, I found the training reinforced the value of joint working and was well received by those attending. I feel that the training would have been of more value to all participants had there been representation from the police and greater representation from wider health providers. The provided training is accessible and relevant and if endorsed by senior leaders, improved police and health attendance can be encouraged and embedded as part of their safeguarding responsibilities. We know this can be effective as evidence by the co-development and co-delivery of the “Significant Harm and Working Together” workshops which have received better multiagency attendance from all three statutory agencies with excellent feedback of its usefulness from attendees.

Area for Consideration 1 – For the partnership to ensure attendance from wider health providers and police officers to attend multi-agency safeguarding training and to highlight how the training aligns with their responsibilities, such as child protection, child neglect and domestic abuse, and how it can improve their response, learning from each other and partnership working. Also recognising that statutory guidance, such as Working Together, stresses all partners duty to engage in multi-agency safeguarding training.

During the course of the year, the partnership undertook a detailed audit on decision making for physical abuse cases. Following the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson the ISCP undertook an audit to identify the effectiveness of multi-agency decision making when children had been subjected to physical abuse by their primary carer or others in the family home. I have provided scrutiny of that process by thoroughly reading the review and considering the recommendations. This was a thorough and detailed audit of 30 randomly selected cases, undertaken by the safeguarding partners. The audit resulted in a published report that was presented to the ISCP. The report concluded that, while there was a general adherence to proportionate multi-agency decision making, there were specific instances where the process was not fully followed thereby highlighting some key areas for improvement. It was however very pleasing to see that the voice of the child was gathered for nearly all of the children where a strategy discussion was conducted. The report has highlighted fourteen recommendations which need to be progressed.

Area for Consideration 2 - For the safeguarding partners to ensure that the recommendations from this audit are given appropriate oversight from the QA subgroup and that they are progressed, actioned and embedded into practice.

The other aspect of scrutiny was to meet with key frontline practitioners from across the partnership to hear their experiences of multi-agency working particularly in relation to cases of neglect. It was evident from the practitioners that I engaged with that there is a very robust multi-agency partnership approach to responding to neglect and children who are risk of harm.

The aspects raised by the practitioners and summarised below are for further consideration to strengthen practice and improve outcomes for children and families. These were raised from focus groups with police officers, social workers, family support workers, midwifery, health visiting, general practice and wider health services, and designated safeguarding leads from education and early years.

There was a consensus that the formation of multi-agency chronologies would really assist frontline practitioners in identifying the persistent nature of neglect, and the historic engagement of services, highlighting the need to record both the strengths and difficulties for families to create a whole picture and assess impact and risks for a child at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, it would support the collective identified need for the think family approach to practice as endorsed by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and proposed focus in the Children Well-being and School bill.

The benefits of multi-agency chronologies are clear when they are used for Rapid Reviews and LCSPR's. The effectiveness of multi-agency chronologies is further evidenced by the Exploitation and Missing team who regularly develop these chronologies. It was recognised by participants the challenge to completing such chronologies includes having multiple systems and databases across the network, as well as having limitations around recording style on some systems. In addition to the time challenges practitioners can experience to completing such tasks.

Area for Consideration 3 - to investigate further the use of multi-agency chronologies throughout the whole journey of the child. Suggestion to consider a pilot (or similar) where multi-agency chronologies are formulated in cases of neglect from early years, onwards, to aid in creating robust information sharing, and multi-agency input in a clear timeline to support with early identification and prevention of persistent neglect.

Area for Consideration 4 – to explore the compatibility between Childrens Social Care systems (EHM and LCS). In addition to wider agency databases being equipped with chronology capabilities and enabling easier early information sharing between partners (ie adult social care and children social care, education/early years, health and police) via database access to reduce barriers

During the focus group conversations it became apparent that there were differing interpretations of thresholds which on occasions led to frustration between CSCT and the wider network. It was established through discussion that the Threshold document can primarily be interpreted as a social care document instead of a whole network document. Practitioners suggested the opportunity to "spend time with CSCT" to gain a better understanding of how they work and how they interpret thresholds. I am now aware that a CSCT induction is offered for the partnership four times a year to enable wider partners the opportunity to discuss referral processes and gain a better understanding of decision making with the CSCT.

The conversation also highlighted the different views around educational neglect with queries as to its definition (for example, is an educational setting not meeting a child's needs educational neglect as well as low attendance to school/parental responsibility), the required response and the consistency of response (when is threshold met). As well as what are agencies considering low attendance percentages; the questionnaires completed (albeit small numbers) demonstrated a wide range of percentage of absence that should trigger S17 or S47 responses.

A further challenge for practitioners included supporting young people aged 15/16+ experiencing neglect when evidencing impact and need for a higher level of intervention including the additional vulnerabilities during transitions.

The participants raised that when threshold is met, that the relevant agencies are not consistently included with each stage from early help to strategy discussion. However, partners were incredibly positive about the co-location of MASH partners in supporting robust and timely decision making.

Area for Consideration 5 - Safeguarding Partners to encourage partners to take up the opportunity to spend time with CSCT in their offered induction sessions.

Area for Consideration 6 – the partnership to ensure consistent communications and reminders about educational neglect. This theme is to be included in the neglect training development. Furthermore, I suggest an agreed understanding of the percentage absence whereby statutory intervention is required.

Area for Consideration 7 – Partnership to regularly review strategy discussions and child protection meetings to ensure appropriate attendance from safeguarding partners and relevant agencies.

Feedback from across the sessions highlighted the need for training in respect of Neglect and support to implement the Neglect Toolkit, it was apparent that there had been inconsistent communications surrounding the new toolkit, its existence and use. With supervisees sharing that more direction from management and regular use in supervision would be beneficial. Management stated they needed training on how to utilise this effectively and agreed that its use is now embedded into practice like other toolkits are (ie DASH risk assessment).

Wider identification by participants included the need to engage fathers in the safeguarding journey of the child, and suggested additional training would be helpful. This feedback is reflective of the finding from the National Panel ""The Myth of Invisible Men"" report which highlighted professionals' barriers to engaging fathers and the need to amend practice.

Area for Consideration 8 – Partners to be assured that there is adequate training in respect of Neglect and support for practitioners and managers to effectively use the toolkit. The partnership to explore embedding the toolkit to support consistent practice responses to risks and impact of Neglect. Consideration for an audit of neglect cases to aid in measuring the impact and success of the toolkit and wider practice approach to Neglect.

Multi agency professionals engaged well in these focus groups. These groups really highlighted how Islington works well together as a partnership and collaborates with a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children. Everyone who participated contributed their expertise, I was able to hear valuable insights from colleagues in health, education, police and the local authority. All discussions were open and reflective, all professionals recognising the importance of early intervention and prevention as well as needing to think 'whole family'. As has been highlighted there were some key challenges such as inconsistent thresholds for intervention and information systems within early help that can't be accessed by social workers in order to understand the child's journey. However, these focus groups provided a constructive space for suggesting potential solutions and strengthening joint working practices.

This process has enabled the voice of frontline practitioners to be heard and has in my view been a very useful scrutiny exercise to gain a better understanding of how joint working can be improved

Area for consideration 9 – For the DSPs to consider further focus groups with frontline professionals to be convened by the independent scrutineer as part of the forward Scrutiny Plan.

In conclusion, there continues to be many strengths to the safeguarding arrangements for both children and adults across Islington. 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 service provision.

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 Islington.

There is strong leadership 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.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Islington Children's Services following their recent Ofsted ILACS Inspection. Achieving an 'Outstanding' grade is testament to all the hard work of leaders, frontline staff and partners in delivering high quality services to improve outcomes for Islington's children and families. It was very pleasing to see that Ofsted recognised Islington's effective partnership. They stated in their report '....robust collaboration with partners to focus on achieving shared priorities for children remains strong'.

Next year the independent scrutineer should consider the findings from this scrutiny report to assess progress against the 'Areas for Consideration'. Finally, it has been a real pleasure and a privilege to have been Islington's independent chair and more latterly its scrutineer for the past twelve years. The partnership is in excellent shape, and I wish you all every success for the future as you continue to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and families.



Alan C Caton OBE
ISCP Independent Chair/Scrutineer

A key role of Safeguarding Children Partnerships is to "Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise organisations on ways to improve" (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023) to support this function the ISCP conducts S11 audits on a biannual basis.

Methodology:

The S11 Audit is a **structured self-assessment and compliance audit** framework designed to evaluate safeguarding practices across partner organisations under the **Children Act 2004, Section 11**, which places a statutory requirement on organisations and individuals to ensure they have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.



Reflections and going forward:

- The Section 11 self-assessment was completed using a Word document. Early Years and Education utilised MS Forms with mixed success: our future audit method will be reviewed considering an analysis of the feedback.
- Partners who work across SCP's raised capacity impacts of completing multiple templates and different reporting timeframes: LSCP are planning to create a tool for London SCP's, in the meantime the North Central London SCP's will aim for more consistency.
- Returns were received from majority of the ISCP Board organisations, but lacked reach to wider organisations including faith, private, voluntary and community organisations: the ISCP will move to strengthen links and engagement with these organisational areas. The local authority response was limited to Children's Social Care, future audits will aim for a whole service report.
- The current tool and 8 standards are less accessible to smaller organisations: the ISCP will develop a S11 "light" to support wider organisations to engage with this core function.

Each organisation completes a **self-audit** using a structured template. Providing;

- Description of current practice.
- Evidence of improved outcomes.
- Identification of gaps and action planning.

The audit assesses compliance with **8 safeguarding standards**, each aligned with statutory duties and ISCP priorities.

Responses are expected to be **evidence-based**. The self-assessment utilised a traffic light system, allowing organisations to RAG (red, amber, green) rate themselves on how well they met each standard.

Using RAG ratings in order to:

- establish how well standards are met within each of the areas.
- assess where further actions may be needed.

Intended Outcomes

- Promote transparency and accountability.
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement (organisation develop and own action plans).
- Align safeguarding practices with statutory guidance and ISCP priorities.

8

Standards

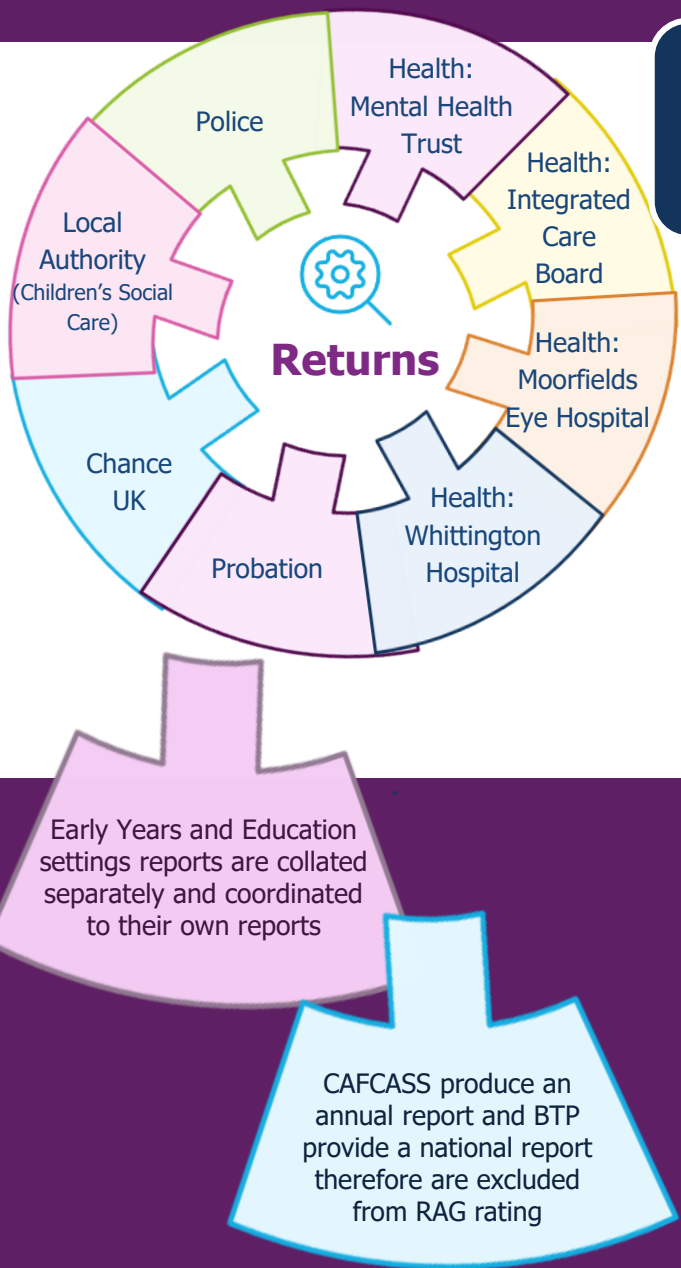
- 1:** Senior Leaderships commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- 2:** There is a clear statement of the agency's responsibility towards children and it is available to all staff.
- 3:** There is a clear line of accountability in the organisation for work relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- 4:** Service development takes into account the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed by the views of children and families.
- 5:** There is effective training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or who are in contact with children and families
- 6:** Safer recruitment procedures and procedures for managing allegation against staff are in place
- 7:** There is effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- 8:** There is effective Information Sharing

Returned audits RAG Rating

87.5% Green

9.3% Amber
3.1% ungraded

Examples of agencies progress against the ISCP Priorities



Address Structural Inequalities:

- Embedding anti-racist and inclusive policing practices; Police introduced the Child First Policy and Race Action Plan
- Inclusive Healthcare and Research at Moorfields: including Efforts to increase diversity in clinical trials
- Community-led and equitable youth services; including Children's interview panels and community mapping
- Agencies have increased inclusive Practice and Workforce Development throughout practice
- System-wide safeguarding and anti-racism oversight eg the ICB's Safeguarding Oversight Group (SOG) provides peer scrutiny
- Accessible Complaints and Whistleblowing mechanisms across partners

Develop Early Interventions and Preventions:

- Whittington's 0–19 service delivers Emotional Wellbeing Visits as part of the Start for Life programme, supporting parents from conception to age 5.
- Strong partnership with Bright Start and Family Hubs includes early identification, community engagement, and targeted support for fathers and male carers.
- Multi-Agency Collaboration and Integrated Practice: including joint supervision protocols, Daily Safeguarding meetings
- Proactive safeguarding in clinical settings including updates to "Was Not Brought" policy
- System-Wide Leadership and Learning; growing safeguarding awareness and confidence in early help pathways
- Agencies increasing child-centred practice and co-design

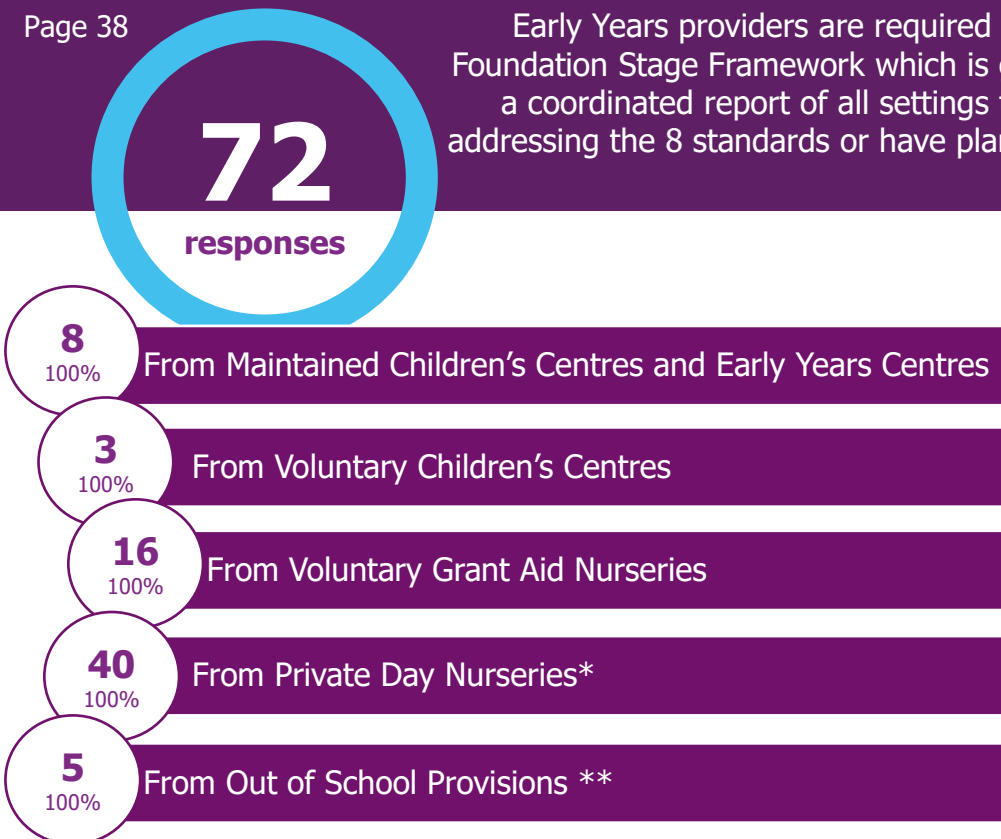
Respond to factors impacting Social Emotional Mental Health needs, Support SEND needs and transitions:

- Early identification and holistic support in health services; e.g. Moorfields has implemented a multi-disciplinary approach and developed a Paediatric SEND Hospital Passport, co-designed with families, to ensure early identification of needs and inclusive care.
- Their Ready Steady Go transition programme (launching April 2025) and counselling services for children and siblings reflect proactive, preventative support for emotional wellbeing and continuity of care.
- Wider Partnership early identification and community-based Speech and Language support
- Expanding emotional and mental health support across partner agencies, alongside development of a Transitions Policy
- Progress made to support inclusive engagement and co-production with neurodiverse Communities

Review Our Response Neglect and Parental Factors:

- Strengthened early identification and response to neglect ie additional paediatric nurse posts
- Trauma-Informed Practice and Domestic Abuse Response ie CANDI providing core skills training into these safeguarding factors and the implementation of VAWG strategy
- Multi-Agency Learning and Review Processes: including active engagement for LCSPRS with reflection in these factors and reflective case studies
- Organisational pledges have been made to support and underpin the pan-London framework to implement a public health approach in tackling violence against women and girls.
- Relationship-Based and Goal-Oriented Support for Families

Quality Assurance S11: Early Years Education Settings



* The figure for Private Day Nurseries includes 4 of the 5 independent schools: London Scandinavian School (previously Dania), Dallington, St Paul Steiner and The Children's House. The Gower School completed the Schools Section 11 audit. ** After School provision, either Ofsted Early Years or Childcare Registered. All 5 Out of School Providers submitted the audit. 2 of these included both nursery and out of school provision.

Early Years providers are required to adhere to Working Together 2023 and the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework which is given legal force by regulations made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006. Early Years produce a coordinated report of all settings that evaluates whether Early Years settings are meeting statutory requirements and identifies if they are addressing the 8 standards or have plans to do so; ensuring alignment with ISCP priorities. Additionally, it outlines the development of action plans for areas where requirements are not currently met.

Summary of findings

The audit has provided a **comprehensive overview of current safeguarding practices in early years settings**. Identifying strengths and areas for improvement is crucial for driving the agenda forward effectively.

A Culture of Safeguarding (all standards) is a strength with a **strong commitment to safeguarding both at leadership level and operational level**.

21% of settings **identified actions to further embed safeguarding culture** demonstrating a commitment to having an environment of protection for children and families.

Several case studies highlight the **effectiveness of partnership working**, illustrating **outstanding practice**. These examples demonstrate the positive impact of early intervention and prevention in a child's life, whilst preventing issues from escalating. Most of these examples were provided by maintained children's centres and independent schools, but there are also notable contributions from private and voluntary settings.

Settings acknowledged the **value of collaboration and communication with partners**, demonstrating **awareness of accountability and responsibility** in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. There is also awareness of Family Hubs and their role in providing opportunities for **networking and partnership engagement**, and the responsibility of settings **to promote the services available via Family Hubs**.

There is a strong focus on **Training and Development, Knowledge Sharing and Assessment, Safeguarding Practices, and Continuous Improvement** to maintain a safe, supportive, and effective environment.

Key areas identified by settings for development

- Online safety to be reflected in safeguarding policies, practice and procedures and settings and parents will have examples of good practice about the risks of online safety, which is age and stage appropriate.
- Settings to have access to specialised safeguarding training for staff working with children with complex Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Settings to report feeling more confident in responding to low-level concerns regarding the suitability of staff.
- Settings to have opportunities to develop their "Trauma Informed Practice"
- Settings to continue to utilise opportunities to capture children's voices
- There is to be consistent awareness and use of a wide range of local and national safeguarding resources in settings



During the period of April 2024 to March 2025 the Safeguarding Children Partnership undertook three Rapid Reviews for Serious Incident Notifications that were referred to the Partnership.

From the three Rapid Reviews held within this reporting timeframe, none progressed to a Local Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR). The decisions not to undertake an LCSPR were also agreed by the National Safeguarding Panel.

Child B

The LCSPR for Child B concluded in December 2024 and focused on a 14year old child who tragically died whilst an inpatient at a Tier 4 Mental Health Unit. There were reflective workshops with practitioners and positive engagement with the family. There was much evidence of the voice of the child within this review.

An action plan is now in place addressing the recommendations and its governance for completion is overseen at the Case Review Subgroup.

Child X Thematic Review

The thematic review was concluded towards the end of 2024 and focused on a thematic learning approach to the amount of serious youth violence reviews Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership had commissioned over a previous five-year period. The thematic review focused on the experiences of specific children, primarily black and dual heritage boys, who are more prevalent in serious youth violence in the borough. Recommendations and consideration for this review gave a focus to strengthening safeguarding practices.

The review emphasised the need for improved multi-agency collaboration, particularly in integrating housing and mental health services into early help frameworks. A consistent, trauma-informed approach across agencies was recommended to better support children and families. Additionally, the review highlighted the importance of making help accessible and acceptable to those in need, with a focus on proactive information sharing and the inclusion of universal settings like youth centres.

An action plan is now in place addressing the recommendations and its governance for completion is overseen at the Case Review Subgroup.

Partnership Re-Assurances, Overarching Action Plan

Towards the end of 2024 the Partnership identified the need for an overarching action plan for Rapid Reviews and Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews to encompass all the actions developed from recommendations made from reviews and to provide a cohesive and coordinated approach to embedding learning and driving improvement across the Partnership.

This need became evident through an internal assessment of our action plans and recognising the multiple actions to manage where recurring themes and recommendations of a similar nature had been identified.

In response, the Partnership developed and implemented a comprehensive overarching action plan that consolidated all action plans into one document that can be easily navigated, cross referenced and can determine where an action is sitting at any given point. Actions are clearly aligned with the recommendations made from the reviews.

The overarching action plan includes measurable objectives, clear lines of accountability and timelines for delivery. Regular monitoring and evaluation processes are embedded to assess progress and sit within the governance of the Case Review Subgroup.

IMPACT:

As a result, we have seen improved oversight and increased partner engagement in terms of actions being driven, monitored, achieved and completed.



The North Central London Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) reviews every death of a child or young person under the age of 18 residing in Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, and Islington. Each child death is a profound tragedy, and the panel is committed to identifying learning and opportunities for improvement that may help prevent future deaths and support families facing similar circumstances.

The CDOP process involves a multi-agency review of each case, with frontline professionals playing a vital role in gathering and analysing information. The panel scrutinises the circumstances surrounding each death and where necessary will make recommendations for learning to improve service delivery and outcomes for children and families.

Listening to the voices of bereaved parents is central to the panel's work. Their feedback informs learning and service development, and many families have expressed deep appreciation for the compassionate care they received. The panel remains committed to ensuring that children and their families are always at the heart of its work.

Links with NCL networks

NCL CDOP has established four NCL network groups to support the dissemination of learning from CDOP within multi-agency services:

- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership managers
- Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs)
- Quality Assurance Managers in Children's Services
- Education Leads.

The NCL Lead Nurse for Child Death is linked with each of the five Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs). In Islington, the Lead Nurse is a member of the ISCP Case Review Subgroup

National Learning.

The national database system used by all CDOPs (eCDOP) has allowed for analysis of all child deaths by the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) team. The NCMD, commissioned by NHS England, published a number of thematic reports in 2024/25. NCL CDOP shared the learning and recommendations from these publications through Safeguarding Partnership Managers.

Using National Learning to Strengthen Local Safeguarding Practice

The Safeguarding Children Partnership has continued to share learning from national reports and reviews to enhance local safeguarding arrangements. Key insights from the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, the London Safeguarding Children Partnership, and other nationwide thematic reviews are analysed and shared across our multi-agency network. These reports have informed reflective practice sessions, learning briefings, and strategic planning, ensuring that emerging themes such as Child Sexual Abuse and "Its Silent", Race and Racism are actively addressed in our local context.

We strengthen our learning culture by aligning the work within our subgroups and our local audits with national findings. These findings enable partners to benchmark practice and identify areas for improvement. Through regular multi-agency learning events and targeted communications, we ensure that frontline practitioners and strategic leaders alike are equipped with the latest evidence-based insights. This approach reinforces our commitment to continuous improvement and collective accountability in safeguarding children.

The Partnership has established, this reporting period, an Overarching National Action Plan designed to systematically monitor and implement recommendations arising from national safeguarding reports. This strategic framework ensures that national learning is effectively aligned with ISCP safeguarding priorities. Governance and oversight of the Action Plan are provided by the Case Review Subgroup, which maintains accountability and drives progress across relevant multi-agency partners.



Family Wellbeing Subgroup: Summary of Key Issues, Impact and Forward Priorities

The Family Wellbeing Subgroup which is joint with the Children and Families Board, has continued to play a focal role in shaping and scrutinising early intervention and family support strategies across Islington. The subgroup has focused on strengthening multi-agency collaboration, embedding the voice of children and families in service design, and responding to emerging challenges in education, mental health, and safeguarding.

Key Developments and Impact

Family Hubs Model: The subgroup endorsed the implementation of a borough-wide Family Hubs model, designed to offer seamless, locality-based support for families. The model builds on existing networks and prioritises engagement with families not currently accessing services. A pilot of the 5–19 model will test multidisciplinary working in a single locality, with data from Phase 1 informing future development.

Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill: Members reviewed the implications of the forthcoming legislation, including statutory duties around multi-agency child protection teams, kinship care, and education for children not in school. The subgroup noted the alignment with Islington’s early help transformation and the DfE grant supporting this work.

School Attendance and Elective Home Education: Persistent absence remains a significant concern, with nearly one in four children affected. The subgroup welcomed the local authority’s “Support First” approach and the use of youth-led surveys to understand barriers to attendance. The rise in elective home education, particularly among girls with anxiety, was noted, with mental health and SEND needs being key drivers.

Youth Safety Strategy: The subgroup reviewed emerging themes for the next iteration of the Youth Safety Strategy, including serious youth violence, mental health, and the need for services tailored to young women and girls. Young people’s feedback highlighted concerns about safety, trust in professionals, and access to timely support.

Voice and Lived Experience of Children

The subgroup commended the development of the **Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Voice and Influence Framework**, which aims to embed lived experience at the heart of service design. The framework includes mechanisms for capturing feedback, empowering young people to influence decisions, and ensuring their voices shape policy and practice. Young people’s views were also central to the Youth Safety Strategy refresh and the evaluation of early help pathways.

Priorities for the Year Ahead

Evaluation of Family Help and Early Help Integration:

The subgroup will provide the steer for the implementation of the DfE Families First Partnership (FFP) programme working alongside local partner agencies within the local area to initiate planning for transformation of the whole system of help, support and protection.

Improved Data Sharing and Recording: The subgroup identified the need for better integration of data systems across agencies to evidence early help outcomes and support strategic planning.

Monitoring Legislative Changes: The subgroup will track the implementation of the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill and its implications for safeguarding, education, and multi-agency working.



Islington Council (Safeguarding and Family Help) want families to receive high quality support at the earliest opportunity so that they can overcome challenges, stay together and thrive. It has therefore been undertaking a Family Help Pilot across early help (Bright Start and Bright Futures) and child in need. The pilot timeline is October 2024-November 2025 and learning will inform the future design and delivery of Family Help as part of the Families First for Partnership Programme reforms.

The Family Help pilot aims to create a seamless, non-stigmatising offer of support, accessible locally, underpinned by a whole-family approach and working in a strengths-based way. It is intended to retain lead practitioner relationships, reduce handovers between services/professionals and to reduce the need for multiple assessments. It is underpinned by the following key components:

- Merging the strengths of targeted early help and section 17 (Child in Need) work, with flexibility on who leads direct work with families to support relationship building
- Utilising multi-disciplinary teams, delivering support out of community-based settings
- Establishing the Family Help Lead Practitioner role
- Single Family Help assessments and plans

The key components of Family Help

Merging targeted early help and section 17 into a single offer of support – bringing together family support workers (or equivalent) and social work teams co-working to provide seamless support for children and families

Part of an end-to-end system of support, from universal services through to care. This could include building support out of Family Hubs, where they exist.

Establishing multi-disciplinary family help teams, based in the heart of communities

Teams should be determined by a local needs assessment – in pathfinders, we are seeing the following agencies/professionals within the team: SEND link workers, domestic abuse specialists, mental health practitioners, youth workers, alcohol and substance misuse specialists, and employment advisers etc.



Implementing single Family Help assessments and plans - remove duplication between targeted early help and CIN assessments, to ensure that families only have to tell their story once, even as needs change

Establishing the Family Help Lead Practitioner Role - can be held by a broad range of practitioners able to build a strong and trusted relationship with the family and remain their main point of contact for as long as they need support.

Bring together a range of professionals and services (e.g. SEND specialists) into an integrated front door model – where children and families can be triaged to the right level of service based on their needs

Reforming practice at the front door - with an emphasis on having a supportive conversation, to promote engagement and the reduce stigma associated with asking for help

Practitioners will develop a single plan in collaboration with the family, which clearly sets out goals, milestones and the services that will be provided for the family. The plan should be accessed and jointly managed by all agencies working with the family

The Family Help Lead practitioner will have the skills, knowledge and experience to work with the family to produce a 'Family Help plan'. They will build a flexible and responsive 'team around the family', (TAF) brought in from the multi-disciplinary team and beyond. Oversight and supervision arrangements in line with Working Together 23 reviewed to account for the broader range of professionals who can be lead practitioners and have updated local protocols to reflect the changes.

The Education Subgroup of the ISCP has continued to play a fundamental role in addressing safeguarding challenges across Islington’s education settings. Over the past year, the subgroup has focused on key identified areas that include attendance, suspensions, elective home education (EHE), and children missing in education (CME). These areas are closely aligned with the ISCP’s priorities and commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

Attendance and Engagement
Islington’s school attendance rates are among the lowest nationally. Persistent absenteeism is often the cohort of pupils with SEND, mental health needs, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The subgroup has endorsed a multi-agency approach to improving attendance, including early help interventions, enhanced parental engagement, and the introduction of the Skills Builder programme being launched in March 2025 to support transitions and life skills development.

Suspensions and Exclusions
Suspension rates remain high within the borough. A survey was carried out to seek the voice of children; 3,500 responses were received around their views on going to school. The subgroup has promoted and continues to promote trauma-informed approaches, such as the Trauma Informed Practice (iTIPS) programme, to reduce exclusions and support reintegration. Schools are being worked with collaboratively and are encouraged to adopt more inclusive policies that focus on keeping students in educational settings.

Elective Home Education (EHE)
The number of EHE pupils has doubled since pre-pandemic levels, with over 320 children currently educated at home. There is a disproportionate representation of some ethnic groups within the cohort of EHE children. Challenges continue to be addressed and support and reintegration pathways are being continually developed, including new initiatives around personalised learning plans and targeted outreach programmes.

Children Missing in Education (CME)
The subgroup has broadened its focus to include children “losing in learning,” such as those in off-site provision or exhibiting school avoidance behaviours. These children often face multiple vulnerabilities, including SEND and mental health challenges. Early Intervention is paramount to support children who are at risk of developing school avoidance issues. Enhanced tracking systems and inter-agency collaboration are being developed to ensure no child is overlooked.

S11 Safeguarding Audit:
The Principal Officer for Safeguarding in Education began the process of undertaking the S11 auditing process for all Islington schools in the last quarter of 2024. This S11 audit is structured around the eight key standards outlined in the Children Act and monitors the effectiveness of their implementation of their safeguarding duties. This will be integrated with the annual report to School Governors. Findings will be presented in the next annual reporting period.

Challenges: Operation Encompass; Royal Assent legislation places a statutory obligation for police to inform relevant schools when they visit a home due to an incident of abuse or domestic violence where a child of school age is present. The aim is to promote multi-agency working and early intervention to help safeguard children from domestic violence. The Principal Officer for Safeguarding in Education made representation to senior police personnel because there was a decline in the notifications schools were receiving. It was determined that there had been a change in recording on police systems which is thought to have caused the decline in notifications being sent. Police are now setting up individual email address so that notifications continue to be sent to individual schools.

Focusing on the Year Ahead:

- Development of a three year forward plan
- Strengthening the subgroup communication strategy through dissemination of safeguarding updates and best practice through blogs, newsletters and forums.
- Engagement of a wider network of Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads onto the membership of the subgroup.

Safer Recruitment:
The Subgroup continues to emphasise the need for thorough and consistent procedures across all service areas around safer recruitment. Subgroup members are encouraged to share best practice and utilise toolkits designed to help schools and organisations implement effective recruitment strategies. Regular training on safer recruitment for all staff involved in the hiring process is offered to schools. This ensures that school personnel are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills helps them identify potential risks and take appropriate action.

Voice and Lived Experience of Children and Families
The subgroup has made notable efforts to incorporate the voice of children and families:

- A large-scale pupil survey captured the experiences of over 3,500 children, providing valuable insights into school engagement and well-being.
- The iTIPS programme, now adopted by 37 schools, has demonstrated positive outcomes in emotional regulation, communication skills, and school culture and better communication between parents and school staff

Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care.

The responsibilities assigned to Virtual School Heads to provide a strategic leadership role in supporting the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker were introduced in 2021. The role of the Virtual School Head was further extended to include children in kinship care arrangements in September 2021.

Virtual School Heads focus on raising awareness of potential disadvantages experienced by these groups, encouraging engagement in education, and working towards reducing attainment gaps. They are expected to use a strengths-based approach when supporting children and promoting educational outcomes.

Their role involves.....

Highlighting the challenges faced by children with a social worker and those in kinship care arrangements

- Strengthening partnerships between educational settings and local authorities, including collaboration with children’s social care, to maintain high aspirations for these children
- Supporting practices that promote participation in education, recognising the importance of regular attendance for safeguarding
- Working to improve educational outcomes and reduce attainment gaps, ensuring access to support for children with a social worker and those in kinship care

As strategic leaders, Virtual School Heads aim to foster a culture of high expectations across education and social care sectors, facilitating educational progress for children with a social worker regardless of their initial circumstances.

OUTCOMES in 2024

While improving the attendance of children with a social worker continues to present challenges, some positive results have been observed:

- The percentage of children persistently absent is 5% higher than the national average for persistent absence.
- The percentage of children severely absent is 5% lower than the national average for persistent absence.
- The percentage of children suspended or permanently excluded is below the national average.
- Attainment 8 scores for these children are above the national average for Attainment 8.
- The proportion of children achieving grade 4+ in English and Maths exceeds the national percentage.

<div>PROGRESS</div>	
<i>Identifying cohort needs and addressing barriers to educational achievement to facilitate pupil progress.</i>	<p>Evidence of progress includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of a database to monitor attendance, attainment, and progression, which also helps to identify trends and areas needing improvement.• Development of a school review and audit tool enabling schools to evaluate best practices and areas for enhancement.
<i>Enhancing collaboration between educational institutions and the local authority.</i>	<p>Evidence of progress includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representation of the virtual school on the Fair Access Panel, Islington Head Teacher network meetings, and DSL forums.• Implementation of enrichment programmes available after school and during school holidays.
<i>Providing advice and support to professionals such as social workers, DSLs, designated teachers, and school leaders, aiming to enhance children's progress through increased use of evidence-based interventions.</i>	<p>Evidence of progress includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of a consultation model allowing joint expertise from schools and social care professionals to determine effective support strategies.• Development and distribution of resources to key professionals to aid in professional development and improved practice.

Priorities for 2025/2026

- Assist schools in adopting evidence-based practices for supporting children with a social worker and those in kinship care by developing and implementing a best practice toolkit.
- Support social care professionals to increase their understanding and effectiveness in working with children and families experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance.
- Expand the Virtual School’s collaboration with families to help parents and carers support children's literacy and numeracy skills.

In May 2024, Children’s Social Care held its 14th Practice Week. This initiative enhances the visibility of senior management and deepens their understanding of the challenges faced by frontline practitioners.

Audit Theme and Focus

The audit concentrated on cases involving children at risk of extra-familial abuse, such as child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE), and serious youth violence (SYV). The audit examined recent referrals and current cases within Child In Need, Child Looked After, Independent Fostering, and fostering teams, focusing on the quality of risk assessments, safety planning, and the support provided to foster carers.

Key Findings:

Audit Population and Case Allocation

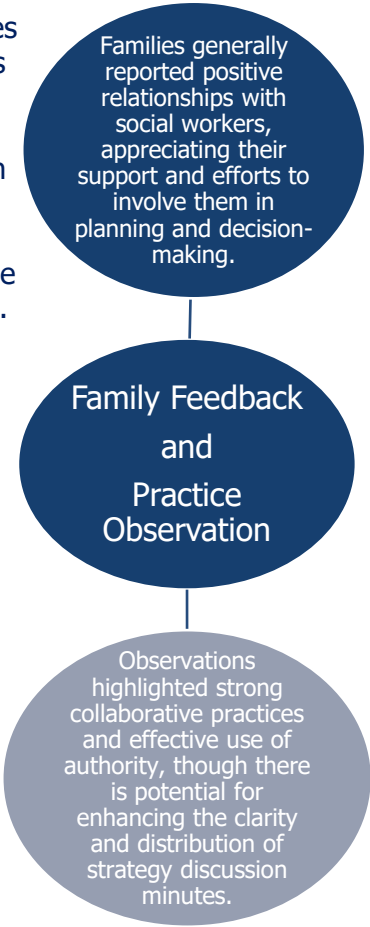
- The audit covered a diverse cohort, with significant variations in case allocations across teams. CLA teams showed consistent case numbers, while CIN teams exhibited more variability.
- The majority of cases involved children aged 13-17, with a notable increase in cases from age 13 onwards.

Assessment and Analysis

- Chronologies were generally well-maintained but varied in their up-to-dateness and inclusion of critical information.
- Practitioners demonstrated a strong understanding of the child's race, culture, and identity, though there is room for improvement in consistently incorporating these aspects into narratives.

Supervision and Support

- Management oversight was predominantly good, with regular supervision evident in most cases. However, there is a need for more reflective and collaborative supervision practices.
- Direct work with children was evident but could be more consistently documented, particularly life story work for looked-after children.



The May 2024 Practice Week provided valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement within Islington Children’s Services. By addressing the identified gaps and implementing the recommendations, the service can enhance its support for children and families, ensuring better outcomes and safeguarding practices.

Recommendations

Allocation and Resource Management

- Review and potentially adjust the allocation system to ensure a more equitable distribution of cases across CIN teams.

Response to Extra-Familial Harm

- Enhance early intervention strategies and training for targeted services to address concerns before they escalate.

Chronologies and Genograms

- Reinforce the importance of maintaining up-to-date chronologies and genograms, particularly in long-term teams.

Strategy Discussions

- Ensure strategy discussion minutes are consistently distributed to all relevant stakeholders and recorded on the system.

Supervision Practices

- Implement structured headings for reflective supervision to improve documentation and practice quality.

Direct Work and Life Story Work

- Emphasise the importance of direct work and life story work, ensuring these are regularly updated on the child's record.

Practice Observations

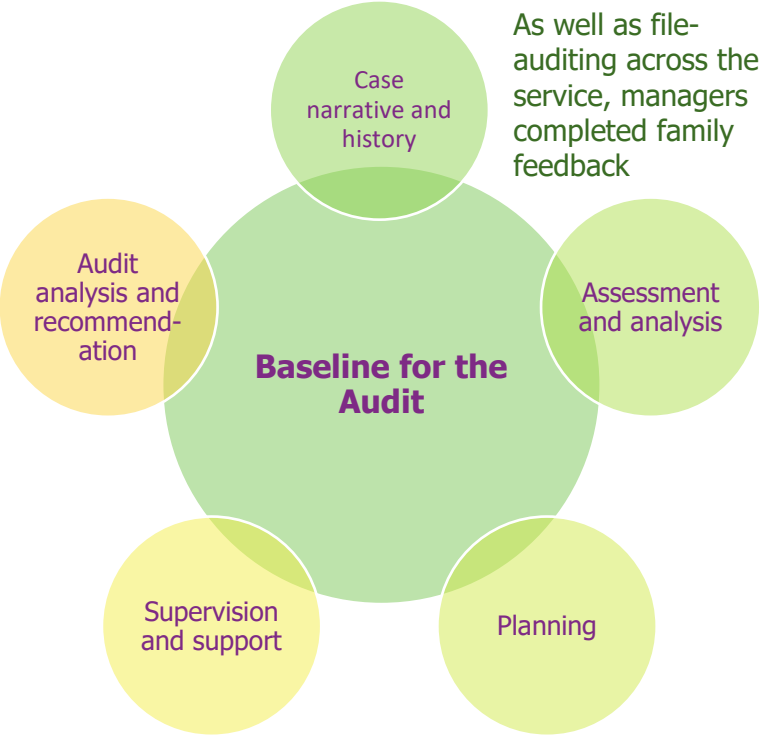
- Reassert the expectation for regular practice observations to support staff development and maintain practice model fidelity.

In November 2024, Children’s Social Care held its 15th Practice Week since 2017. Practice Week continues to provide an opportunity for senior managers to be involved in frontline practice which includes hearing from frontline practitioners as well as the voices of the children and families that we work with.

Senior managers engaged in a range of auditing activities with practitioners to further increase their understanding of what it is like for frontline practitioners, walking in their shoes and gaining a deeper understanding of current frontline practice.

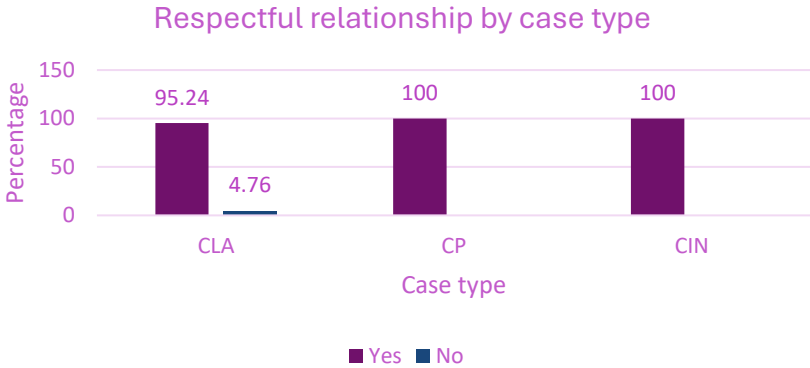
The service areas included in Practice Week were Bright Start and Bright Futures, Children in Need, including Children’s Services Contact Team and the Disabled Children’s Services, Children Looked After and Independent Futures, and Fostering and Permanency.

This audit focused on cases where children are at risk of abuse through neglect.



Voice of Parents:

Parents have overwhelmingly (98.7%) said to senior managers that the relationship with their social workers was respectful. In their comments, many parents reflected on the fact that they would have preferred not to have a social worker, but nevertheless felt they have a good working relationship, and they have come to understand what the local authority was concerned about. Parents also said that social workers helped them and that they have a good relationship with their children.



Main Findings:

Case History and Narrative:

- Chronologies were generally well-maintained, with 66% of cases rated as good or outstanding. However, there were some areas needing improvement

Assessment and Analysis:

- Responses to allegations of abuse and neglect were taken seriously, with 79% rated as good or outstanding. The assessment of children’s developmental needs was thorough, with 93% rated as good or outstanding. There were some areas where improvements are needed.

Planning:

- Strong assessments should be followed by robust, clear purposeful planning for the child and family. Children Subject to a Plan for More Than 12 Months: Fewer than half (47%) of children in the audit were subject to a plan for longer than 12 months. This indicates that while many children are receiving timely interventions, there is a significant portion where longer term help is need.

Supervision and Support:

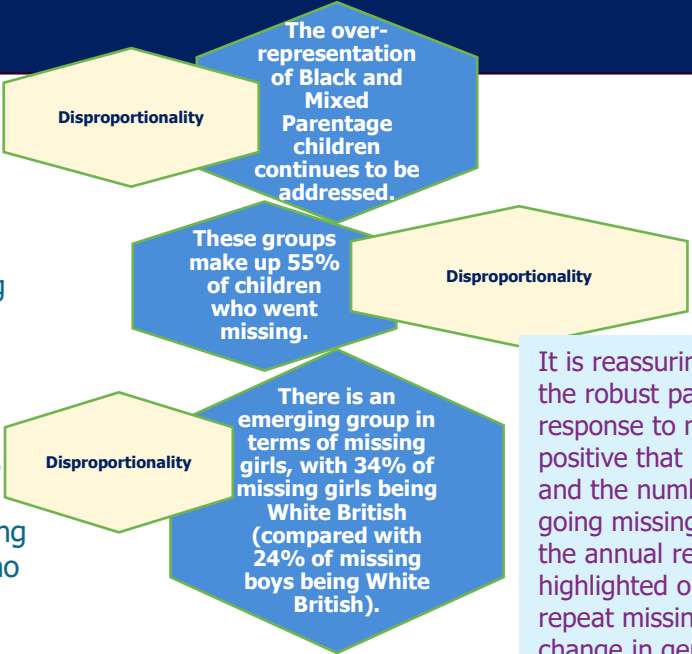
- Supervision was regular and of high quality in 82% of cases, reflecting strong management oversight and support for practitioners.

Audit Analysis and Recommendations:

- Chronologies: consideration should be given for chronologies to be implemented across the entire practice system.
- Focus on Cumulative Harm: Introduce workshops on recognising and analysing the cumulative effects of harm.
- Deeper analysis of the children whose cases were considered RI/inadequate.
- Family Involvement: Increase efforts to involve families and specifically children in providing feedback.
- Review and refine the practice week process to ensure internal consistency between audits, moderation and senior leadership oversight.

Children Missing from Care and Home

Between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, a total of **189 children went missing**, accounting for **1245 missing episodes**. Compared with last year, there has been a reduction in the number of children who are going missing but an increase in missing episodes overall (19%). **97 girls went missing, a reduction from 124 last year**, but with episodes rising from 697 last year to 705 this year **72 boys went missing, a reduction from 93 last year** but with missing episodes rising from 261 last year to 474 this year (Context around this being that we have a number of young people who have become looked after this year and/or who are now in suitable placements following them previously being at home with their family or placed with family members who were not reporting them missing when their whereabouts were unknown. This will be explored further in the missing in care report which will be shared at the Corporate Parenting Board on 10.09.2025).



It is reassuring to see the impact of the robust partnership working in response to missing children. It is positive that missing episodes for boys and the number of individual children going missing has reduced, however, the annual report from MACE highlighted ongoing concerns for repeat missing and the fundamental change in gender patterns over the past two years with most of the children Missing from Care being girls. I am pleased that the partnership will be undertaking a thematic review to better understand this worrying trend.

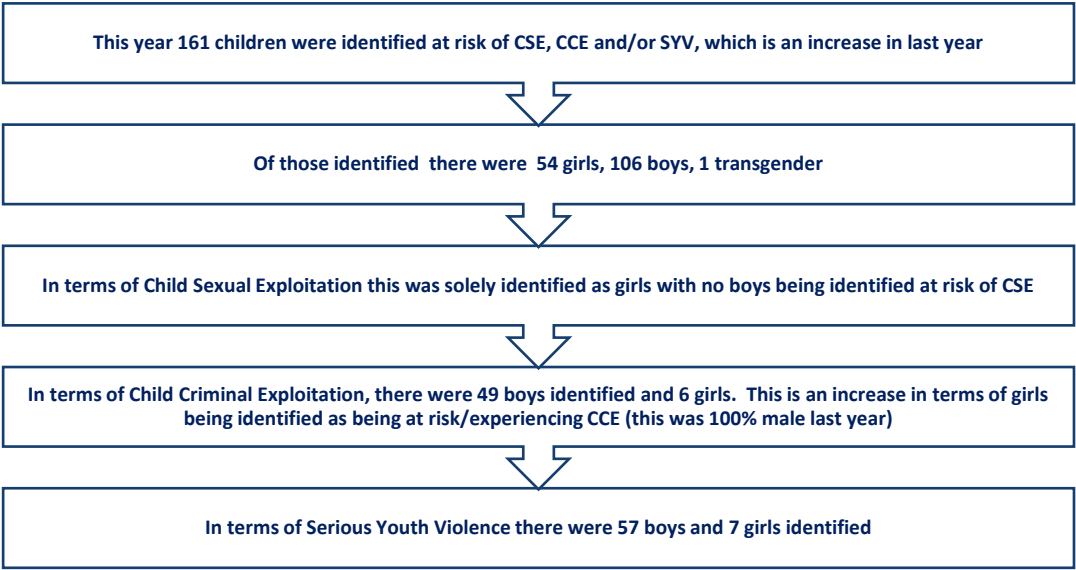
Alan Caton, Independent Scrutineer

Impact of Multi-Agency Working

Information sharing which was facilitated within the Pre-MACE and MACE processes led to the arrest of adults involved in group-based sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation affecting several children. Information sharing and partnership working led to the following outcomes:

- Arrest of the adults involved in CCE and CSE
- Coordination between CET Police and social work teams in terms of understanding children's experiences and keeping them informed in relation to the ongoing investigation
- Devolved NRM panel set up to review the cases for all children and young people who were exploited in Islington by the group
- Training developed and delivered by Community Safety team and Exploitation and Missing team to managers across a fast-food chain, following these locations being identified as being used by adults to target and groom children for the purposes of exploitation

Key Insights



Focusing on the year ahead:

- Terms of reference for Pre-MACE and MACE will be reviewed and updated
- Islington's Exploitation Policy and pathways to be Reviewed and Updated

The Adolescent Support Intervention Project, (ASIP) works to prevent young people at contextual risk from coming into care, wherever it is safe to do so, by putting in place holistic, intensive support and an exit strategy to hold the young person safe at home.

ASIP worked with **27** young people, their families and their peer networks between April 2024 – April 2025. During this time there were 16 new referrals. Through intensive work **18** of those young people were accessed Education, Training and Employment (ETE).

During this period, ASIP developed a relationship with NRC whereby the ASIP Clinical Psychologist joined their monthly Team Around the School (TAS) meeting to support the development of formulations for selected students. In this period **3** young people successfully completed their GCSE's and a further **4** young people are preparing to sit them this year.

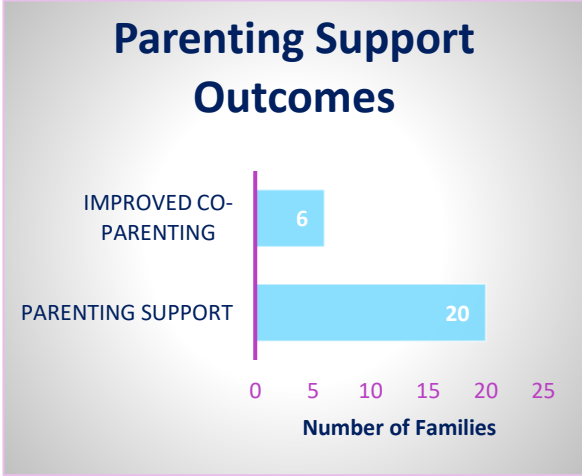
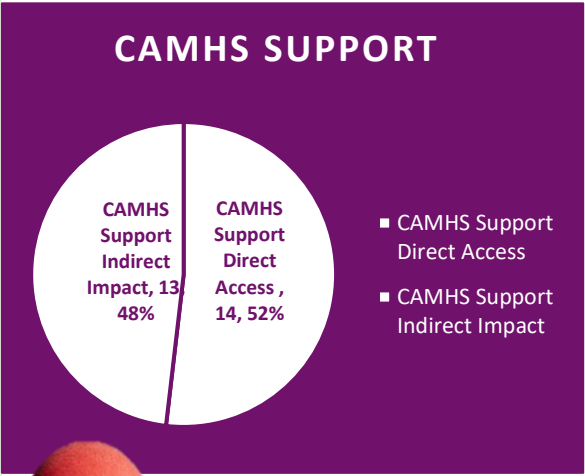
ASIP facilitated respite for families outside of the UK, continuing to work with families whilst they are abroad in Poland, Egypt, Kosovo and Jamaica. ASIP also purchased school uniforms and school equipment; arranging activities such as trips to The Shard; London Dungeon; Go Karting; The Emirates; Bowling; Virtual Reality Experiences and respite for parents. ASIP has delivered bespoke fathering work with three fathers during this period that has resulted in an improved ability to mentalise their children as well as a self-reported improvement in their relationships and abilities to co-parent.

ASIP enrolled two young people in the I-Box service and ASIP has made noticeable home improvements to **8** family homes all of which have resulted in better night sleep for family members, improved emotional wellbeing and school attendance for some of our young people.

11 ASIP cases are showing a significant reduction in offending behaviour (appearing on overnights less frequently); and there has been a reduction in the missing episodes in **23** of the **27** ASIP cases throughout the year.

Voice of Families:

ASIP also supported a group of parents to co-produce an intervention that enabled them to identify risk factors for their children and to work together to reduce that risk. The parents reported better communication between them as well as less blaming language being used.



Outcome and Impact: Key Highlights

- **66.67% (18 of 27)** young people are accessing **Education, Training and Employment (ETE)** through intensive direct work and staff upskilling.
- **18 of 27** young people were **prevented from entering the care system**.
- **14 young people/families** are directly accessing **CAMHS support**, while the remaining **13** are indirectly impacted through updated clinical formulations.
- **20 families** received **parenting support**, all reporting improved relationships or behaviour management. **6 families** showed significant improvements in **co-parenting**.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Pilot Programme

Year 4 Review: April 2024 – March 2025

The **NRM Pilot Programme**, now in its fourth year, continues to provide essential support to potential victims of **modern slavery** and **child exploitation**. This Home Office led process helps identify and protect vulnerable children, ensuring they receive the care and assistance they need. The partnership between **Islington Children's Social Care (CSC)** and the **London Borough of Camden (CSC)** remains a cornerstone of the pilot's success, offering a structured pathway to prevent further exploitation.

Referrals and Data

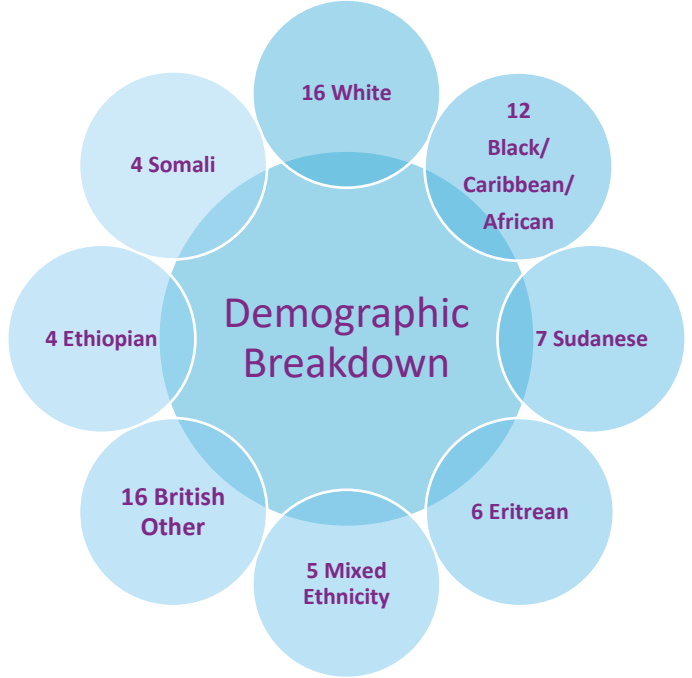
During this period, **71 referrals** were allocated to the pilot. However, one referral was withdrawn as the young person was the safeguarding responsibility of another local authority, leaving **70** potential victims—**41** from Islington and **29** from Camden. Of these potential victims, **55 were male** and **15 were female**. The ages of the potential victims ranged from **13 to 17**, with the majority between ages **15 and 17**.

Exploitation Types and Patterns

- 42** Children Identified as Child Criminal Exploitation Victims
- 8** Children Victims of Child Sexual Exploitation
- 15** Children Victims of Forced Labour
- 3** Children Victims of Domestic Servitude
- 2** Children where Exploitation Remains Unknown

Exploitation Types and Patterns Cont'd

The panel have noted links between referrals for child victims and trends and patterns of grooming and exploitation are being observed regarding the exploitation of child victims. The panel have also observed that for some child victims there have been historical incidences of exploitation, that was not recognised at the time and reflected on the impact of these earlier experiences to their current circumstances. The panel are noting that previously identified child victims are being named as suspected exploiters and there is also earlier identification of child victims.



Education Context

The data hasn't been recorded this year, although several Potential Victims were attending Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit or were NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Decisions Made by the Panel

- 65 Positive Reasonable Grounds (RG) decisions were made at the first panel meeting (the SCA had already made Positive Reasonable Grounds decisions in 4 cases heard at panel).
- 40 Positive Conclusive Grounds (CG) decisions were made at the second meeting.
- 1 Negative RG decision was recorded, along with 3 Negative CG decisions.

Stop and Search

Haringey Council piloted work with the Police on Stop and Search through a Safeguarding lens. The abiding approach is that Stop & Search should be utilised more as an early intervention measure rather than a punitive action that can have long-lasting psychological and traumatic effects for young people who experience it. Islington has supported Haringey with this project and is working on other safeguarding-focussed approaches with the Police.

IMPACT:

This year has seen a significant increase in referrals, reflecting improvements in the quality of submissions and enhanced awareness among professionals. The workforce's increased access to exploitation training has contributed to more timely identification of at-risk children.

The Islington Youth Justice Service (YJS) continues to deliver an exemplary, trauma-informed, and child-centred approach to youth justice, as evidenced by its 'Outstanding' rating from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in 2024. This recognition reflects the strength of Islington's multi-agency partnership, which includes social care, education, health, police, and the voluntary sector. The service has made significant strides in reducing first-time entrants (FTEs), reoffending rates, and the use of custody, while maintaining a strong focus on safeguarding, early intervention, and the lived experiences of children.

A cornerstone of Islington's success is its robust early intervention and prevention framework. The Early Intervention and Diversion Panel (EIDP) plays a pivotal role in identifying children at risk of offending and ensuring timely, proportionate responses. This panel brings together Targeted Youth Support (TYS), police, and other partners to review cases where children have been arrested but not charged, or where community resolutions are being considered. Triage interventions are tailored to the individual needs of each child, often addressing complex vulnerabilities such as trauma, exploitation, or family breakdown. The Turnaround programme further supports this work by offering assertive outreach and support to children who have been arrested but not charged, ensuring no opportunity for early help is missed.

The Youth Safety Strategy 2025–2030 is currently in development and builds on the previous five-year strategy.

- It is being co-produced with children, families, and professionals to ensure it reflects lived experiences and local needs.
- The strategy adopts a public health approach to youth safety, addressing the wider determinants of harm.
- Extensive engagement has been undertaken, including:
 - Surveys with children, parents, and professionals.
 - Focus groups and workshops to facilitate deeper dialogue.

Key aims of the strategy include:

- Protecting children from violence and exploitation.
- Fostering safer communities and public spaces.
- Promoting school inclusion and academic achievement.
- Addressing disproportionality in the youth justice system.

A Youth Safety Delivery Group, chaired by young people, monitors progress and ensures accountability across the partnership.

Reduction in Reoffending:

- Reoffending rates have consistently decreased, with a 74% reduction in the frequency of reoffending since 2016/17.
- Islington now performs better than both national and YOT family averages.

Reduction in Custody and Remand:

- Custodial sentences and remands have declined, with only two custodial remands recorded in 2023–24.
- Intensive community supervision and improved court confidence in YJS proposals have contributed to this trend.

The voice and lived experience of children are central to service design and delivery.

Children participate in the Youth Justice Services Management Board (YJSMB), the You-Lead group, and the Youth Council, influencing strategic decisions and holding services to account. Youth Peer Advocates contribute to staff recruitment, training, and service evaluation. The "Love and Loss" film, co-produced with bereaved families, is a powerful tool used in schools and youth settings to raise awareness of the consequences of knife crime.

Looking Ahead:

The Youth Justice Plan 2025–2026 outlines nine strategic priorities, including early intervention, education and employment, children's voice, partnership working, wellbeing, victim support, and tackling domestic abuse.

The service will continue to invest in workforce development, quality assurance, and co-production with children and families. The forthcoming Youth Safety Strategy will further strengthen the borough's commitment to safeguarding and youth justice, ensuring that children are not only protected but empowered to shape the services that support them.

The Youth Justice Service led on an **Anti-racist Strategy** which was commended by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation during the 2024 inspection.

The **Disproportionality Action Plan** includes mentoring programmes, anti-racist training, and the inclusion of disproportionality data in court reports. Islington's pioneering work in this area has been **cited as national best practice** by HMIP.

Despite these successes, disproportionality remains a significant concern. Black and Mixed Heritage children account for 59% of interventions and 86% of custodial sentences, despite representing a smaller proportion of the local population.

Youth Work in Islington: Impact, Outcomes and the Voice of Young People

The 2024–25 Youth Work Impact Report demonstrated the breadth and effectiveness of Islington’s youth offer, delivered through the Young Islington partnership. The borough’s youth services have continued to provide inclusive, trauma-informed, and youth-led support to thousands of young people, particularly those from marginalised communities or at risk of poorer outcomes. The report highlights how youth work contributes to safeguarding, wellbeing, and personal development, while amplifying the voices of young people in shaping their communities.

Reach, Inclusion and Community Engagement

Over **5,600** young people accessed youth activities during the reporting period, with **84% attending regularly** and **more than 83% living in the borough’s most deprived areas**. The enhanced detached youth offer, led by Prospex, engaged nearly **3,000** young people in six priority areas such as Bunhill, Clerkenwell and Finsbury Park, connecting **142** of them to wider services including therapeutic counselling and mentoring. This outreach has been instrumental in reaching young people who may not otherwise access centre-based provision, thereby reducing isolation and increasing access to safe spaces and trusted adults.

Wellbeing and Resilience

Youth work has had a demonstrable impact on young people’s physical and emotional wellbeing. Activities such as boxing, hiking, and gardening have supported resilience, emotional regulation and self-confidence. A QLIP survey found that 83% of young people rated their sense of safety at youth clubs as 8/10 or higher, reinforcing the role of youth spaces as protective environments. Programmes such as the SIS Project and Freightliners City Farm have provided safe, inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth and those with complex needs, contributing to improved mental health and social connection.

Youth Voice and Leadership

Youth voice is embedded across Islington’s youth services. Young people have played a central role in designing, assessing and delivering youth-led projects through the Young Islington Network Grants. The SIS Project, **supporting over 250 girls and young women**, has fostered peer mentoring and leadership development, while the Youth Council continues to provide a platform for young people to influence policy and service delivery. These initiatives reflect a commitment to co-production and participatory practice, ensuring young people are not only heard but empowered to lead.

Skills, Aspirations and Transitions

Youth services have supported young people to develop practical, social and emotional skills through volunteering, mentoring and accredited training. The Summervarsity programme alone delivered over **4,700 attendances** and **197 accreditations**, helping young people build confidence and prepare for future employment.

The Working Worlds programme has provided real-world experience for young people with SEND, including placements and community catering projects. Transition support between play and youth services has increased, with **26%** of adventure playground users moving into youth clubs—a **10% rise** since 2022–23.



Looking Ahead: Priorities for 2025–26

- Expand and sustain youth and play provision, particularly in underserved areas.
- Deepen youth participation in service design, delivery and evaluation.
- Enhance support for marginalised groups, including SEND, LGBTQ+ and Global Majority youth.
- Strengthen partnerships across education, health and community safety.
- Improve impact measurement and data collection across the youth sector.

The Children’s safeguarding teams have continued to provide support and supervision to operational teams, the reach has been extended to cover therapies and other professional groups. Named professionals maintain a strategic presence in their respective safeguarding children’s partnerships and work collaboratively with operational teams across the organisation. The Head of Safeguarding Children’s post became substantive in March 2025 the post has been covered by the same person since October 2024, providing continuity.

A peer review was completed by an external safeguarding nurse specialist; there is an action plan in place to address the areas identified.

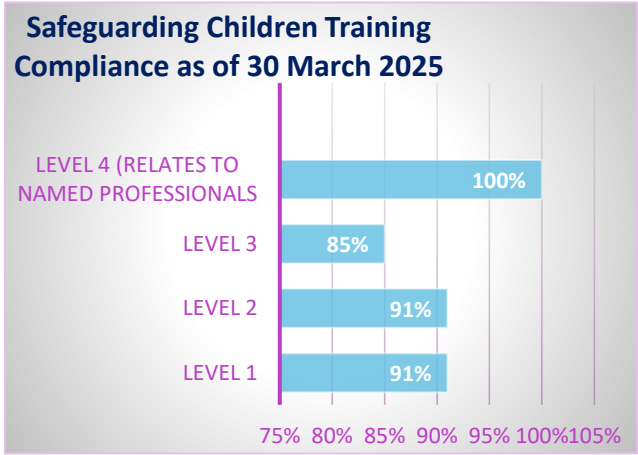
The collection of data that evidences safeguarding activity remains a challenge we are currently working with clinical systems to progress the digitalisation of data gathering. The challenge remains in that we have multiple Electronic Patient Records across the trust. We continue to mitigate by manual data collection.

Safeguarding Children Supervision

Compliance with safeguarding supervision for caseload holders remains high across the organisation. All staff can access ad hoc and planned supervision sessions. Multidisciplinary team meetings are held on IFOR ward twice a week, training is provided for Junior doctors by the Named doctor and Paediatric Liaison health visitor. The Neonatal team have a weekly safeguarding meeting led by the Named doctor and supported by midwifery, which allows for case discussion and supervision. Safeguarding midwives have an open-door policy and provide ad hoc and planned supervision. The safeguarding resource is challenged in meeting the needs of all staff who should be offered regular mandatory safeguarding supervision.

Safeguarding Children Training

Training compliance across the whole trust has improved in the last two quarters Staff have a rich offer of additional safeguarding training linked to child safeguarding practice reviews across each of the children’s partnerships. The training offer has been reviewed and clarified for operational teams to ensure staff are accessing the correct level of training to remain compliant with the needs for their specific roles. Safeguarding teams have been able to access additional training to support their continual professional development.



Audits

The safeguarding team have an audit strategy for the year that aligns with the children partnership priorities. Audits on School Nursing safeguarding process’ in Islington was undertaken as well as an audit on the use of the Neglect toolkit in this reporting period. Section 11 audits have been undertaken the safeguarding children’s partnership which reflect good compliance with our Safeguarding responsibilities. Multiple other partnership/ multi agency audits have been undertaken including a ‘Stop and Search’ audit, the outcomes of these are pending.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs)

Learning from CSPR’s is shared across the organisation via 7-minute learning sessions/ learning sets/Grand round/MDT meetings and staff forums. Learning will also be discussed in safeguarding supervision. Training that emerges from the learning is put on by the safeguarding children’s partnerships. Communication remains a central theme from local and national reviews. Learning and action plans from the CSPRs and serious incidents are presented to the Integrated Safeguarding Committee and through subgroups of the relevant Safeguarding children Partnerships. A tracker has been put in place in this reporting period so we can more accurately capture how we embed learning from Rapid reviews and CSPR’s.



The Sunflower Project: Offers domestic violence abuse group recovery programmes for women, children and young people in Islington. Referrals can be made by any professional working with a female survivor of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) or by the woman herself.

The Sunflower Project offers a nurturing and safe space for survivors to explore, process, and begin healing from their experiences of DVA. The programme supports women to rebuild confidence, strengthen resilience, and connect with others through meaningful peer support.

Women must be an Islington resident and no longer in an intimate relationship with the perpetrator. To make the programme accessible, oyster cards are provided for travel to and from the programme and an offer a warm meal at the end of each session. There is also provision of a space for one-to-one discussion, should a participant require it.

The Sunflower Project’s children and young people’s groups take place within the school setting that the children/young people attend, with a minimum of four children and a maximum of eight children/young people per group. Work is with children in early years (four-years-old and above), upper primary school and secondary school students.



The pupil programmes have been developed to support children and young people to explore the spectrum of DVA, age-appropriately, in a nurturing environment, using creative tools and strategies to help them understand what DVA is, what healthy relationships are and to provide healthy coping strategies to assist them process their lived experiences and regulate their emotions.

Challenges: School engagement with the Sunflower Project has presented several challenges during this academic year. While the Team have worked proactively to build meaningful relationships with schools, through working in partnership with senior leaders, presentations at governor forums, and detailed planning with designated safeguarding leads with three secondary and four primary schools, schools have faced significant barriers to implementing the programme. Despite initial commitments, several schools have ultimately been unable to proceed with delivery due to increasing safeguarding concerns and competing internal priorities.

These challenges are reflective of the broader systemic pressures facing schools, particularly in supporting children and young people with complex emotional and social needs. The impact of these pressures often results in limited capacity to facilitate interventions, even when there is a clear recognition of their need and value.

Delivery commenced in one secondary school towards the end of the academic year and is set to continue into the new year. While full delivery in other schools did not go ahead, the groundwork laid has established strong relationships and a foundation for future implementation of the Sunflower Project. This experience highlights the importance of flexibility, persistence, and sustained engagement when embedding domestic violence abuse (DVA) recovery programmes in schools.

**Initiatives for the year ahead:
Pilot DVA Support Group Programme:**

We have developed a new pilot programme to support children and young people who remain living at home with the perpetrator of DVA. This need emerged through previous school referrals and direct disclosures from young people; however, support could not be provided due to existing programme criteria requiring the perpetrator to no longer live in the family home. Following research and consultations with senior leaders in Children Services and national organisations, we identified a significant gap in support for this cohort of young survivors. The pilot, which will be rolled out in the autumn term, will accept referrals only for those children and young people with an allocated social worker, to ensure risk is effectively managed.

Sunflower Project Conference:

As part of the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the 16 Days of Activism, the Sunflower Project Team will host its first Sunflower Project conference, ***"Lean in and Listen: Placing the Voice of Young Survivors at the Heart of the Conversation."*** This event will spotlight the impact of DVA on children and young people, explore pathways to recovery and healing, and mark the launch of the interim independent evaluation report of the Sunflower Project.

The Home Safe Prevention Programme supports the education community around addressing domestic violence abuse (DVA) and bullying to create a culture of human rights, non-violence and equality within education. The Prevention Programme Manager also works closely with other colleagues, providing, for example, specialist Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage (FM) and 'Honour' based Violence/Abuse (HBV) awareness training and working in partnership with other professionals to steer the strategic development of FGM elimination in the borough, which reflects the UN Goal to eliminate FGM by 2030, alongside a review of issues such as prevalence rates in the borough and terminology used in the exploration of FGM.

The Prevention Programme Manager leads on the delivery of an all-day training event for multi-agency practitioners, which takes place three times throughout the academic year. One of the major highlights took place at the most recent training event, whereby a survivor of FGM spoke openly to participants about her experiences of undergoing FGM in her country of origin. This was a very emotive testimony, not only describing the impact on her as a child, but the lifelong impact on her, on her partner and family. It was a privilege to be a part of the training whereby a survivor understood the importance of breaking the silence of this form of child abuse.

Another positive, was hearing from a professional at a multidisciplinary forum about the direct impact that the prevention workshops had on her family, after her children had attended a workshop on DVA/FGM and healthy relationships, run by the Prevention Programme Manager.

This academic year the Prevention Programme Manager worked with a significant number of children and professionals, however, if we are to meet the UN Global Goal of eliminating FGM by 2030, professionals need to enhance their understanding of what FGM is; how to respond effectively to concerns of FGM; and how to contribute to the prevention of this form of child abuse.

The next academic year will soon be upon us, and increasing uptake of the all-day training events, as well as greater engagement with schools that have traditionally not taken up the Prevention Programme offer, are a key priority throughout 2025/2026. Training for the FGM, FM and HBV Multi-Agency Awareness Training is available to book on the My HR learning system of the ISCP.

Islington Harmful Practice Steering Group have devised the Islington FGM Risk Assessment Tool alongside FGM awareness posters specifically for children and young people.

Manor Gardens FGM Forum, which has an international membership, is currently focusing on research and development regarding prevalence data and terminology used when referring to FGM

Training Provided:

- 259 primary school pupil,
- 464 secondary school pupils,
- 4 parent/carers,
- 181 Early Year's Practitioners,
- 50 school staff in one school
- 42 multi-agency professionals via the all-day training – delivered in 3 different training settings



Training and Professional Development Subgroup

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The Training and professional Development is a sub-group of the ISCP and has the overarching responsibility of integrating learning from audits, local needs and child safeguarding practice reviews locally and nationally into training across the partnership.

	Address Structural Inequalities:	Develop Early Interventions and Preventions:	Respond to factors impacting Social Emotional Mental Health needs, Support SEND needs and transitions:	Review Our Response Neglect and Parental Factors:
2024 – 2025 Achievements	<div>All core training course have been updated with key focus on the Equality Act, equitable practice and inclusive of learning from Child Q in Hackney and Local Reviews</div> <div>Reflection space and key message embedded: “uphold the best interest of ALL children”</div> <div>Cultural Competency Continuum Work Group established</div>	<div>Early Help toolkit created.</div> <div>All course training courses explore early identification, the role of early help Early intervention.</div> <div>LSCP Professional Curiosity course developed with ISCP input</div>	<div>Transitions Protocol developed and launched October 2024</div> <div>Online safety included in Core training courses</div> <div>Safer Internet Day: 4 events held including, Pornography, Social Meda, Sextortion and Scams and How to the have the conversation with Children and parents</div>	<div>Neglect training developed to support the ISCP Neglect Toolkit (Training to commence from May 2025).</div> <div>Safer Sleep advice published on the website alongside a 7 minute briefing</div> <div>Substance misuse training launched.</div> <div>Extended VAWG training offer: including Introduction and DSL DVA and Supporting Male Victims of DVA course.</div>
2025 – 2026 Going Forward	<div>Cultural Competency Continuum Work Group to continue to develop training in line with need, resources and guidance.</div> <div>To undertake Quality Assurance activities of ISCP training course contents and practice guidance.</div>	<div>Early Help toolkit created and to be added to the ISCP website.</div> <div>Early Help training to be developed to support the implementation of the Families First Partnership Plan and Early Help toolkit</div>	<div>Update and develop guides for staff and volunteers to supporting Disabled children</div> <div>Enhance engagement with Online Safety training Support implementation of the Online Safety Protocol in development</div>	<div>Adult Mental Health and Safeguarding Training to be developed.</div> <div>More bitesize courses to be developed ie adolescent to parent violence.</div>

Training Programme

The ISCP is now offering **more face-to-face courses**, this is in response to delegate requests, facilitator reflection regarding engagement and to support the psychological safety of attendees due to the sensitive of course topics. This does have limitations due to room sizes, but has enabled great engagement, we have seen a **50% increase in course evaluations** and **an increase in "excellent" course ratings**. In person delivery has also enabled **two courses to be supported by BSL interpreters**.

Delegates continue to **engage well with our core courses**, but attendance for our subject specific courses remains inconsistent. The subgroup **have seen an increase of attendance this year to the Harmful Practices and FGM course**. Whilst our overall course offerings have increased with expansion of topics, some topics are on hold due to facilitator availability, but we hope to relaunch these over the coming year.

This year we **launched our "Significant Harm and Working Together"** training course, successfully delivering 2 courses focused on the S47 process, exploring practice challenges and barriers and supporting participants to understand each others roles, responsibilities and limitations, and how to support practice remains focused on the best interest of the child/ren. **The course is co-developed and delivered by Police, Local Authority, Health and the ISCP business unit**. The course has been well attended by all statutory partners and aims in 2025-2026 to gain traction with Education and Early Years settings.

We are also excited **to launch our "Understanding Neglect in Practice" course in May 2025**, this course supports partitioners to embed the use of the **ISCP Neglect Toolkit into their practice**, understanding the impact neglect has on brain development and increases understanding around the signs and indicators, role of chronologies and multi-agency working, as well as how to work with families where neglect is present.

We have successfully **published 7minute briefings** (Safer Sleep) this year to aid the partnership in accessing core information in a quick read guide, providing **opportunities for focused team discussions and future quick reference guides**, we aim to continue to develop more over the coming year.

"In last year report I was keen for the ISCP to have a more focused response to Neglect, as a result my Scrutiny role focused primarily on this area of practice. Read my scrutiny report on page 28-30 it is reassuring that Neglect Training development has occurred, and delivery will start in May 2025".

Alan Caton,
Independent
Scrutineer

Cultural Competency Continuum working group established

The Subgroup have considered cultural competency in all the training and professional development work completed, to strengthen this further the subgroup have established **a working group to reflect on the single agency training offer and collective partnership need**. The working group reflected on language of "cultural aware and "cultural competence" and agreed that **cultural competency is a journey rather than an end point** and therefore have adopted the Staff College Cultural Competency Continuum Framework; recognising that everyone will have their own experiences which will impact their "competency" and this is nonlinear. **Throughout 2025-2026, the working group aims to embed this in the ISCP core and additional training and identify need for specific topics.**

Trauma Training

The Training and Professional Development Subgroup have **aligned with the Quality Assurance Subgroup to aid in setting the direction of a multi-agency trauma training offer**. The subgroup have launched a whole partnership practitioner survey in March 2025. The survey **aims to identify current Trauma-Informed practice by identifying where the individual, service and organisations are on their trauma-informed journey to inform what future standards will be strived for in the ISCP**, including best practice and areas for improvement. Set the direction in relation to trauma practice for each staff/volunteer level (LSCP Learning and Improvement Framework levels, and ISCP Training strategy). The **ITIPS model continues to be rolled out to specific agencies across the partnership** (see page 51)

Training and Professional Development: VAWG Training Overview

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VAWG Workforce Development Team (WFDT) delivered a variety of training sessions to ISCP employees, volunteers and parents.

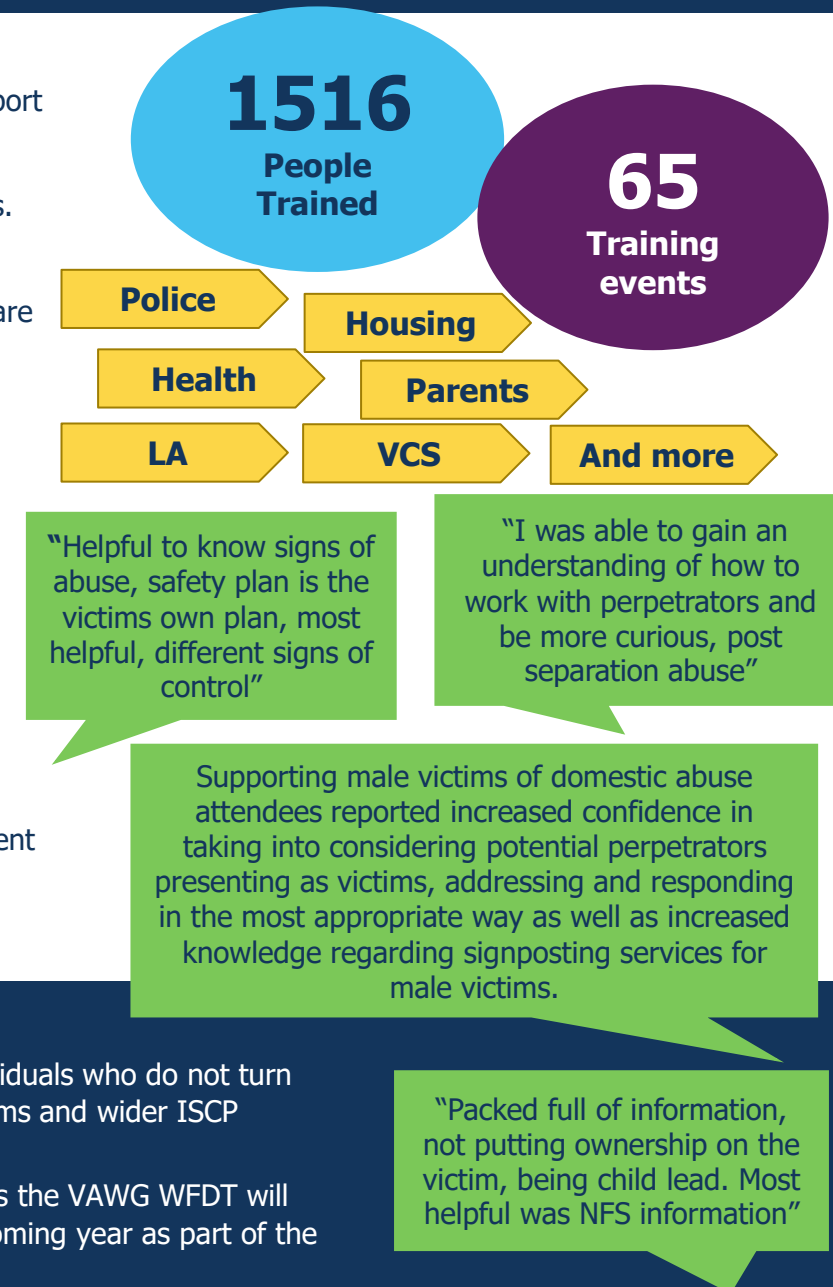
Training sessions included:

- Supporting male victims of domestic abuse - Training developed to support professionals to more confidently identify and support male victims of domestic violence and abuse.
- Practitioner Forum focused on Repair and Recovery.
- Daily safeguarding Meeting (DSM) MARAC processes supporting workers to increase confidence in completing MARAC referrals.
- Teen domestic abuse, direct work and risk management/how DA presents in teens.
- Non-Fatal Strangulation (NFS)
- Family Group conference (FGC) coordinators training increased understanding of the risks related to domestic abuse, so they are more informed and effectively able to risk assess cases to engage with FGC or mediation process.
- Domestic abuse bespoke training sessions for Designated Safeguarding leads
- Domestic abuse bespoke workshop delivered to Special Guardians
- Domestic abuse bespoke workshop on working with domestic abuse and young people
- Online and technology safety
- London Met University workshop. Explored - Domestic Abuse, the law and legislation, identification of different forms of abuse and harm and assessing risk, knowing how to respond and how to have safe and empowering conversations and support available for younger people, adults, and yourselves as professionals.
- Housing colleague's bespoke webinar -DA training focusing on Safety Planning and Risk Assessment
- Sextortion - Online Training for Professional's working with Young People delivered to Play and Youth staff.
- Perpetrator training
- Core domestic abuse 2 day training for Islington professionals
- Domestic abuse training for community safety team
- Islington Standing Together Event Domestic Abuse Presentation
- Blackstock Road - 16 Days of Activism event VAWG WFD VAWG/DA presentation. Blackstock road Community Engagement event promoting awareness of VAWG and Community Safety.
- Economic abuse training
- Bright Start - Domestic abuse training delivered to agencies supporting families/focusing on those targeting children under 5.

Reflections and going forward:

A continued challenge to the Training offer is a lack of sign up despite repeated requests for training delivery, additionally, individuals who do not turn up for training they have booked, unfortunately, this has been noticeable throughout the Islington Workforce Development Teams and wider ISCP training offer.

Going forward to make training more feasible and to explore alternative accessibility for staff, in line with the ISCP Training aims the VAWG WFDT will be bringing out bitesize blocks of training focusing on areas of domestic violence. This training will be available in the up-and-coming year as part of the ISCP training Program.



Whittington Hospital

In 2024 Whittington Health Trust invited the VAWG workforce development team (VWFDT) to spend a week co-located at the Whittington hospital to raise awareness of VAWG. The team spent time with hospital staff and provided training to clinicians. This proved very successful, leading to further discussions between the hospital and the VWFDT on how we can work together to address the significant challenges staff face in responding to VAWG and domestic abuse challenges while working in a very busy hospital setting. The Whittington safeguarding leads identified the need for a specialist VAWG resource to support the hospital to improve the safety of and outcomes for survivors and their families.

Achievements: VWFDT delivered a domestic violence awareness conference at the Whittington hospital in July 2024. We explored what staff are seeing practically day to day, how best to respond/ how the most effective conversations with victims/survivors, manage challenges, hold perpetrators accountable and more.

Impact: Staff report increased confidence in recognising and addressing domestic abuse. VAWG WFDt was well received and highlighted the need, as a result the Whittington hospital received funding from their trust to appoint a new domestic abuse lead role. The council's VWFDT are now providing a full-time equivalent Workforce Development Lead, and a project officer will be to be co-located at Whittington Hospital for 1 year. The WFDt will oversee and implement this.

This dedicated staff resource and the wider VWFDT will work with the hospital to:

- Upskill and equip hospital staff to identify and support survivors and family members at risk of VAWG
- Increase referrals to safeguarding, specialist VAWG services and the Daily Safeguarding Meeting
- Assist the hospital to align with the new NHSE guidelines on VAWG
- Provide training to staff on all relevant topics
- support all staff in responding to complex cases
- Support Whittington to achieve strategic and policy-based change.

Going forward 2025 - 2026: The council's VWFDT are now providing a full-time equivalent Workforce Development Lead, and a project officer will be to be co-located at Whittington Hospital for 1 year. The Domestic Abuse Lead will upskill staff across the hospital, support signposting and strategic development. One of the aims is to increase staff competency around domestic abuse and increase appropriate referrals for safety and support.

Police

The WFDt provided training to 750 first responders police officers from the period of September to December 2024. This was part of the METs drive to make VAWG a priority. The focus of this training within safer neighbourhoods and in line with the VAWG strategy is to improve support and services within the community for victim survivors of domestic abuse.

Objectives for the training included:

- What helps victims of domestic abuse – what do they say?
- Developing an understanding of evidence gathering when responding to domestic abuse call outs
- How to recognise risk to the victim
- Develop understanding of non-fatal strangulation, what to look for to support victim's health, what evidence to look for
- What happens when you refer to a family or victim?

Impact: The feedback from the police has been positive whilst also highlighting the challenges for first responders face when responding to domestic call outs



"VAWG staff have made really great action plans alongside social workers and provide clear support around risk management. This is quite different to PICT's way of working, as our remit is different. Thank you for all the amazing work you do – I know how valued you are by social workers! " – PICT team

"Consults help me to reflect, think about things from a different perspective and to maintain a tailored approach with clients I work with, and to help other professionals to be on board with the approach" - Camden & Islington Navigator Service

Consults

VAWG Workforce Development Team (WFDT) continue to have a steady flow of professionals making use of the consultation resource.

Our data shows that the majority of consults focused on: signposting; safety planning; suggestions for direct work with adult survivors and direct work with perpetrators.

Going forward 2025 - 2026: From learning and reflection the WFDT will focus more attention on certain safeguarding areas including direct work with children, post-separation abuse, harassment and stalking and coercive control.

Adolescent Domestic Abuse

Between October 2024 and March 2025 WFD developed a pilot project for Youth Justice Services (including TYS and I-CAN) which began in March 2025 with rolling out training for all professionals in these teams on recognising and responding to adolescent domestic abuse.

Going forward 2025-2026: This is an innovative approach to prevention and early intervention on domestic abuse. VAWG will continue to develop the pilot project in YJS, TYS and I-CAN including offering co-location and consultations. Whilst offering specific focus training on coercive control and YP, stalking and YP and sexual violence as these continue to be increasing issues in the services

Non-Fatal Strangulation and Suffocation (NFS/S)

Another area of achievement is the NFS/S training Aisling Barker WFDT manager, who has worked in partnership with the ICB and health providers to develop a referral pathway for survivors of NFS/S who are offered referrals for medical screening by the vascular team at the Royal Free Hospital.

Going forward 2025 - 2026: Aisling has been commissioned to deliver NFS/S training and vascular pathway education over the 7 consortium North Central London ICB hospitals to ensure competency around assessing and supporting victims of non-fatal strangulation and ensuring accurate referrals to the vascular assessment pathway.

Additional Forward Planning 2025-2026: VAWG are working with Matt Brown founder of the global anti-violence movement She is Not Your Rehab. [Home - She Is Not Your Rehab](#). The aim this year is to host an event where Matt will speak to Islington practitioners and then in Autumn host a multi-disciplinary conference to reimagine how we prevent violence against women and girls through community-led, trauma-informed and youth-centred approaches.

Training and Professional Development: iTIPs Model

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Islington's trauma-informed ecosystem includes:

iTIPs for schools
Tiny Tips for early years settings
Community iTIPs (C-iTIPs) for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations

These programmes are embedded within the borough's wider Youth Safety Strategy and are recognised in the **ISCP thematic safeguarding practice review 2024 as key strengths in early intervention, safeguarding, and relational practice**. Each setting that joins iTIPs gets two years of structured support, including whole staff training and regular consultation from an iTIPs practitioner; there are also termly or bi-annual network meetings to meet with other iTIPs settings. **Post programme, settings have continued access to the network meetings, centralised trainings for new staff** and top ups for existing staff and the possibility of opting into continued bespoke iTIPs practitioner support.

Evaluation of the impact of iTIPs is conducted using Staff Beliefs Questionnaire measuring changes in staff's skills and knowledge in working with trauma and the Professional Quality of Life Scale (Proqual) to assess impact on staff wellbeing alongside use of reflective tools to support sustainability.

iTIPs (Trauma-Informed Practice in Schools) **Reach and Expansion**

35 schools have received iTIPs support. In 2024, one new secondary school joined, and New River College (NRC) re-engaged with the programme. Five new primary schools are scheduled to begin in September 2025.

Impact: Feedback

"iTIPs appears as the most coherent and effectively embedded [trauma-informed approach] in schools and early years settings... It offers a theoretical/conceptual framework for understanding the development and behaviour of children and families... and a theory for doing – the ARC model."

"The iTIPs schools who shared their practice with the review demonstrated resilience and resourcefulness and aspired to always have something to give children and families through the relationships they offered."

"Primary schools where the iTIPs model is embedded are creating a valuable record and resource of the child's 'lived experience'."

"The iTIPs approach in schools offered a framework to staff to support children over long periods of time whilst they were awaiting diagnoses, citing the 'team around the school' offer as instrumental to their success."

Tiny Tips (Early Years Settings) **Reach and Participation**

17 early years settings involved, including all but one of the borough's Children's Centres. 2 new settings joined in 2024/25. Staff from an additional 8 PVI settings attended trauma training this year.

Activities and Support

Ongoing support includes: *Watch Me Play* training and reflective practice for staff, and *Little People, Big Feelings* workshops for parents. 5 parent workshops delivered this year (100% of parents reported learning something new).

Impact: Feedback

Children: "I think they're feeling more able to begin to regulate their own emotions, to label those, to be able to reach out and ask for help... offering that kind of containment and knowing you can't always make it better for them."

Staff: "All staff are feeling confident in delivering Mindful-Mo sessions... A lot of it is their own confidence in doing things... anyone in the team now does them and feels comfortable and confident in it."

Parents: "I think staff are better with their interactions with parents... just really trying to be empathetic, putting yourself in their shoes."

Community iTIPs (C-iTIPs) for VCS Organisations **Reach and Expansion**

35 organisations supported to date. New organisations being onboarded for the 2025–2027 cohort. Support extended to Safer Schools Officers (SSOs) and Family Hubs (over 270 staff trained).

Impact: Feedback

"The thing about this training is that it applies to all of us, not just children. We all have trauma... So it's good to challenge our own selves too so we can support these young people as best we can."

"How important it is to talk about things, even if uncomfortable. Important to be able to tackle a topic, even if you get things wrong. It's what we learn from it."

"Practitioners and their managers are able to acknowledge structural and system harms... The iTIPs training recognises racism as traumatic and supports practitioners in considering how to 'position' themselves and address the experiences of children and families."

Going forward:

- Develop a whole system trauma-informed approach.
- Support children's mental health needs.
- Extend trauma-informed practice to universal youth centres.
- Improve consistency in online safety and digital safeguarding.
- Address disproportionality and racism as system harms.

iTIPs

Supporting Islington
Trauma Informed Practices



Training and Professional Development: Think Family Approach

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In line with Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2023), Children's Social Care Framework (2023) and Families First Partnership Programme (2025), the ISCP has adopted a Think Family Approach is a safeguarding strategy that promotes a **whole-family perspective** when working with children, young people, and adults. It recognises that **services should work collaboratively** to support the family as a unit and for all agencies, practitioners and volunteers to strengthen their safeguarding knowledge, identify early help needs and take appropriate early action.

In response to the Families First Partnership Programme the ISCP continue to co-design the reforms to create a local model which is reflective of our local context. As the delivery plan for the progresses areas of practice development and training needs across the partnership are expected to evolve, the Training and professional development Subgroup will lead on ascertaining need of staff and volunteers to continue to build a confidence and competent safeguarding workforce for Islington's Children and Families.

With the shared aims to meet the ISCP prioritises and lead to;

Improved education, social and health outcomes of children from pre-conception through each age/stage, and their parents/carer

More families staying safely together with children/parent/carer's multiple needs met

Strengthened family networks and improved family relationships or attachments

Reduced demand for acute or specialist social care, health, criminal justice and community services

Disproportionality and inequities addressed across the system

Fewer transition points, interagency referrals or handoff between services and thresholds

- **Whole-Family Focus:** Practitioners consider the needs of all family members, not just the individual they are directly supporting. For example, adult services must consider the impact on children, and children's services must be aware of adult vulnerabilities.
- **No Wrong Door:** Any service a family accesses should act as an entry point into a broader system of support, ensuring families are not bounced between services.
- **Joined-Up Working:** Encourages collaboration between adult and children's services, including health, social care, education, and the voluntary sector.
- **Tailored Support:** Interventions are personalised to the family's unique circumstances, combining services like parenting support, mental health treatment, and childcare.
- **Building on Strengths:** Practitioners work in partnership with families, recognising their resilience and empowering them to find solutions, such as through family group conferencing.
- **Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility:** All professionals, regardless of their primary client group, are expected to consider safeguarding implications for the whole family.
- **Understanding Interconnected Risks:** The approach acknowledges how issues like parental mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, and poverty can affect children's wellbeing and development.

This approach is especially important in safeguarding because it helps identify risks that might otherwise be missed if services focus too narrowly on an individual and do not engage the whole network around a child and family.

Areas the Think Family Approach has been developed and embedded

Family Group Conference

Engaging Fathers

Early Help Toolkit

Transitions Protocol

Core Training

Training and Professional Development: Family Group Conference (FGC's)

Page 62

This report outlines the delivery and impact of the recent training course titled *"Introduction to Family Group Conference (FGC) Model"*. The course was designed for professionals working with children and families, with a focus on promoting family-led decision-making. It provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the FGC model, including its theoretical foundations, practical applications, and the roles of key professionals involved.

The training was interactive and practical, encouraging participants to explore how the FGC model empowers families by bringing together a child's wider network of relatives and friends to collaboratively develop plans that meet the child's needs. As well as defining the roles of professionals within the FGC process, including the coordinator, referrer, and advocate, equipping ISCP staff with the skills and confidence to explain the FGC process to families effectively.

The course is available for all agencies as Islington offers a broad referral model to FGC



Family Group Conferences for Families in Islington



As parents or carers, we all need a little help at times, whether we have difficult decisions to make about our children or just need some extra support to get through a difficult time. Sometimes it is hard to ask family and friends for that help. A family group conference (FGC) is a free service to Islington families which can give you the help you need.

ISLINGTON
For a more equal future

80% excellent rating
20% good rating

Impact: The course successfully met its objectives by fostering a deeper understanding of the Family Group Conference model and its practical implementation. Participants left equipped with the knowledge and skills to advocate for and facilitate family-led planning processes, placing the child's voice at the centre of decision-making

Impact: What will you do differently as a result of this course?

Having confidence in explaining what FGC is to families who would benefit from it

Involve the young people as much as possible from the beginning and not leaving this to the advocate or co-ordinator

Listen to the voice of the family and young people

Really try to empower the family to search for their own solutions

The course successfully met its objectives by fostering a deeper understanding of the Family Group Conference model and its practical implementation. Participants left equipped with the knowledge and skills to advocate for and facilitate family-led planning processes, placing the child's voice at the centre of decision-making

Changes made from feedback: the course has been renamed on our booking system this year, from "Early Help Family Group Conference" to "Family Group Conference" to remove confusion about the course audience.

Training and Professional Development: Engaging Fathers

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Engaging fathers is a critical component of effective safeguarding and family support, as emphasised in both the *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* and the *Children's Social Care National Framework (2023)*. The ISCP **Fatherhood Champions** group was established in 2024 as part of Islington's successful **Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC)** bid.



Key stakeholders across the partnership identified a need to engage fathers earlier in the RPC process to reduce risk and improve outcomes for children. Research consistently shows that early, positive father involvement is beneficial for child development, emotional wellbeing, and family stability. Fathers and father figures often play a significant role in a child's life, yet they are frequently overlooked in assessments and interventions. Actively involving fathers helps build a more complete understanding of family dynamics, strengthens protective factors, and improves outcomes for children.

The Project has:

- Trained **16 Fatherhood Champions** across Health, Islington Council (LBI), and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), creating a cross-sector network of advocates for father-inclusive practice.
- Delivered a successful borough-wide event in November 2024 in partnership with Arsenal in the Community and Music, Football, Fatherhood, attended by over 70 fathers and professionals.
- Created safe, inclusive spaces for fathers to share experiences around parenting, mental health, and relationships.
- Strengthened collaboration between services and community organisations, with links across the Fatherhood Champions network continuing to grow and evolve.
- Elevated the voices of fathers through the work of the Fatherhood Champions.

Fatherhood Champions Training

Understanding Fatherhood

- **Unpicking Bias:** Explore stereotypes and assumptions about fathers.
- **Positioning of Fatherhood:** Analyse how fatherhood is framed in various contexts

Understanding Conflict in Co-Parenting Relationships

- **Understanding Conflict:** Differentiate between parental conflict and abuse; understand the impact on children and family.
- **Addressing Conflict:** Assess and develop strategies to support co-parents.

Father-Inclusive Practice

- **Inclusive Practice:** Principles of father-inclusive practice; good engagement examples
- **Community Needs:** Understand and profile fathers in specific localities.

Being a Champion

- **Champion Role:** Key aims and barriers for Champions.
- **Moving Forward:** Methods to support engagement and develop action plans.
- **Helping services engage** and focus on father-inclusive practice.

"It is great to see that the partnership is continuing to take steps to engage fathers, the training and development of the Fatherhood Champions is a great addition to the skilled workforce. I hope to see this knowledge and experience disseminated across the partnership."

Alan Caton, Independent Scrutineer

Impact: what's currently happening

Engaging Fathers & Male Carers Working Group.

Action Learning Sets.

Group email of sharing information across the Champions.

Impact: Feedback

"I wish there were more spaces like this where we can talk"

"I felt seen and heard for the first time as a dad"

"I felt seen and heard for the first time as a dad"

Going forward:

Continue to amplify the voice of fathers in service design and delivery, ensuring their experiences shape future support.

Strengthen training for professionals on father-inclusive practice and RPC awareness (on hold while recruitment for new RPC lead is taking place).

Develop a regular programme of engagement for fathers, including peer-led groups and targeted outreach (Bright Start of a Dad's Stay and Play, but once the child is 5 groups are limited).

In an increasingly digital world, the safeguarding of children online has become a critical and complex challenge. The rapid growth of social media platforms, gaming environments, and digital communication tools has created new opportunities for learning and connection—but also heightened risks related to exploitation, cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, and online grooming.

Over the past year, the landscape of online safety has continued to evolve, shaped by emerging technologies, shifting user behaviours, and strengthened regulatory frameworks such as the UK's Online Safety Act. These developments have underscored the importance of proactive, multi-agency collaboration and the need for robust digital literacy among children, caregivers, and professionals.

Locally in 2024 Public Health conducted an "Online safety, self-harm, and suicide prevention" survey with Children's Mental Health Professionals. Whilst feedback quantity was limited the findings identified:



Confidence in Topic

Most surveyed healthcare professionals lack confidence in their understanding of the topic and their ability to discuss it with young people, parents, and carers.



Mental Health Practice

Most professionals who completed the survey don't ask young people about online content in their initial screening, despite almost half reporting having worked with a young person who has encountered pro-self-harm content.



Training Need

Almost all professionals reported not receiving training on this topic and the need for training was a key theme in free text responses.

"It is of real concern - and there is definitely an ongoing training need."

Q13 Free Text Response: Online safety, self-harm, and suicide prevention survey

"I think a discussion or training created by young people that updates professionals on what is happening on the internet and increasing staff awareness can be very beneficial."

Q10 Free Text Response: Online safety, self-harm, and suicide prevention survey

Going forward:

The ISCP are creating a multi-agency Online Safety Strategy (2025-2028) and an accompanying action plan involving services from across the partnership, which both aim to ensure that all children and young people can enjoy the educational, social, and economic advantages of the online world safely and knowledgeably. The strategy which aims to be published in 2026 will recognise the rights of children and young people to be part of the digital world.

By implementing a strategy and action plan, we aim to create a sustainable online safety infrastructure that enhances and promotes online safety for Islington's children. We will educate children, young people, their parents, and caregivers, as well as those who work with them.

ISCP Safer Internet Day 11th February 2025

The years' theme was '**Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online**'.

The ISCP hosted four bitesize (1-1.5 hour) events to support staff and volunteers focus on this challenging and ever-changing safeguarding need. The events were co-developed and delivered by the Exploitation and Missing Team and Violence Against Women and Girls Team.

Pornography: an opportunity to learn more about illicit and illegal content and children's access to pornography. Understand the impact on brain development, the associated risks and peer expectations that can present.

Social Media: an opportunity learn about the different online platforms are we seeing including the risks & who may pose the risks including online grooming and sexual bullying and serious youth violence.

Sextortion and Scams: an opportunity to understand what sextortion is, who is affected and who perpetrates it, alongside what happens when a young person is financially sextorted. The course explored the role of social media platforms in sextortion and how practitioners can help children affected and educate others on this issue i.e. parents and carers.

Having the Conversation: an opportunity to develop an understanding of what young people say worries them about being online, gain tips on how to be digitally aware and respond to online harms from early years to adolescence. Providing time to practice having conversations and responding to scenarios and learn more about resources available to practitioner to support their knowledge and skills.

Reflections: The sessions were less attended than the year prior despite significant requests for the courses. Barriers remain unclear. The training booking system was not required for the course with the hope to remove a booking barrier, however this was unsuccessful.

Going forward: The Training and Professional Subgroup will be reviewing how the course is advertised, booked and utilised across the partnership, given the known challenges to practice around online safety, the ISCP priority focus and feedback of ongoing need for training from practitioners this will be a strong focus. The ISCP need to re-source facilitators for this course.

Training and Professional Development: Training Data

24

+ 3 cancelled due to lack of booking or facilitator absence

Core Courses delivered between April 2024 – March 2025:

- Introduction to Safeguarding and Information Sharing (LSCP Level 1 and 2)
- Designated Safeguarding Professionals/Leads: Roles and Responsibilities (LSCP Level 3).
- Safeguarding Refresher and Updates to Practice (All LSCP Levels)

18.6%
Non-attendance
2.1% decline from last year

542
Trained

This demonstrates a continued demand for multi-agency training and a robust core offer from the ISCP Business unit. Overall, we have increased percentage trained to 81.4% with a 2.1% decline in non-attendance on the day. However, on average 35.7% of courses remain empty and pre course cancellation sits at 26.2%. Barriers to training attendance will remain a focus of the Training and Professional Subgroup.

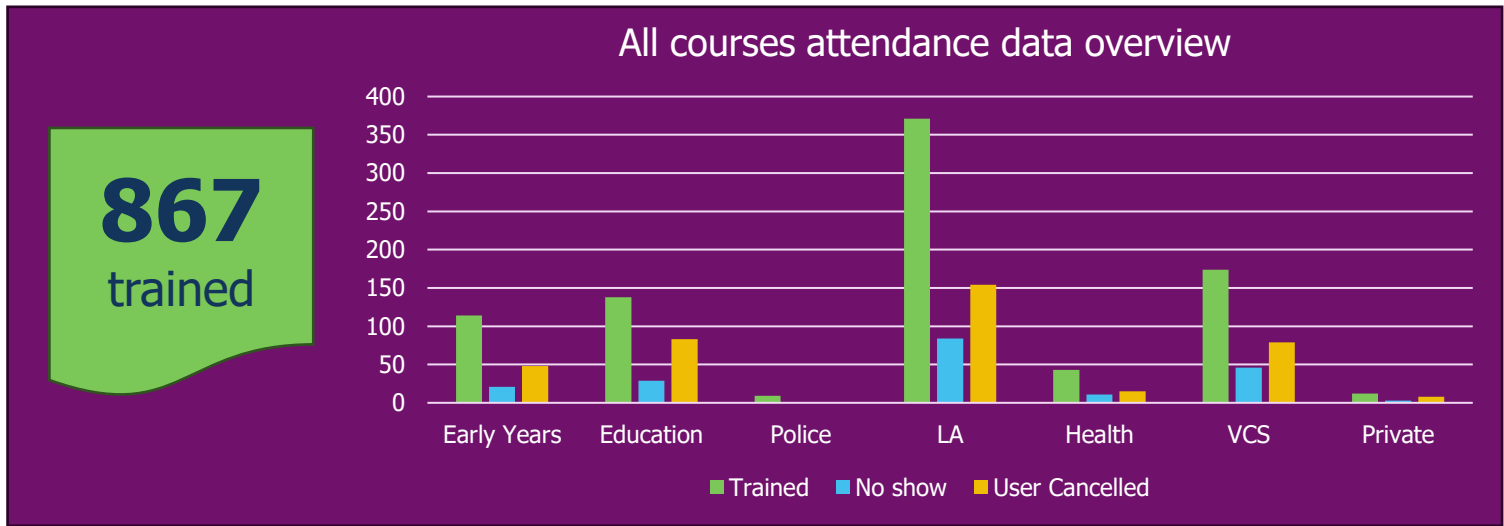
2

+ 1 cancelled due to lack of booking

Workshop for Protocol for Managing Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse, Violence and Harassment

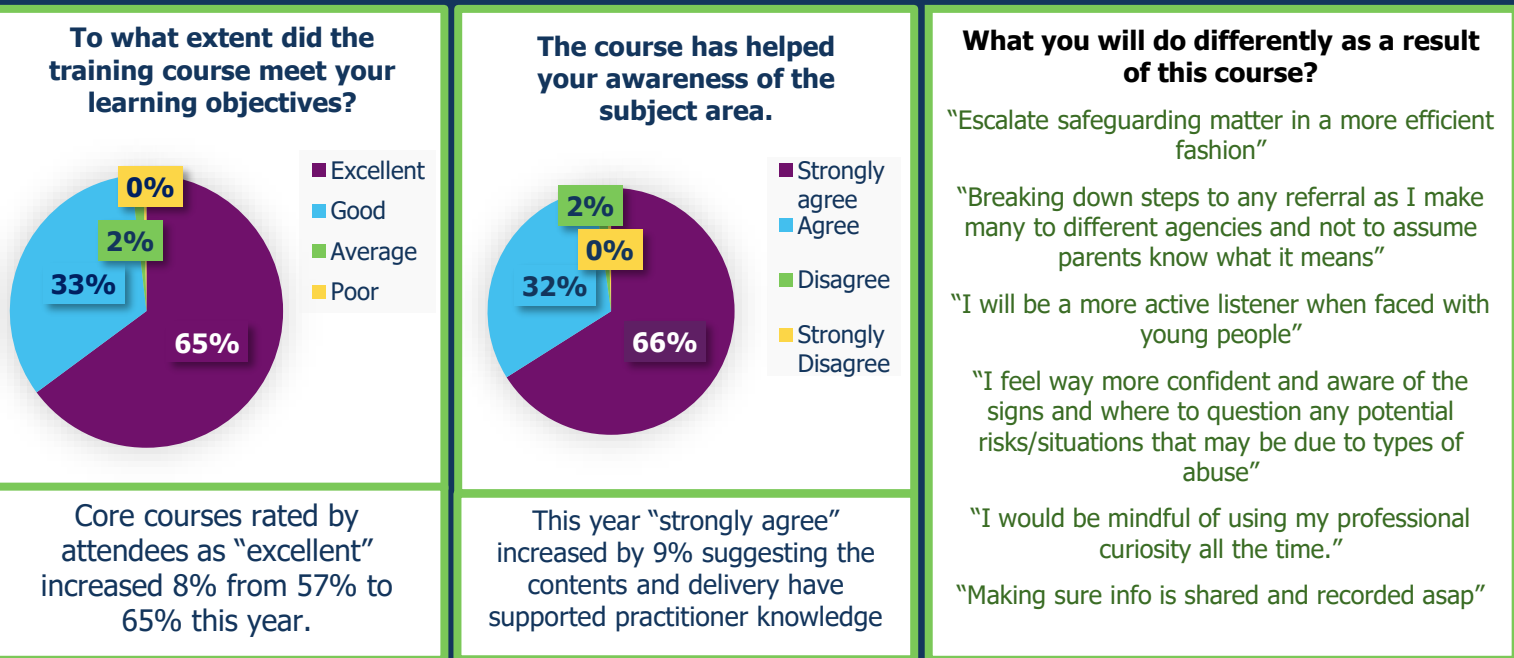
27
Trained

Going Forward: 3 courses per year to be offered. ISCP Website to be updated to include protocol and resources



Evaluations

Evaluation completion for core courses have **increased from 39% to 80%**: giving a much greater insight into the effectiveness of the training and planned changes to practice. This has also enabled the the Training and QA manager to respond to feedback and adjust future courses accordingly in a timely manner.



ISCP Whole Course Offer:

- Introduction to Safeguarding and Information Sharing (LSCP Level 1 and 2)
- Designated Safeguarding Professionals/Leads: Roles and Responsibilities (LSCP Level 3).
- Safeguarding Refresher and Updates to Practice (All LSCP Levels)
- Workshop for Protocol for Managing Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse, Violence and Harassment
- Significant Harm and Working Together
- Child Sexual Abuse and Safeguarding Procedure
- Understanding and Responding to Sexualised Behaviours
- Understanding and Responding to Child Exploitation
- Family Group Conference
- Harmful Practices and FGM Training
- Substance Misuse and Safeguarding Children (variety of bitesize courses regarding adult and child substance use)
- Introduction to Domestic Abuse
- Designated Safeguarding Professional/Lead Domestic Abuse Training
- Supporting Male Victims of Domestic Abuse (bitesize)
- Induction: the role of Children’s Services Contact Team (Bitesize course re referral pathways)
- **Understanding Neglect in Practice (launching May 2025)**

The ISCP proactively raises awareness of safeguarding themes and issues throughout the year to continuously reinforce knowledge and increase awareness to children’s safeguarding. This year the ISCP Training and QA Manager had regular attendance across Practitioner Forums including;

- DSL Forum
- Early Years Forum
- Head Teacher Forum
- Named GP Forum
- Hospital Multi-Disciplinary Team

Going forward: the Partnership aim to increase engagement with Voluntary and Community networks, forums and groups, to support wider input into our safeguarding arrangements, and support access and engagement with ISCP safeguarding training, learnings and protocols

London SCP Courses

Bookings by ISCP Staff and Volunteers

• 25 years since Victoria Climbié’s murder - Victoria’s lasting legacy	2
• Anti-Racism	1
• Cultural competence for safeguarding professionals	1
• Dancing to Equity - A Journey of Empowerment and Change	2
• Domestic abuse awareness	3
• How to identify and respond to cultural stigmas in mental health	1
• How to support young people with anxiety and eating difficulties	15
• Incels - A deep dive into extreme misogyny	20
• Information sharing guidance	3
• Intra-familial child sexual abuse	3
• Introduction to trauma-informed practice	1
• KoothTalks: supporting neurodiverse and SEND young people	3
• KoothTalks: supporting young people to manage anxiety with self-care	1
• LGBTQ+ Experiences of Domestic Abuse	1
• LGBTQ+ Safeguarding Children Taster	3
• LSCP Conference: Impact of childhood experiences	21
• Overview of hidden harm and harmful traditional practices	16
• Overview of Spiritual and Ritual Abuse including accusations of witchcraft	2
• Parental substance misuse - impact on adults, children, and young people	6
• Prevent - radicalisation into violent extremism	1
• Safeguarding children and young people from suicide	1
• Self-care and safeguarding	5
• Tackling racism and inequalities in safeguarding children and young people	2
• Threshold Document	4
• Understanding and working with anxiety	1
• Understanding children’s mental health - improving awareness and practice	8
• Working with young people at risk of death by suicide	2

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The ISCP Training and QA Manager is involved in the development and delivery of LSCP training. **Also launching from March 2025, “Professional Curiosity”, Neglect in Practice and a standardised Level 1 Course.** Providing more date and course options for the ISCP.

Training and Professional Development: ISCP Newsletter

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This year the ISCP Launched a Newsletters to support the dissemination of information across the partnership and to increase reach to frontline practitioners and voluntary and community services.

Spring Edition

- New priorities.
- ISCP response to Disproportionality and Inequality.
- Supporting a Confident Response to Child Sexual Abuse.
- Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC): what's available for Islington's Families.
- Multi-agency training offer.
- Information sharing reminder: New guidance.
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: annual report 2022 to 2023
- London Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP): Procedure and Practice Guidance Updates.
- The Family Group Conference (FGC) Service in Islington expanded offer.
- Escalation Policy.

Summer Edition

- Published Local Safeguarding Practice review in respect of Child W
- New Neglect Toolkit
- Private Fostering: what is it and what do you need to do?
- Fire Safety Awareness
- Window Safety and Keeping Children Safe
- Child and Adolescent to Parent and Carer Violence and Abuse (CAPVA)
- Learning in the Partnership North Central London (NCL) Integrated Care System (ICS) hosted a Safeguarding Event
- A message for the end of School Term.
- Escalation Policy
- Multi-agency training offer

Autumn Edition

- Annual Report published.
- Your voice is important share your views: join a practitioner event with the ISCP independent scrutineer.
- London Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) Guidance Updates.
- Online Safety, Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Survey Findings.
- The Pan London Care Leavers Compact, London Region Care Leaver Health update – Free Prescriptions for Care Leavers.
- Free Events for Families: hosted by Parent champions and practitioners focused on Sextortion and Vaping risks.
- Safeguarding Children in Education.
- Multi-Agency Training Offer.
- Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) model escalation routes.
- Children's Commissioner's School Survey 2024: have your say.
- Escalation Policy.

Winter Edition

- Our New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA).
- Your voice is important: Independent Scrutineer Practitioner Survey
- S11 Statutory Duty - deadline notice.
- Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive (Breaking down barriers to opportunity) and Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.
- 6th February 2025 is International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation
- "I wanted them all to notice": Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Report focusing on protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment.
- Join Safer Internet Day 2025 and the wider multi-agency training offer.
- Safer Sleep – advice and guidance. 7 minute briefing published.
- What is CAIS? Supporting young people who are looked after by Islington or are care leavers, wherever they live.
- Islington Lifelong Links Service for Care Leavers and Looked After young people aged 14– 25 years.

The newsletter has been received by **543 subscribers**, this does not include those forwarded the newsletter. Of the 543, 53.3% have opened the newsletter, with a 75.4% click rate on the articles.

Going forward: We aim to increase subscriber and open rates to broaden the reach of local and national safeguarding updates, news, and guidance - helping staff and volunteers stay informed and up to date.

Working Together 2023 states that.....

“The LSP should agree on the level of funding needed to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This includes consideration of business and analytical support, independent scrutiny, infrastructure, and core functions including local children safeguarding practice reviews, multi-agency training and learning events. It is the responsibility of the LSP to ensure that adequate funding is allocated and spent in line with agreed priorities.

Funding contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable and agreed by the LSP. Funding for the arrangements should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they can meet the financial needs of the arrangements.”



In my overview of last year’s yearly report, I mentioned the need to review the level of funding required to deliver effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and how Working Together 2023 requires funding contributions from the 3 statutory partners to be joint and equitable. Unfortunately, this has not been addressed. The consistently low contributions from the police continue and the main funding contributor remains the local authority. I would again recommend that the Metropolitan Police review their contributions to safeguarding arrangements to ensure joint and equitable funding in line with statutory guidance.

Alan Caton, Independent Scrutineer

INCOME	April 2024/March 2025	
Partners	Agency contributions	£
Local Authority	London Borough of Islington	191,275.00
Education	DSG Grant	£50,000.00
Health	North Central London Integrated Care Board	£10,000.00
	North London NHS Foundation Trust	£7,500.00
	Moorfields NHS Trust	£7,500.00
	Whittington NHS Trust	15,000.00
Police and Probation	MPS (MOPAC)	£5,000.00
	London Probation Service	£2,500.00
	Subtotal	288,775.00

Expenditure	April 2023/March 2024
	£
Salaries	221,030.00
Independent Scrutineer	20,354.00
Training	1,860.00
LCSPRs and Rapid Reviews	16,640.00
Miscellaneous Costs	9,138.00
Subtotal	269,022.00

ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	ICB	Integrated Care Board
ASIP	Adolescent Support Intervention Project	ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
ASV	Allegations against Staff/Volunteers	IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
BCU	Basic Command Unit	ISAB	Islington Safeguarding Adults Board
CAMHS	Child Adolescent Mental Health Service	IIOC	Indecent Images of Children
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation	IMHARS	Islington Mental Health and Resilience in Schools
CIN	Children in Need	LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
CP	Child Protection	LBI	London Borough of Islington
CQC	Care Quality Commission	LCSPR	Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review
CSC	Children Social Care	MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
CSCT	Children Services Contact Team	MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	NCL	North Central London
CWASW	Children With A Social Worker	NEET	Not in Education Employment or Training
CYP	Children and Young People	NFA	No Further Action
DCI	Detective Chief Inspector	NHS	National Health Service
DCT	Disabled Children Team	NRM	National Referral Mechanism
DIT	Dedicated Inspection Team	QA	Quality Assurance
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead	RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
DSP	Designated Safeguarding Professional	SEMH	Social Emotional Mental Health
EHE	Elective Home Education	SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
FFPP	Families First Partnership Programme	SSO	Safety School Officer
FGC	Family Group Conference	UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
GP	General Practitioner	VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviour	YJSMB	Youth Justice Service Management Board
HMICFRS	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services	YPSI	Youth Produced Sexual Imagery