

Item 6b Action from CYP Scrutiny Commission on 12th January 2020

CHSCP Annual Report 2019/20

Responses to written questions from CYP Scrutiny

- 1. To improve accountability, the Safeguarding Partnership is considering requiring partner agencies to complete Annual Child Safeguarding Statements. How will these plans be published, and will there be opportunities for these to be tested or challenged?**

Our emerging thinking is that organisations will be required to undertake a safeguarding risk assessment to determine their strengths and areas for improvement against a set of minimum standards. This will be similar to our existing Safeguarding Self-Assessment process.

On completion, organisations will produce their Child Safeguarding Statements. There will be an expectation that organisations publish these themselves and make them available for the public. This could be via a website or printing hard copies that can be seen or sent to anyone using their services.

There will be opportunities to test and challenge content. The process for doing this will mirror some of the arrangements we currently have in place, such as through peer reviews, auditing and dip-sampling, but is also likely to form a key function of the Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner and his role as our local independent scrutineer.

- 2. To what extent have local 'Relevant Agencies' (who then have a duty to comply with child safeguarding requirements) cooperated with the local Child Safeguarding Partnership? Are there any local compliance issues in any sectors?**

We have a good level of cooperation from the vast majority of organisations in Hackney. As set out in the Annual Report, our main concern relates to the continued difficulties in establishing any oversight of safeguarding in the Unregistered Educational Settings sector – namely yeshivas.

- 3. What testing and challenge has the Child Safeguarding Partnership provided for virtual assessments developed by Children and Families Service and other children's services to ensure that they are robust and help to safeguard local children? How is the Partnership disseminating information and best practice about virtual assessments across local agencies working with children and young people?**

A range of relevant Covid-19 guidance developed by Hackney CFS has been reviewed by the CHSCP as part of its Contingency Oversight Planning Meetings developed after the first lockdown. This includes visit guidance and guidance for virtual CP Conferences. The visit guidance outlines that all newly allocated assessments will include at least one face to face direct visit except in exceptional circumstances- so assessments will be through a blended approach to contact with

the child and family. Whilst the CHSCP has not reviewed the quality of these assessments, they remain subject to the management oversight and internal audit processes by Hackney CFS as per usual.

- 4. The Ofsted inspection highlighted the need for earlier involvement and improved information sharing from safeguarding partners (in particular from the Police) in child protection discussion and decision making. Has any improvement been seen in the engagement and involvement of the Metropolitan Police over the past 12 months?**

Through both the catalyst of the inspection and the need for partners to work differently as a result of Covid-19, there has been good engagement in the context of virtual meetings, such as strategy discussions. The CHSCP recently launched a multi-agency protocol on strategy discussions and this is intended to help drive the expectations on information sharing and engagement further. Available [HERE](#)

- 5. Effective safeguarding of children is dependent on effective partnerships not only amongst professionals but also with the community. The Commission has received reports which note that social care intervention rates are disproportionate for some groups of local children, particularly with children from Black Caribbean and some other minority ethnic backgrounds. What work has the Safeguarding Partnership undertaken in relation to combat racial inequality and to support cultural competence in assessing safeguarding risks and assessments?**

The Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner and CHSCP partners are alive to this issue. In 2020, the ICSC engaged with HCVS and representatives from the voluntary sector to talk about this very issue following the death of George Floyd and the BLM protests. A follow up session has been scheduled.

More recently, the CHSCP has agreed to scrutinise the anti-racist position statements and training provisions of Partner organisations at its Executive meeting scheduled for 9 February 2021. The safeguarding self-assessment process will also be adapted to include reflection upon and evidence of action to address this issue.

Furthermore, two recent Reviews one a published SCR and the other an ongoing Safeguarding Practice Learning Review will be used to help identify and respond to key safeguarding practices, evidence of bias (unconscious or otherwise) and specific community needs and concerns.

- 6. How is funding for Child Safeguarding Partnership determined and apportioned between partner agencies - is there a national formula?**
- 1. How does funding for the Child Safeguarding Partnership in City & Hackney compare to neighbouring boroughs?**
 - 2. For transparency should individual contributions from partner agencies be included in annual reporting?**

There is no national formula to determine funding. At present, it is a complicated and mixed picture and comparisons are difficult to make. Some agencies provide

funding determined locally, others where contributions are agreed on a pan-London and some on a national level. Partnership contributions for the CHSCP have remained the same as they were under the CHSCB arrangements, with the exception of CAFCASS, that has withdrawn contributions nationally.

The CHSCP committed to review funding following the launch of the new arrangements in September 2019. Covid-19 has delayed this work. Sir Alan Wood is currently undertaking Phase 2 of his review into safeguarding arrangements and the inconsistency of this has been flagged as an issue for him to consider.