Our first annual report
October 2018-October 2019
TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES & CARERS
BEXLEY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN 2017-2020

5 AMBITIONS

- All children & young people are safe from harm
- All children & young people are healthy and enjoy healthy lifestyles
- All children & young people enjoy and achieve at school and/or college so that they have the skills they need for life & future employment
- All children and young people have access to leisure & opportunities for fun as they are growing up
- All children and young people are active in their communities, their experiences count and they have a voice with influence

A SHARED VISION: In Bexley we want healthy, happy, safe young people and families who are engaged and effective partners in the local community. We value the voice and choice of young people and their families and ensure that we offer the support they need so that they feel safe and valued. Our outcomes are that young people and families are engaged and active and have a positive future.

A SHARED PRIORITY: Shared Vision for Children, Young People, Families & Carers

- Continuity & learning from the frontline
- Shared vision for children, young people, families & carers
- Creating a multi-disciplinary learning hub
- Our shared priorities: Child & adult services
- The values of joint working

MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

- The learning hub
- How much are we doing
- What difference are we making

BEST PRACTICE

- What works
- The importance of best practice

MECHANISM & REACTION

- What is working
- Making it work
- Scribing magic

4 big meetings & 4 smaller meetings

THE BRIEF:

- How will we know when we've done it?
- What other people say
- How do we measure?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword by the 3 safeguarding lead partners</td>
<td>Page 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
<td>Pages 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Working Together 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Our vision, values, success measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 The partnership name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The work of the Partnership Board</td>
<td>Pages 9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 The focus of the Partnership Board’s activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Key decision-making by the Partnership Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Emerging culture of the Partnership Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The activity of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive</td>
<td>Pages 11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Changing the name to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive from the Working Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 The focus of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive’s activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Key decision-making by Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Re-working the structure and focus of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The first year in numbers and pictures</td>
<td>Page 13-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The partnership priorities and the work of the Learning Hub</td>
<td>Pages 30-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 The Learning Hub model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Priority 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Priority 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Priority 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Learning from Practice Group</td>
<td>Pages 52-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 The development of the group’s terms of reference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Child safeguarding practice reviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Learning reviews event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)</td>
<td>Pages 57-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 New Arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 2018/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Learning from child deaths in Bexley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE)</td>
<td>Pages 60-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Activities in the last 12 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Key decision-making and further development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Future plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Feedback from Bexley’s relevant agencies</td>
<td>Pages 62-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1 Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 Bexley Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3 Bromley Healthcare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4 Dartford &amp; Gravesham NHS Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5 Healthwatch Bexley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6 Lewisham &amp; Greenwich NHS Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7 London Borough of Bexley Children Social Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8 London Borough of Bexley Community Safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9 London Borough of Bexley Education and Inclusion Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10 London Borough of Bexley Libraries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11 London Borough of Bexley Public Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12 London Borough of Bexley Sports and Leisure Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.13 London Borough of Bexley Youth Offending Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.14 London Community Rehabilitation Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.15 London Fire Brigade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.16 Metropolitan Police Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.17 National Probation Service – London Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich Cluster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.18 Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Multi-agency training</td>
<td>Pages 73-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1 Training and development activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2 Safeguarding champions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 Multi-agency auditing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Independent scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>The requirement for independent scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>Feedback from Nigel Richardson, Independent Scrutineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Early adopter programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>The shared priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>Next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>Formal handover from Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>Voice of children, young people and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>Role of early years settings, schools and other educational establishments in the partnership including Designated Safeguarding Leads Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>Role of youth offending and custody services, children and young people who run away and/or are missing from education in the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Section 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>Self-assessment of statutory responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>Operational team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>Published arrangements document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.10</td>
<td>Annual reporting arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Plans for Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>Learning Hub 2 priorities for Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>Children and Family Learning Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>Restorative practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>Training and development plan 2020/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>Independent scrutiny activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>Section 11 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>Tri-borough work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>- Training and development activity October 2018-October 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword by the 3 safeguarding lead partners

Our S.H.I.E.L.D. partnership symbolises our commitment to safeguarding and protecting children and was named by our children and young people, standing for: Shelter, Haven, Inspiring, Empowering, Leading and Defending. In Bexley, we believe that some of the biggest changes and improvements we have made in the past few years have happened because of our strengthened and strengthening work as a partnership around local children, young people, young adults, carers and families and it was therefore important that they were at the forefront of our new partnership arrangements - including choosing our name!

Our vision and values remain as detailed below and we have chosen to focus on a small number of shared priorities aligned to this, each led by one or more of the 3 statutory safeguarding partners, with a view to using our resources wisely to make a difference where this matters most to our children, young people and their families.

For Year 1, there has been a great deal of activity across the partnership in pursuing our priorities including learning forums, feedback from children and families as well as practitioners, audit activity and partnership discussion on our success measures and evidence of service quality. Our Learning Hub has focused on 3 practice priorities: missing children and young people, parental mental health and its impact on children and young people, and basic child protection practice. This report tells the story of that work. We have chosen to produce a longer report in order to show how we have approached our work; we hope that showing our ‘workings out’ will be useful learning. Alongside the written narrative, we have included the visual records in Section 4 which represent key moments in the partnership’s last 12 months.

The longer-term challenge and the one that we must continue to focus our energies on into Year 2 and beyond is to be confident that a positive difference has been made, particularly when considered from the lived experience of a child, young person or a family. Key to this is the work, we are developing our Children and Family Learning Circles, working with families who have experienced our services to help us learn what works and what we need to do differently to deliver our vision and priorities. Section 14 of the report describes some of our Year 2 plans and priorities.

We take our responsibilities to work alongside families and to support them to find solutions to their difficulties seriously. We want children to be safe and to grow up to be successful adults. We hope the story, ambition and future plans set out in this report will help explain and demonstrate to others that we are in this to make a positive difference for children.

Michael Boyce
Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group
Deputy Managing Director and Director of Quality

Stephen Kitchman
London Borough of Bexley
Director of Children’s Services

Jim Foley
South East Basic Command Unit
Detective Superintendent
I. Introduction

1.1 Working Together 2018

Reporting requirements for new partnership arrangements are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children on pages 80-81 as follows:

“1. In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

2. In addition, the report should also include:
   • evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers
   • an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
   • a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report’s period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
   • ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

3. Safeguarding partners should make sure the report is widely available, and the published safeguarding arrangements should set out where the reports will be published.

4. A copy of all published reports should be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care within seven days of being published.

5. Where there is a secure establishment in a local area, safeguarding partners should include a review of the use of restraint within that establishment in their report, and the findings of the review should be reported to the Youth Justice Board.

6. The three safeguarding partners should report any updates to the published arrangements in their yearly report and the proposed timescale for implementation.”

1.2 Our vision, values, success measures

In October 2017, partners from Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Bexley, Lewisham and Greenwich Basic Command Unit (the Metropolitan Police) and the Local Authority in Bexley met to consider the implications of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 on local arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and young people in Bexley. A shared vision was agreed across the local area:

In Bexley, we want healthy, safe, resilient family networks in communities that are also safe. We want children to attain the skills that they need at schools and colleges so that they grow up to be independent and productive. We want children and young people driving our local growth and engaging in the plans we make and the services we deliver.
5 shared ambitions for the partnership arising from that vision were agreed:

- All children and young people are safe from harm
- All children and young people are healthy and enjoy healthy lifestyles
- All children and young people enjoy and achieve at school and/or college so that they have the skills they need for life and future employment
- All children and young people have access to leisure and opportunities for fun as they are growing up
- All children and young people are active in their communities, their experiences count and they have a voice with influence.

We have identified the following success measures:

**Success measure 1: restorative learning with families and children**

- A new framework and approach to learning alongside families. Used when practice makes a real difference and when practice is considered not to be “good enough” – replacing serious case reviews with family practice learning inquiries (for good and less good practice)
- Establishing a new system to consider when a family practice learning inquiry needs to happen (old serious incident subgroups).

**Success measure 2: learning with practitioners**

- Implementing a new Learning Hub that is practitioner led and in the first year, examines three priority areas of practice with a lead statutory partner for each
- Each Learning Hub priority supported by a core practitioner membership – led by Practice Review and Learning Manager
- Learning Hub priorities for improvement presented to the main partnership each quarter.

**Success measure 3: a kind and healing system**

- A children and families partnership board will be a central element of the new arrangements – children and family representatives will work with the system and professionals to influence the improvements we will continuously make (part of the early adopter programme)
- Our Bexley young Director and the participation team will support this success measure
- We are determined that the work of the new partnership will prioritise healing and trauma that comes from difficult lives and complex professional experiences.

Some shared priorities for the partnership were initially agreed in 2017 which support these ambitions and can be reviewed using these success measures. We have adopted these priorities as our initial plan for supporting the protection and wellbeing of children and young people in Bexley. The plan is set out on page 2 of this report.
1.3 The partnership name

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.’s name was chosen by Bexley’s Youth Council in April 2019 following consultation with Bexley schools, Bexley Positive Journeys, and staff from across the partnership. The values that make up the S.H.I.E.L.D. name – shelter, haven, inspiring, empowering, leading and defending – were also identified by the Youth Council during a session exploring what safeguarding means and the role of the partnership in Bexley. The partnership logo was developed by the Youth Council from a range of designs in June 2019. Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.’s name was confirmed at the Partnership Board in July 2019.
2. The work of the Partnership Board

2.1 The focus of the Partnership Board’s activity

The Partnership Board is the decision-making body overseeing the multi-agency plan to promote and protect children and safeguard their welfare. The Partnership Board is led by the 3 safeguarding partners – Police, CCG and Local Authority and has met quarterly in the partnership’s first year as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chairing Authority</th>
<th>Highlights</th>
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| 29 October 2018 | Chaired by the Local Authority | - Our first full board under our new partnership arrangements  
- Terms of reference confirmed with Board members and role of independent scrutiny explained  
- Main focus on partnership practice priorities being progressed within the Learning Hub:  
  o Delivery plan for Priority 1  
  o Scoping the work of Priority 2  
- Updates on subgroup activity and governance issues |
| 28 January 2019 | Chaired by the CCG | - Updates on priority practice priorities:  
  o Considering the recommendations from Learning Hub for Priority 1  
  o Delivery plan for Priority 2  
  o Scoping the work of Priority 3  
- Updates on learning reviews and CDOP cases  
- Budget for 2019/20 agreed  
- Partnership learning and development plan for 2019/20 confirmed  
- Bexley Community Safety Partnership Serious Violence Strategy and Knife Crime Action Plan presented |
| 29 April 2019 | Chaired by the Police | - Updates on priority practice priorities:  
  o Considering the recommendations from Learning Hub for Priority 2  
  o Delivery plan for Priority 3  
- Update on the work of the Strategic MASE  
- Presentation on the findings of Bexley Healthwatch report on young carers (to feed into the work of Priority 3)  
- Session on restorative practice by Mark Finnis (L30 Relational Systems)  
- Updates on governance issues in relation to the CDOP and previous LSCB annual reports  
- Update from the National Police Coordinator as part of Bexley’s Early Adopter Programme activity |
| 8 July 2019 | Chaired by the Local Authority | - Updates on priority practice priorities:  
  o Updates on progressing the action plans for Priorities 1, 2 and 3  
  o Plans for Year 2 priorities  
- Report on the effectiveness of the MASE arrangements  
- Updates on learning reviews, refreshing the Effective Support document (setting out levels of need and support), and other governance and communications issues  
- Presentation on plans to develop the Children and Family Learning Circle in Bexley |

Section 4 of this report sets out the visual records of these meetings along with attendance numbers.
2.2 Key decision-making by the Partnership Board

The Partnership Board has agreed a number of key decisions over the past year:

- Agreeing 11 recommendations from the Learning Hub for Priority 1 – Reduce the number of children and young people missing from home or care including those subjected to criminal and sexual exploitation
- Agreeing the rationale and success measures for Priority 2 – Respond effectively to the mental ill health of parents so that they are supported to give their children the best start
- Agreeing 9 recommendations from the Learning Hub for Priority 2
- Agreeing the 10 issues to be ‘fixed’ by the Learning Hub for Priority 3 – Getting basic child protection right
- The work of the Learning from Practice Group to be a standard agenda item for all Partnership Boards (to include updates on current learning reviews)
- Agreeing the terms of reference for the Learning from Practice Group and the Multi-Agency Learning Forum
- Agreeing the response of the Strategic MASE to undertake a dip sample of cases of missing children and the use of low, medium and high risk categories as part of the action plan for Priority 1
- Agreeing the arrangements and reporting period for the CDOP annual report 2018-19
- Agreeing the restorative and relational practice foundation for partnership working (linked to the partnership’s 3 overarching success measures)
- Agreeing the multi-agency cohort of practitioners to attend 3-day restorative training and become ‘restorative champions’ for the partnership
- Agreeing the content of the refreshed Effective Support document including a directory of Bexley services
- Agreeing the indicative content for the partnership’s first annual report.

2.3 Emerging culture of the Partnership Board

The 3 safeguarding partners have established an approach to the Partnership Board meetings which includes the following:

- A focus on the 3 overarching success measures for the partnership
- Grouping the agenda items for meetings in relation to the 3 overarching success measures
- Ensuring the work of the Learning Hub is prioritised for discussion to ensure the Board remains sighted on issues and learning from frontline practice
- Promoting a collaborative style of meeting with group discussions and feedback to encourage all Board members to participate and have a voice in the meetings wherever possible
- The leadership of the meetings is shared equally between the 3 safeguarding partners.

Developing a culture for the Partnership Board has been an important contributory factor in the partnership establishing itself in its first 12 months.
3. The activity of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive

3.1 Changing the name to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive from the Working Group

Members of Bexley SH.I.E.L.D. Executive agreed to change the meeting’s name from the Working Group in September 2019 in order to have a more explicitly understood name and to be aligned with the equivalent meetings in Lewisham and Greenwich.

3.2 The focus of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive’s activity

The purpose of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive is to coordinate the work of the safeguarding partnership. It is made up of representatives from the 3 safeguarding partners – Police, CCG and the Local Authority. Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive has met 6 times during the reporting period of this annual report. This included 2 additional meetings with the independent scrutineer. The focus of each meeting is set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 December 2018</td>
<td>- Developing the partnership children’s plan:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Update on Priority 1</td>
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<td>o Update on Priority 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Scoping Priority 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Timeline in 2019 for agreeing priorities for Year 2</td>
</tr>
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<td>- Governance items including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Handover items from Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Section 11 and Section 175 requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>o Reviewing the safeguarding champions network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>o Subgroup activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Partnership communication plans</td>
</tr>
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<td>14 January 2019</td>
<td>- Reflective session with independent scrutineer</td>
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<td>- Areas for independent scrutiny</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Partnership Board, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive and subgroups</td>
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<td>- Performance dashboard and priority success measures</td>
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<td>- Relationship-based approaches</td>
</tr>
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<td>4 March 2019</td>
<td>- Developing the priorities in the Learning Hub:</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>o Update on Priority 1 action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Update on Priority 2 activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>o Update on Priority 3 activity and planning</td>
</tr>
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<td>o Agreeing the priorities for Year 2</td>
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<td>- Governance items including:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o The partnership annual report, Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board final annual report 2017/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Statutory responsibilities self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Section 11 activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o 2019/20 Training and Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Updates from the partnership’s subgroups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Partnership budget and partner contributions 2019/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Early Adopter Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 June 2019</td>
<td>- Developing the priorities in the Learning Hub:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Updates on all Year 1 work (Priorities 1, 2 and 3) - progressing action plans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Reflections on the partnership model and future planning</td>
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</tbody>
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Agreeing the priorities for Year 2

- Governance items including:
  - Annual reporting requirements and scoping
  - Statutory responsibilities self-assessment
  - Independent scrutiny arrangements
  - Updates from the partnership’s subgroups
  - Early Adopter Programme updates
- Partnership communication plans

**8 July 2019**
- Reflective session with independent scrutineer
- Our Year 2 priorities
- Areas for independent scrutiny (Year 2 work plan)
- The work of the Learning Hub
- Restorative approaches
- Planning the partnership’s first annual conference
- Child death review arrangements
- Arrangements for Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive

**16 September 2019**
- Developing the priorities in the Learning Hub:
  - Updates on all Year 1 priorities (progressing action plans)
  - Scoping Priority 4 (Year 2)
- Governance items including:
  - Partnership first annual report
  - Section 11 visits
  - Updates from the partnership’s subgroups
  - Arrangements for Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive
- Training activity planning

The visual record for the 8th July 2019 meeting can be found on page 25.

### 3.3 Key decision-making by Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive has agreed a number of key decisions over the past year:
- Agreeing the agendas and strategic focus for all Partnership Boards
- Identifying the membership of the Learning Hub for each of the practice priorities for Year 1
- Identifying the success measures for each of the practice priorities for Year 1
- Agreeing the methodology for the partnership’s Section 11 activity
- Confirming the partnership’s name (as chosen by Bexley’s Youth Council – see Section 1.3 above)
- Agreeing the practice priorities for Year 2 to be explored in the Learning Hub
- Agreeing the other partnership priorities for Year 2
- Agreeing the operational team resource for Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. for 2019/20
- Agreeing a revised structure of meetings for Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive from October 2019 – see Section 3.4 below.

### 3.4 Re-working the structure and focus of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive meetings

In September 2019, members of Bexley SH.I.E.L.D. Executive proposed a new structure of meetings for the group in order to achieve the following:
- Increased frequency of meetings to allow for more time to be spent discussing partnership business
- Focused time ahead of each Partnership Board to review agenda items
- Focused time after each Partnership Board to review actions and prepare the agenda for the subsequent Partnership Board.
### 4. The first year in numbers and pictures

We have captured the key partnership activity from our first year in a series of visual records which are highlighted below and set out in full on pages 14-29. We would like to thank Sandra Howgate for her contribution to the work of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. in producing the records which follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 October 2018</td>
<td><strong>Partnership Board</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Our first full board under our new partnership arrangements&lt;br&gt;• 31 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Chaired by the Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 October 2018 (Priority 1)</td>
<td><strong>Learning Hub</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 18 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Led by the Police and the partnership’s operations team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 December 2018</td>
<td><strong>Strategic MASE</strong>&lt;br&gt;• First meeting with revised terms of reference for the group and capturing the Bexley profile on adolescent risk&lt;br&gt;• 20 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Chaired by Lesley Hamilton and Fi Cisneros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 January 2019</td>
<td><strong>Partnership Board</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 31 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Chaired by the CCG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 January 2019 (Priority 1)</td>
<td><strong>Learning Hub</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 17 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Led by the partnership’s operations team&lt;br&gt;• Recommendation-setting session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 2019 (Priority 1)</td>
<td><strong>Learning Hub</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 18 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Led by the partnership’s operations team&lt;br&gt;• Recommendation-setting session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 December 2018</td>
<td><strong>System Learning Event</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Sharing the recommendations from Priority 1 and launching Priority 2&lt;br&gt;• Panel discussion including local parent, David Akinsanya (journalist), Ben Westwood (poet), and Nikki Reeves (Missing People charity)&lt;br&gt;• Keynote speaker Dr Susan Pawly on impact of perinatal mental ill-health on infant care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 2019 (Priority 2)</td>
<td><strong>Learning Hub</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 20 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Led by the CCG and the partnership’s operations team&lt;br&gt;• Recommendation-setting session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 April 2019 (Priority 2)</td>
<td><strong>Learning Hub</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 20 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Led by the CCG and the partnership’s operations team&lt;br&gt;• Recommendation-setting session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 July 2019</td>
<td><strong>Working Group</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Session to scope the partnership’s Year 2 priorities and programme of activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 July 2019</td>
<td><strong>System Learning Event</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 95 attendees&lt;br&gt;• Sharing the recommendations from Priority 2 and launching Priority 3&lt;br&gt;• Reflections on Priority 2 from a local parent and keynote speaker Mark Finnis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 September 2019</td>
<td><strong>Learning Reviews Event</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Sharing the key themes from recent Bexley learning reviews with input from parents from Bexley and Camden Family Advisory Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 October 2019</td>
<td><strong>Partnership Conference</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 78 attendees&lt;br&gt;• An appraisal of the first year of the partnership and the launching of Year 2 priorities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Hub 30 October 2018 (Priority 1)

Learning Hub: Priority 1

Children and young people who are missing and are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation

- What do we need to know more about?
- Any key people/place/teams that are missing?
- Have we got the right people?
- How can we make a difference?

Next steps:
- Stay in touch with good networks
- Keep the coalition going
- Find new ideas, new strategies

Working with the strengths of young people
Partnership Board 28 January 2019

Bexley Safeguarding Partnership for Children & Young People
System Learning Event 30 April 2019
Bexley Safeguarding Partnership for Children & Young People

WORKING GROUP: Strategic Planning - Year 2 Outlines

5 AMBITIONS

- All children & young people are safe from harm
- All children & young people are healthy and enjoy healthy lifestyles
- All children & young people enjoy and achieve at school and/or college, so they have the skills they need for life and future employment
- All children and young people have access to leisure and opportunities to fun as they are growing up
- All children and young people are active in their communities, their experiences count and they have a voice with influence

Linked to Public Health?

Bexley Safeguarding Partnership for Children & Young People

Wor...
Priority 3: Getting Basic Child Protection Right - Workshops 9/7/19

**ISSUE TO FIX:**
1. **Recommended Activity:**
   - **Supporter Education:**
     - How to respond to signs of abuse?
     - How to keep children safe?
     - Child protection in practice

2. **Recommended Practice:**
   - Child protection awareness training
   - Child protection training

3. **Outputs & Actions:**
   - Supporter Education
   - Child protection awareness training
   - Child protection training

4. **How to Measure Outcomes:**
   - Audits
   - Feedback from families
   - Feedback from professionals
   - Performance evaluations
   - Child protection exit interviews

**MEETING OUTCOME:**
1. Understanding the role of workers
2. The right people in the room
3. Signs of safety partnership training
4. Feedback from families

**FUTURE ACTIONS:**
1. Awareness of services
2. Feedback & review from young people & families
3. Improve communication
4. Peer support/advocacy at every stage of the process
Learning Reviews Event 13 September 2019

* Visual record produced by Ada Jusic
Partnership Conference 14 October 2019
5. The partnership priorities and the work of the Learning Hub

5.1 The Learning Hub model

The Learning Hub is at the heart of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.’s work on multi-agency practice. The Learning Hub’s role is to examine a range of information from a variety of sources relating to a multi-agency practice issue. It considers frontline challenges and successes and makes suggestions and recommendations to improve multi-agency working which are presented into the Partnership Board by the Practice Review and Learning Manager.

The Learning Hub was established by the BSCB in 2016 to improve the effectiveness of Bexley’s safeguarding and child protection practice across partnership agencies. The aim of the Learning Hub is to ensure a clear line of sight into practice across Bexley engaging with its most vulnerable children including those in receipt of Early Help services. It is designed to bring together the views of children, their families and professionals to inform the continuous development of services and approaches aimed at protecting children from harm and making positive differences to their lives.

The Practice Review and Learning Manager will gather information from a variety of sources and present this to the initial Learning Hub group in order to inform the first set of discussions about the practice issue being considered. The Practice Review and Learning Manager will present this information in a delivery plan template and will include the following:

- Current data and performance
- Success and impact measures
- Relevant statutory and other guidance
- Evidence from previous Learning Hubs (where relevant)
- Evidence from visits and observations by the Practice Review and Learning Manager
- Evidence from self-assessments and peer challenge
- Evidence from serious case and learning reviews, child deaths, LADO, national reports, inspection reports (including from other areas).

The Learning Hub will be structured around a four-monthly cycle of events as follows:

- Month 1 – initial scoping
- Month 2 – single- and multi-agency auditing
- Month 3 – feedback from children, young people, families, practitioners
- Month 4 – agreeing recommendations and actions.

The Learning Hub is made up of nominated members from Bexley’s relevant agencies; nominations come from the 3 safeguarding partners. In Month 2, Learning Hub members will contribute to a programme of multi-agency audits and in Month 3 will assist with collecting feedback from children, young people, families, and practitioners. In Month 4, the Practice Review & Learning Manager will present an updated delivery plan with information from Month 2 and 3 activities. This will then be considered as the Learning Hub agrees any recommendations it wishes to make both on an operational and strategic level to the Partnership Board.
5.2 Priority 1 – Reduce the number of children and young people missing from home or care including those subjected to criminal and sexual exploitation

5.2.1 Rationale and success measures
This priority was focused on how the Partnership responds to children and young people when they go missing and associated risks around criminal and sexual exploitation. The priority was one of an initial 13 practice priorities identified by the partnership’s 3 lead partners – the CCG, the Police and the Local Authority – as part of their initial planning for the new safeguarding partnership arrangements in Bexley in late 2017. The Police agreed to be the lead partner for this priority and to encourage joint working with both Lewisham and Greenwich as part of the Department for Education’s Early Adopter programme and in response to the joint policing arrangements established in 2018 for the South East Basic Command Unit (BCU) made up of Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham. A shared practice priority on missing children and young people was identified given there are children and young people known to all 3 areas.

Set out below are the success measures for this priority that we will review the agreed set of recommendations (and any corresponding actions) against:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children and young people feel safe and settled where they are living</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Do children and young people feel supported by us and do they and their families understand why they go missing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The number of children and young people reported missing reduces as well as the length of their absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children in need of help, protection or care are more settled where they are living and this sustains over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is a single system for recording children who are missing from home, care or education to support strategic planning and operational oversight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clear programme of support for young people who are not in school and/or who go missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Plans record the support to be offered to the child/young person and their parents/carers and all children and families have a clear ‘safety plan’ with next steps (for example, if there is a further missing episode)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plans record any agreed actions between the support worker, the family and the child/young person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The episodes and number of children and young people reported missing reduces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is an improved response to and advocacy for children and young people who go missing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective multi-agency disruption and risk management when a child/young person is missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• There is evidence of improved co-ordinated intelligence about where children and young people go missing, who they are with, and other risks they are exposed to e.g. CSE, resulting in more effective safety planning and risk management (this includes the effective use of return interviews to feed into safety planning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Audits of practice show that all agencies involved provide timely and effective help for children and their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Families can describe what action was taken and whether it was effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2 Learning Hub activity
Work on this priority was led by the Police, and supported by the partnership’s operational team. In August 2018, as part of the initial scoping work for this priority, a short film was commissioned by the Police to introduce some initial themes and perspectives in respect of Bexley children and young people who go missing. 8 young people took part in the film alongside both strategic and operational leads from the Police, LB Bexley Children’s Services and health agencies. The film was shared with all professionals working with children and young people in Bexley to raise the profile of the new partnership and the focus of the partnership’s first practice priority.
The Learning Hub’s activity was as follows:
- Month 1 – initial scoping (October 2018)
- Month 2 – single and multi-agency auditing (November 2018)
- Month 3 – feedback from children, young people, families and practitioners (December 2018)
- Month 4 – agreeing recommendations and actions (January 2019).

5.2.3 Month 1 - Initial scoping
Learning Hub members met for the first stage of the work on 30th October 2018 for a session introduced by the Detective Chief Inspector for the South East BCU, and supported by the operational team including the Practice Review and Learning Manager. Presentations were given by the Director of Children’s Services from LB Bexley and the partnership’s independent scrutineer. The session also included the following:
- What we already know - presentation of the evidence collated by the operational team on the delivery plan
- Reviewing the success measures agreed for this priority
- Analysis of Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board missing self-assessment exercise
- Planning for Month 2 (auditing) and Month 3 (feedback)
- Reflecting on the film produced by the police on missing children and young people.

Learning Hub members were led through a series of exercises aimed at exploring some of the challenges and successes of multi-agency safeguarding practice in relation to children who go missing. The findings from these exercises are presented below, with some of the key emerging themes including:
- Return Home Interviews (RHIs)
- Sharing information across boundaries
- Designated missing leads
- Reaching the wider public and professionals
- Weekly operational missing meetings (MASE)
- Cultural sensitivity and competence.

The Learning Hub discussed and noted the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is working well?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More conversation is happening around the missing agenda, with higher partner interest and contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools have a lot of intelligence and play an integral role when children go missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are now dedicated leads for missing across all agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are regular missing meetings with the relevant people invited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate buy in from senior management across the agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lens may be different for each agency but overall goal is the same.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for development?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We need to avoid ‘revolving door syndrome’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is currently only one alternative education provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with children / young people and parents at an earlier stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our choice of language when describe ‘missing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need to reach the wider public and professionals (eg bus drivers, hotel staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective are Return Home Interviews? – should we replace them with a support or call service (i.e. an out of hours helpline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o How many have taken place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o How well were they carried out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Have they made a difference?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Return Home Interviews meaningful for children and young people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to spot trends from children and young people’s feedback? (soft intelligence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with other areas if a Bexley child goes missing in another borough – cross-boundary intelligence sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do we make useful intelligence-sharing between areas standard practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do we get schools connected to the work of the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Group?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.4 Month 2 – Auditing

Selected Learning Hub members met for two days of case auditing and reflective discussion on 13th and 22nd November, regarding 4 specific case studies which highlighted some of the challenges for multi-agency safeguarding practice. The cases were selected by the Practice Review and Learning Manager from the sample of cases discussed at the weekly multi-agency missing meeting in Bexley observed by the Practice Review and Learning Manager in October 2018.

Multi-agency audits were completed for each case, and these were read and discussed by the Learning Hub members. The sessions were facilitated by the Police and the partnership’s operational team.

Practitioners working on the selected cases were also invited to a reflective discussion at the end of each session to answer any specific questions that Learning Hub members had and to review the effectiveness of partnership working on the case.

The Learning Hub also considered the findings from the following single-agency auditing activity:

- Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board’s work to produce a missing self-assessment through its Multi-Agency Safeguarding Teenagers Group between December 2017 and March 2018
- A survey of schools in Bexley and their response to missing children and young people
- The SE Basic Command Unit (BCU) carried out a safeguarding audit of the South East which included a focus on missing in August 2018 – this included looking at 43 reports across Bexley, Lewisham and Greenwich.

The findings from the multi-agency audits were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is working well?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The consensus area that was working well across all four cases was the good relationships built between social workers and the vulnerable children. This has been reinforced by the regularity of visits to the family, as social workers were noted to often go above and beyond to help children who are at risk of going missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This was aided by the speed that the standard statutory procedures were carried out. In nearly all cases, the Return Home Interview was conducted promptly, and it provided valuable detail, and was a chance to give a voice to the child. It was also noted that regular missing meetings were taking place, with the involvement of Family Wellbeing being very important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another key positive area was the good relationships being built up by schools with these vulnerable children, as in most cases, school was seen as an enjoyable and safe place. Indeed, schools were engaging well with the family, and passing any useful information on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some comments from learning hub members:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There was a good relationship developed between [the child] and her school and Family Wellbeing keyworker — the voice of the child is very strong throughout [the audits].”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Return Home Interviews have taken place promptly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Police, the placements team and family and social care are working well together in meetings.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for development?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One key area for development was the lack of understanding of a child’s background history, which was often complicated if a child came from a different school or local authority area, as the information needed to be passed on in full, and flagged to the receiving school or authority where necessary. It was clear from the case studies that this did not always happen, and as such there were gaps in the children’s backgrounds that made it difficult to assess the child’s priorities and actions that would need to take place. It was particularly stressed that the child’s voice was often lost through the history of the reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following on from this, in most cases it was difficult to understand the timeline of events. There were lots of different reports, in different formats, and this has never been translated into a clear and standardised chronology of the child’s history. It was noted that this would be helpful for professionals who didn’t have access to all the separate systems, but would also help provide further understanding of a child’s history, and therefore needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.5 Month 3 – Feedback

Learning Hub members and the operational team worked to gather feedback from frontline staff, families and young people, giving a more complete understanding of Bexley’s performance around missing. This was gathered through learning events, feedback sessions, 1 to 1 interviews and system wide and targeted surveys – this activity was the focus of Month 3 of the Learning Hub cycle (December 2018).

| 8 young people took part in making the Bexley missing film in August 2018 that launched the priority (led by the police) | 13 frontline practitioners attended a focus group on 7/12/18 to share their views about support for young people in Bexley who go missing |
| 2 parents spoke to the Practice Review and Learning Manager | 12 foster carers took part in a survey about missing at their committee meeting on 22/11/19 |

Learning Hub members noted the following in terms of what the feedback from young people, parents, foster carers and practitioners said was working well and could be improved:

What is working well?

- Strategy meetings are happening and are well attended, all relevant agencies are invited including social workers, the Police (missing unit), Staying Together team, Targeted Youth Service (TYS), foster carers are invited. This aids better collaboration and information sharing. However, it was suggested to give TYS specific time slots at the meetings so they can give more detailed and focussed feedback
- Families are usually fed back to after a strategy meeting unless good reason not to. Families are not always part of these meetings (police may not be able to share information with a family if an investigation is underway)
- Some work has been commissioned (Little Fish Theatre Company) with an opportunity to invite community representatives, all relevant agencies and young people
- In the young people’s situations discussed, both Children’s Social Care staff and the police were going above and beyond to provide help and support to the young person.

Areas for development?

A key area discussed was the level of detail included when reporting. For example, it was noted that MERLINs provided by the police often have sparse information, provide conflicting reports and can sometimes include inaccurate dates and times. This can cause various issues, most notably the confusion over timelines and how long a young person has been missing. Indeed, there have been incidences where DOBs have been incorrect, which only serves to harm our understanding and limit the speed of our responses to children and young people.

Another important area for future development is the work on school inclusion in Bexley, and the potentially challenging situation for Bexley children and young people when school placements are at risk of breaking down due to a range of behavioural issues. The additional challenge of supporting children and young people with complex social and emotional needs was noted.

Resource issues was another key theme. It was noted that the TYS team could not hold drop-ins at all schools. In addition, not all schools gave a consistent response to the TYS, with some not engaging. The ongoing resource challenges for the Police were also noted as affecting their ability to respond effectively to children who go missing. At the time of the Learning Hub’s initial work, the YOT team had moved within the Civic Offices so they were not sat with TYS – this has since been resolved as the teams sit together (which aids regular and effective information-sharing).

Geographical boundaries were discussed as a limiting factor. For instance, there are a number of examples of young people who live in Bexley and attend school in Greenwich, Lewisham and Bromley, and vice-versa.
which creates issues with intelligence sharing, as well as a continuity of the professionals that will meet young people. There is no system that automatically flags this, or shares information with the respective local authorities when children move, and so it relies on individuals taking that initiative, rather than a standardised process.

Indeed, it was repeatedly noted that a lot of work relies on relationships and not processes, which creates inconsistencies and sometimes gaps in intelligence in the system, especially when combined with the issues thrown up by geographical boundaries, and in cases when there are no established relationships.

The lack of engagement of foster carers was also noted. It was agreed that they have valuable insights and knowledge into the lives of children and young people and were best positioned to engage them. However, it is felt that they are not always treated as professionals, engaged appropriately in planning forums and their opinions valued.

5.2.6 Month 4 – Recommendation-setting

The Learning Hub met in January 2019 to consider all of the information and feedback gathered from the previous 4 months around practice relating to missing children and young people in Bexley and to propose a series of recommendations for improving practice and the experience of children, young people and families. The Learning Hub members were presented with an updated delivery plan summarising the findings from the 4 months of activity and a number of recommendations were developed through facilitated group work.

The Learning Hub’s recommendations are set out in the table below. These were presented to the Partnership Board in January 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Issue identified by Learning Hub</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>One of the key themes emerging from the initial Learning Hub was the debate around the effectiveness of Return Home Interviews (RHIs). For example, it was noted that RHIs might not make the best use of resources, and that this funding could instead be directed towards extra staff or perhaps an evening hotline or drop-in service.</td>
<td>Complete a detailed review of the effectiveness of RHI arrangements, ensuring that any future offer is meaningful for children and young people and provides an adult with whom they have an established relationship and helps them to stop running away. This might include an out-of-hours or weekend offer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2   | • The terms of reference for the new MASE will require some scrutiny by the partnership. There is a need to improve the feedback process for social workers providing updates to the weekly missing meeting (Operational MASE)  
• The content of RHIs are not discussed at the weekly missing meeting, those attending the meeting are just told that the RHIs are completed  
• Practitioners across the system are not aware of the remit of the weekly missing meeting (Operational MASE) and the monthly Strategic MASE and how this supports Bexley’s work with missing young people | Require the Strategic MASE to prepare and disseminate a protocol for social workers and practitioners supporting missing children and young people in respect of how to update and confirm that action has been taken to protect and support their children and young people |
| 3   | • Practitioners across the system are not aware of who the missing leads are in different agencies  
• Police need access to designated teachers (recommended by Partnership Board in January 2018)  
• Children’s Social Care staff need to be in more regular contact with Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools | • Require the Strategic MASE to produce an annual resource list of partner leads for missing children and young people  
• Require Head of Family Support and Child Protection for the Local Authority to allocate a lead social care professional to attend all Designated Safeguarding Lead Forum meetings  
• Require the Detective Chief Inspector-Safeguarding for the SE BCU to allocate a lead police to attend all Designated Safeguarding Lead Forum meetings |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>There is confusion around the choice of language used when describing ‘missing’ and ‘unauthorised absence’ – different agencies have different understandings. Different definitions across different agencies only harm collaborative working. For example, the police have a different definition of missing to social workers, and so in some cases it was difficult to know whether a young person was missing and at risk or if they were with a friend of family friend, i.e. safe but technically missing. Ensure the definitions of ‘missing’ are clarified and used to standardise procedures across agencies so that everyone has a clearer understanding of a young person’s situation. Ensure the definitions are respectful of young people and their situations. Require the Strategic MASE to agree a local arrangement, language and protocol in respect of children and young people who go missing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>There is a lot of work taking place in silos, especially regarding schools, but there are also some overlaps: o Some schools are more engaged than others o Some schools are resistant to giving access to Targeted Youth Service (TYS), police, CSE leads and Community Safety o Schools are not all aware of the work of the TYS and Community Safety. Require the Local Authority lead for inclusion to agree and establish a programme of Designated Safeguarding Lead Forum events to support schools and so that TYS, Community Safety leads and the CSE social care lead are able to host discussion and training events within the school community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There is a high exclusion rate in Bexley at secondary level and the potentially challenging situation this is creating for Bexley children and young people. There is an inconsistent picture of inclusive practice, with varying levels of engagement with, and work with young people and families to prevent exclusion and explore different options. o New Horizons is the only alternative provision for excluded children o Children who are excluded from school discussed at weekly Operational MASE but action plans not clear at this meeting and what is being taken forward. Ensure the strategy to reduce school exclusions includes clarity in defining potential risks to each individual young person of criminal and sexual exploitation if they are excluded. Excluded children to be presented at the Operational MASE if they are missing from education or running away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>There are a number of examples of young people who live in Bexley and attend school in Greenwich, and Lewisham, and vice-versa, which create issues with intelligence sharing, as well as compromising the continuity of the professionals that will meet young people. There is no system that automatically flags this, or shares information with the respective local authorities when children move, and so it relies on individuals taking that initiative, rather than a standardised process. The South East Basic Command Unit is asked to improve the response to children and young people who go missing across a wider geographical footprint and to consider an initial learning event across the tri-borough area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Our local professional system needs to maximise positive relationships with young people and community and faith groups and leaders. Community Safety Partnership to prioritise the development of a small mixed professional subgroup whose initial task is to engage with a parents group and to learn with young people about how to reduce their missing episodes. First report to be shared with the Partnership Board in October 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Schools are feeding back information from children and young people in a variety of formats. There was the lack of understanding of a child’s background history, which was often complicated if a child came from a different school or local authority area, as the information needed to be passed on in full, and flagged to the receiving school or authority where necessary. There were gaps in the information about the children’s backgrounds that made it difficult to assess the child’s priorities and actions that would need to take place. It was particularly Improve the consistency and quality of feedback about children and young people including ensuring their voice and their history is included. Require the Strategic MASE to oversee the development of a new information update template about children and young people who run away. This should be developed with secondary head teachers and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and signed off by the Strategic MASE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
stressed that the child’s voice was often lost through the history of the reporting and Partnership Board for use from April 2019

| 10 | • MERLINs provided by the police often have sparse information, provide conflicting reports and can sometimes include inaccurate dates and times. There was a lack of detailed research being completed on subjects which could potentially lead to viable lines of enquiry which are often not progressed until an investigation is passed to the Missing Persons Unit.  

• Police process versus social care process needs clarifying. Explanation of Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) scale – Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) need to explain the RIC scale that they use as it was unclear from the audits what each rating meant  

• It is not clear about the completion of Form 87a’s and how these trigger responses |

| 11 | • Detective Superintendent for the SE BCU to lead a local improvement priority on the content and description of the young person set out in MERLINs.  

• Issue relating to the RIC scale addressed by Recommendation 10  

• Practice Review and Learning Manager to follow-up on issue about completion of Form 87a’s with the Police (issues arose from one of the multi-agency audits completed during this priority’s activity) |

| 11 | • Community Safety Team, CSE lead from Children’s Social Care and Service Manager for Looked After Children to develop a bi-annual discussion and training forum for foster carers  

• Public Health Team to produce and raise awareness of information about available sexual health services (with input from Positive Journeys) and dispatch to schools, health centres and to frontline practitioners  

• Community Safety Partnership to investigate an ‘outstanding’ community engagement programme on missing and exploited children and young people and host a community event during 2019/20  

• Deputy Director for Children’s Social Care to lead on an improvement priority on assessments setting out full family networks and histories – to be actioned during the Learning Hub Priority 3 from April 2019 |

| 11 | • There is a need to connect with the wider public and other professionals in the community to raise awareness around safeguarding children and young people who go missing  

• Summary reports from sexual health clinic not readily available telling us how many young people seen and what analysis is coming out of risk assessments  

• Families and foster carers generally positive about support from professionals. However, highlighted they needed to be more involved and more included in safety planning or more aware of outcomes of meetings. (When there are no CP concerns or when a parent is NOT implicated in risk)  

• Social Care Assessments in audits lack detail about social backgrounds, family relationships, and attachments. Many of the young people connected to CSE and who go missing, have fractured family relationships and attachments  

• Many of the parents also have complex history. Evidence that fathers were very significant in all four audits but little sense of the impact of their relationships on young people |

A system-wide learning event took place in January 2019 to share the recommendations for Priority 1 with 85 practitioners attending. These were presented by the Practice Review and Learning Manager, on behalf of the Police. A number of guest speakers were also invited to participate in relation to the issue of missing young people. Nikki Reeves from the Missing People charity outlined her organisation’s work on child criminal exploitation as well as the SafeCall project. A panel discussion took place which included a local parent, the journalist David Akinsanya, the poet Ben Westwood, and Nikki Reeves. The discussion offered a number of perspectives on the work of Priority 1 for the audience to consider and take into account in any next steps activity.
5.2.7 Next steps

An action plan was developed by the Police alongside the partnership’s operations team in March 2019 in response to the recommendations. An update report on progress with the action plan was provided at the Partnership Board on 8th July 2019.

The impact of the work of this priority has been planned in order to effectively measure any improvements in line with the success measures agreed for the priority and in order to ask the question, ‘have we made a difference?’ The Police will lead on assessing the impact of this priority’s recommendations.

The table below shows how the work of Priority 1 has been taken forward to date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14/2/19 and 7/3/19</td>
<td>Safeguarding champions events to share learning and recommendations</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6/19</td>
<td>S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive Group to review the actions plan on Priority 1</td>
<td>To be considered at S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive Group in September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/7/19</td>
<td>Police to feedback to Partnership Board on early findings (6-month stage)</td>
<td>Completed – presented by SHIELD partnership team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/9/19</td>
<td>S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive Group to note progress with the action plan on Priority 1</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10/19</td>
<td>Update on early findings at safeguarding champions events</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/10/19</td>
<td>Update on early findings at partnership conference</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/11/20</td>
<td>Police to provide a full report to Partnership Board on the agreed actions and impact of the recommendations made by the Learning Hub (12-month stage)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2020</td>
<td>Update on impact after 12 months at safeguarding champions events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| April 2020    | Any longer term work from this Priority will be included in one of the following:  
                         • The partnership’s Priority 4 on adolescent vulnerability  
                         • The workplan of the Strategic MASE |                                        |

5.3 Priority 2 - Responding effectively to the mental ill health of parents so that they are supported to give their children the best start

5.3.1 Rationale and success measures

The Partnership Board agreed to explore three priorities in its first year. Priority 2 was led by the CCG. The priority was focused on how services in Bexley respond to the needs of parents experiencing mental ill health to ensure they are well supported to provide their children with the
best start in life. In the context of mental health, the priority focused on parents identified as having moderate depression/anxiety.

Parents can be affected by a range of mental health problems including anxiety, depression and post-natal psychotic disorders. Parental mental illnesses increase the likelihood that children will experience behavioural, social and learning difficulties and fail to reach their full potential. The onset and escalation of anxiety and depression can often be prevented through early identification and help. Even if the illness itself is not preventable it is possible through support and appropriate services to prevent some of the negative effects of depression and anxiety on children. Emerging evidence suggests that the quality of parents’ interactions with their babies and the quality of attachment relationships can be improved through effective interventions.

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. set out to determine the efficacy of current practices in place for identifying parents who have mental health issues, and that they are:
- Robust and effective
- Effective in providing early help to parents and their children (inclusive of unborn, infants and young people)
- Reducing referrals into statutory child protection services.

Set out below are the success measures for this priority:

- Parents who at risk of, or suffering from mental illness are identified at the earliest opportunity
- There is increased community and professional awareness of services and support to families
- There is evidence of effective multi-agency working
- There is a reduction in the numbers of families referred into MASH for child in need (CIN) and child protection (CP).

5.3.2 Learning Hub activity

Work on this priority was led by the CCG, and supported by the partnership’s operational team. Following the learning from our initial Learning Hub cycle, the second priority started with a ‘pre-meet’ session, to allow Learning Hub members to introduce themselves, and to raise any early hopes or questions relating to the topic. This gave a chance to set the scene, answer any questions and cover some of the practical information that was needed to convey, without eating into the time of the first Learning Hub workshop, therefore allowing a greater focus. The areas covered at the pre-meet included:
- Introductions
- The importance of the Learning Hub
- The culture of learning
- The Partnership’s published arrangements and its governance
- The Learning Hub model
- “Hopes and worries” exercise
- Working agreements
- “Success measures” exercise.

The Learning Hub’s activity was then as follows:
- Month 1 – initial scoping (January 2019)
- Month 2 – single and multi-agency auditing (February-March 2019)
- Month 3 – feedback from children, young people, families and practitioners (March 2019)
- Month 4 – agreeing recommendations and actions (April 2019).

A system learning event took place in January 2019 with 85 practitioners in attendance. As well as presenting the recommendations arising from Priority 1, the event launched the work of Priority 2. The rationale for choosing the priority was described by the Deputy Managing Director and Director of Quality from Bexley CCG and keynote speaker Dr Susan Pawlby (King’s College London) presented on the impact of perinatal mental ill-health on infant care.

5.3.3 Month 1 – Initial scoping
Learning Hub members met for the first stage of the Learning Hub in January 2019, which comprised a 2-hour workshop. This was introduced by the Head of Safeguarding/Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children/Children Looked After and the Deputy Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children/Children Looked After from Bexley CCG, and supported by the partnership’s operational team and independent scrutineer.

The session included the following:
- Revisiting the success measures
- Discussion about what’s working well and what are the challenges Learning Hub members face in relation to multi-agency practice?
- What we already know - presentation on the delivery plan
- Group work - planning for Month 2 (auditing) and Month 3 (feedback)
- Discussing the following 3 questions: Is there any evidence missing? What do we need to know more about? Have we got our plan right?
- Revisiting the success measures and confirming next steps.

The Learning Hub discussed and noted the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is working well?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 99.9% of mothers are seen by health visitors and/or midwives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MASH – Good working relationships in terms of having permanent staff / making health enquiries. MASH has supervision monthly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Good working relationships between CAMHS and GPs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for development?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Parental engagement (in some cases) / tackling fear and stigma of mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Time to attend BUS (multi-agency network meeting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pathways and thresholds (whether cases should be referred to FWB or MASH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strategic approach (a lot of agencies have this as a priority but keep passing the cost to each other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How we can save money through better team working?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Funding – there are pocket of funding available (this would require more joint working between the local authority and the CCG to work up a bid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Developing a whole community approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Utilising voluntary sector organisations like Family lives and NCT (more acceptance places where parents could go to for support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using more IT and digital approaches (Community Connect/BVSC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Providing links to other resources / trusted sources of further information (on websites and linked to a directory of services) – including signposting for professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communications – awareness raising leaflet which can be given out to parents to explain what some of the symptoms might look like (parents become more informed and can seek support/Royal College of Psychiatry have produced some useful leaflets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Perinatal mental health as a public health priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More joined up working between Children’s Social Care and Adult Services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Hub members brought a wealth of knowledge to the first scoping session and the group work planning for both auditing and feedback activity generated lots of ideas as well as reflecting the knowledge of existing services amongst the Hub members. The issue of how aware both parents and professionals are of the whole range of existing services in Bexley was clearly identified through the discussions within the Hub. The need therefore for an accurate source of information on services was also highlighted.

Funding for services was raised in the group discussions and opportunities to bid for additional funding also considered. The extent to which savings could be made by joining up services to then invest in others was also explored. In one instance, during discussions in the Hub, one organisation was able to offer a venue to another organisation to run a support group. Pooling resources remains an avenue to explore.

In starting to develop questions for feedback interviews with parents, the issue of the stigma around mental health was brought into focus and it was agreed that this should be explored through the
interviews whilst recognising that it could be a barrier in itself to completing the interviews in the first place.

5.3.4  Month 2 – Auditing

There were 107 individual children which had been referred into the MASH between April 2018 and December 2018 where parental mental health had been the presenting reason for referral. During the course of this selection, emerging themes from the original 107 children were noted so that they could be considered as part of the overall auditing process.

The Practice Review and Learning Manager jointly with the Head of Safeguarding for the Clinical Commissioning Group selected 8 of the families from this initial group to consider in more detail.

Selected Learning Hub members were invited to join a panel for two days of ‘deep dive’ auditing and reflective discussion on 4 of the cases, which highlighted some of the challenges in the multi-agency response to parental mental health. There was representation from children’s social care, education, health, CAMHS, and police during the course of the audits. Adult mental health services were also invited to attend in person (who provided written feedback which contributed to the process and subsequent findings).

Practitioners working on selected cases were asked by the audit panel to clarify information and to review through discussions the effectiveness of partnership working on the case. There was also opportunity to share what had gone well and a recognition of further work to be done.

In addition, multi-agency audit forms were sent to a range of practitioners involved in the remaining four cases. All 8 audits were facilitated by the partnership’s operational team. Reflective discussions were facilitated by the Head of Safeguarding for the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Practice Review and Learning Manager.

Parents were invited to participate either in person with the audit team and or via telephone. One family responded and participated in a telephone interview. Other families were invited to respond but did not do so.

Findings from the auditing activity are described below:

Themes emerging from the original sample of cases referred into the MASH

- A number of cases were noted to highlight that both parents were experiencing poor mental health.
- Anxiety, depression and a history of alcohol and drug misuse featured in many of the cases.
- Some cases referenced a history of exposure to and or experience of domestic abuse in adult years.
- Unresolved childhood trauma for parents was referenced in many of the cases. It was not clear regarding what therapeutic support was available or in place for families.
- Parental mental health was not usually an isolated factor of concern. Other factors included children with special needs in the family, physical health needs alongside mental health needs, and environmental factors such as housing issues.

Themes emerging from the multi-agency audits

- Many of the families were being supported by Family Wellbeing Service.
- Good family support in 2 of the cases was an important factor in sustaining stability. 2 out of the 4 cases had access to strong positive support from extended family.
- These cases had access to respite when needed. For example, the family could go and stay with relatives when one parent was too ill or children could be placed with extended family when home life was more unsettled, thus avoiding the need for children to be placed away from the family.
- One family had multiple needs and another had children with special needs. In these cases, multiple professionals were involved.
- All 4 deep dive cases identified that both parents experiencing mental health problems including anxiety and depression. 2 of the cases included long term conditions such as schizophrenia. The parents remained in the same household in 3 of the 4 cases. One case involved a non-resident father with a history of alcohol misuse.
- In one case, the family were also experiencing additional stress due to the children presenting with emotional and behavioural needs. There was no extended family support. The mother is the carer to both the father and children. She was considered to be strong and capable and yet while accessing the
Family Wellbeing service, felt her own psychological and emotional needs were not being met. In her interview, she requested access to counselling and respite.

• The paper auditing of the additional 4 cases reinforced the emerging themes set out above and the remaining findings and areas for recommendation-setting below.

What is working well?
2 of the cases audited demonstrated that schools had established good relationships with the families and evidenced a proactive approach to supporting young people. The schools had met with parents and been able to ask young people about home life and offer support. There was evidence of regular support and contact with the families by school staff both in the community as well as in school. There was also opportunity for young people to discuss their worries. This highlighted positively the importance of being able to establish a relationship with families and have difficult conversations.

The Family Wellbeing service demonstrated it was very attuned to supporting parents with mental health difficulties. Practitioners were going above and beyond to advocate for families and to provide support. In 1 case, the service challenged decisions which were not in the interest of the family.

Support offered by health visitors to those flagged during the ante-natal period was evident. In one case it was clear the health visitor had gone out of their way to build rapport with the family and met with the extended family to ensure there was creative support and safety planning in place. Again, this highlighted the effectiveness of including all family members in supporting parents with mental health difficulties and establishing safety plans which support children and families remaining together.

Areas for development?
There was limited evidence of ‘a whole family approach’ in the cases audited and this was considered to be an overarching theme. The focus tends to be on the parent with mental health difficulties. There is a need to consider the impact of parental mental health on relationships between parents and on children across age ranges (the ‘whole family approach’).

There was limited information regarding what other services were in place and or how Bexley was signposting families to follow up support? It was difficult to ascertain therefore how families were being supported in a coordinated way and proactively to avoid family crisis.

There was a notable absence of reference to how adults and children services were linking in together to support families. This led to consideration of how well the existing processes and opportunities for sharing information and working more cohesively are understood between social care and adult services. The audits prompted a view that there needed to be better understanding of the importance of collaborative working from both perspectives.

In some cases, there were lots of professionals involved but these interventions were not always co-ordinated. Services were not talking to each other or coming together to plan, review or decide who was best placed to take actions forward.

One family when interviewed fed back that they had not been listened to in relation to what they needed. There was evidence in several cases that a range of services were offered but parents were feeling overwhelmed by the many different professionals visiting. This again raised the importance of a coordinated approach.

It was clear from the cases audited that the child’s voice was not always included in child and family assessments in respect of the impact of mental health on their development, and or from assessments completed in respect of adults and how mental health may be impacting on all members of the family.

The voluntary sector played a pivotal role in ensuring one young person was supported when much of the focus had been on significant parental mental health difficulties. This flagged the importance of ensuring that ‘young carers’ and or young people living with parental mental health need to be supported. Once this support was interrupted there was evidence of the young person struggling emotionally and her education became disrupted. The importance of the voluntary organisation involvement with the young person had not been fully appreciated and information had not been shared fully with other agencies.

Support packages were not always family-led but rather led by process and what was available. A more creative and flexible approach is required.
5.3.5  Month 3 – Feedback

Learning Hub members and the operational team worked to gather feedback from parents and frontline staff, giving a more complete understanding of Bexley’s performance around parental mental health. This was gathered through feedback sessions, 1 to 1 interviews and surveys – this activity was the focus of Month 3 of the Learning Hub cycle (March 2019). The feedback activity is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 parents attending sessions at children’s centres</td>
<td>1 additional parent interview by Practice Review and Learning Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>were interviewed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 parents being supported by a health visitor were</td>
<td>8 frontline practitioners attended a focus group on 12/3/19 to share their views about support for parents with mental health issues in Bexley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interviewed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 parents being supported by Bexley Women’s Aid were</td>
<td>1 additional practitioner interview by Practice Review and Learning Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interviewed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 parents being supported by Mind in Bexley were</td>
<td>Feedback from Early Adopter Programme project lead on Postnatal Check-ups (Mental Health) Bill - Private Member’s Bill introduced by Wera Hobhouse (Lib Dem, Bath)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interviewed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings from the feedback activity with parents are summarised below:

### What is working well?

- Some parents described their own coping strategies, a good network of family and/or friends for support, and the confidence to share their anxieties.
- Some parents were positive about the support they had received from services including midwifery, health visiting, GP’s, Peareswood School, Sure Start, the Police, the gym instructor at Steps to Health, children’s centres (for example, “Danson has been a godsend”), CAMHS (“I built a great relationship with [my worker] and she helped me process my thoughts without any judgement”).
- Parents were also positive about how well they had been signposted to other services by the following: their health visitor, their family worker at a children’s centre, ADAPT, their counsellor at Mind in Bexley, and the Bexley website.
- One parent fed back that “The support is there when you need it which is a massive help so that way you don’t feel like you’re alone and you can talk to anyone for guidance.”
- Of those parents who directly responded to the question about who they would speak to if they were prepared to share their concerns and anxieties, there was an equal split of responses – 37% said professionals, 37% said family, 26% said friends.

### Areas for development?

- Some key messages came through the interviews:
  - Sometimes the parent doesn’t perceive their own need for help (only in hindsight following a pregnancy or the early days after childbirth)
  - It is important to connect mums to other mums for mutual support
  - There is the need for the parent to feel looked after as well as their child/baby
  - Not every individual has supportive family and friends
Not all parents know where to go to for support or even signposting to support.

- Some of the issues mums described they wanted advice and support around included:
  - Breastfeeding
  - Weight
  - Having twins
  - How the baby would affect other relationships?

- There was no awareness in one case of support services available for parents with disabilities to be able to take their children out of the house (e.g. to the park)

- One parent described her mental health diagnosis as leading to being treated differently by services or being perceived to be at fault or considered ‘unstable’

- One parent described a referral that was not made by Children’s Social Care to another agency resulting in delays and the parent needing to self-refer in the end

- An issue with delays in getting a prescription for antidepressants when a patient transferred from one GP surgery to another was noted

- There was some criticism of the response received from the crisis line – being referred to the individual’s family for support where this was not appropriate and also receiving a negative tone

- Some feedback noted the business of services, regular workers not being covered when on leave

- Parents felt that a difference could be made by:
  - Professionals having time to talk/listen
  - Support groups for parents
  - Being aware of mental health services available that offer support and advice
  - Positively promoting mental health issues so that there is less stigma.

The findings from the feedback activity with practitioners are summarised below:

### What is working well?

- Involvement of voluntary organisations in social care (early help and child protection) meetings has improved
- Voluntary sector is at meetings and networking and BVSC is good at coordinating the sector
- Practitioners are making better referrals with more detail, thresholds are also clearer
- MASH and crisis services are better connected
- Family Wellbeing service are working really well with health visiting service – good communication.

### Areas for development?

- Sometimes long waiting lists for support; e.g. MIND (IAPT), Porchlight, Bexley Centre for Unemployed (BCU), Adapt team
- Challenge to get parents to engage with children’s centre or library-based activities – reasons for not going include:
  - Reluctance to meet new people
  - Reluctance or inability to leave the home
  - Fear of a strange environment
  - Fear of being judged by others
- Audits highlighted the need to respond specifically to the mental health needs of fathers (2 fathers attending weekly SNAP early years service at children’s centre)
- Lack of awareness of services available and a challenge to maintain a directory of services – the Family Information Service used to do this work, is there an equivalent?
- Exploring why mothers are more open to talking about their mental health than fathers
- Revisiting how the family history within assessments are completed – when done well, they can be very revealing about a mental health-related situation for an individual parent(s)
- Thinking about the consistency of professionals involved – the effect this has on building and maintaining trust – wanting to avoid parents having to keep repeating their histories
- Looking at the range of assessments that different agencies might complete in relation to one parent/family situation
- Confidence-building for practitioners (e.g. health, schools professionals) in responding to a parent with a mental health issue without having to make a referral on to another agency (e.g. to MASH)
- Clarity around information-sharing (issues with fear around GDPR)
- Exploring the growing openness around mental health with the reluctance to share
- Exploring the issue of choice of language, some parents not recognising the label of mental health as describing some of their situation/issues (is well-being a more engaging term?) – need to agree the right language
- Considering the effect of NHS mental health counselling only offering 6 sessions – not long for parent to build a trusting relationship with the counsellor
- Thinking about what ante- and post-natal support groups can offer (what is the current provision in Bexley)? Do hospitals run parent craft classes?
- Professional empathy – is the first response made by a professional helpful?
- Producing a do’s and don’ts crib sheet with basic communication tips for professionals
- Considering how parents who are agoraphobic would present themselves in A&E if no other services could offer support to them?

### 5.3.6 Month 4 – Recommendation-setting

The Learning Hub met in April 2019 to consider all of the information and feedback gathered from the previous 4 months around practice relating to parental mental health in Bexley and to propose a series of recommendations for improving practice and the experience of children, young people and families. These recommendations were presented to the Partnership Board in April 2019 where they were reviewed and refined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Issue identified by Learning Hub</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Children’s Social Care protocol for assessments needs to be reviewed in line with Working Together 2018 requirements to ensure that assessments are multi-agency in their production in order to make sure that resulting services to children and families are appropriate, holistic and include all the relevant agencies (whole family approach)</td>
<td>The partnership to review the Children’s Social Care protocol for assessments to ensure that there is appropriate and effective guidance around a multi-agency approach to completing the assessment. The partnership must ensure that Adult Mental Health and Children’s Social Care contribute to assessments in line with their statutory duty where mental health is a factor and children are involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parents are not all aware of the existing range of services available to support parents with their mental ill health in Bexley</td>
<td>The partnership to both endorse and coordinate an awareness-raising campaign for parents around the current mental health support services provision in Bexley (to include a range of activities and approaches to publicising and encouraging parents to access services).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Practitioners from across the professional system are not all aware of the existing range of services available to support parents with their mental ill health in Bexley</td>
<td>The partnership to both endorse and coordinate an awareness-raising campaign for professionals around the current mental health support services provision in Bexley (to include a range of activities and approaches to publicising and encouraging professionals to signpost/refer parents to appropriate services).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parents have fed back that one of the best sources of support comes from other parents who have shared experience</td>
<td>The partnership to enlist the help of voluntary services (via BVCS) to support setting up self-sustaining support groups for parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Parents have fed back that GPs could ask more about their mental health at their 6-week postnatal appointments</td>
<td>The partnership to ensure that all GPs are confident to initiate conversations about mental health and emotional well-being at their 6-week postnatal appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feedback from parents and practitioners has identified a number of practice issues relating to parental mental health that would benefit from some multi-agency training in order to improve the services parents are receiving in Bexley</td>
<td>The partnership to commission and deliver multi-agency learning events to examine a range of practice issues relating to parental mental health: Benefits of early contacts, Importance of taking a “think family approach” (i.e. who are the family’s support networks, what is the quality of the support?), Family-led support and offering flexible services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
46

**Bexley Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People**

- Recognition of the impact of parental mental health on all members of the household
- Support for men/male parents and carer in that household/other male partners not necessarily related
- Awareness of childhood trauma and its impact on a family’s social history
- Referral pathways
- Processes for closing cases
- Importance of listening to the lived experience of parents

There may be additional workstreams within other organisations responding to parental mental health as a priority. There is a need to coordinate Bexley’s response and any subsequent work (including commissioning, pooling resources and funding opportunities)

The CCG to produce a report on the work of this priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board in order to ensure there is a strategic oversight and coordination of all work which is focused on parental mental health

There is a rich body of research and intelligence gathered from interviews with parents that might benefit from further analysis in line with the ongoing work of this priority

- The CCG to consider any opportunities for additional research and analysis using the core data collected by the Learning Hub
- The CCG to feedback to the parents who contributed to this priority on how their recommendations are being taken forward

The multi-agency auditing activity (in month 2 of work on this priority) has identified some issues around the ownership of cases when there is a change of worker and the expectations for producing audit reports

The partnership to lead on a comms campaign to ensure practitioners understand the requirements for contributing towards multi-agency audits, the approach of the partnership to learning, and the Learning Hub model

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A system-wide learning event took place in April 2019 to share the recommendations for Priority 2 with 95 practitioners attending. These were presented by the Deputy Managing Director/Director of Quality – Bexley CCG. Reflections were made by a local parent who had experience of mental health services at the time of her being pregnant with one of her children. An overview of Oxleas NHS Trust’s perinatal service was presented by members of the team.

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**5.3.7  Next steps**

An action plan was developed by the CCG alongside the partnership’s operations team in May 2019 in response to the recommendations. An update report on progress with the action plan was provided at the Partnership Board on 8th July 2019.

The impact of the work of this priority has been planned in order to effectively measure any improvements in line with the success measures agreed for the priority. The CCG will lead on assessing the impact of this priority’s recommendations.

The table below shows how the work of Priority 2 has been taken forward to date:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16/5/19 and 6/6/19</td>
<td>Safeguarding champions events to share learning and recommendations</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/7/19</td>
<td>CCG to provide an update to Partnership Board on the initial work completed on the action plan</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/9/19</td>
<td>Working Group to note progress with the actions plan on Priority 2</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10/19</td>
<td>Update on early findings at safeguarding champions events</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/10/19</td>
<td>Update on early findings at partnership conference</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/10/19</td>
<td>CCG to feedback to Partnership Board on early findings (6-month stage)</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2020</td>
<td>Update on early finding at safeguarding champions events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>CCG to provide an update to Partnership Board on the agreed actions and impact of the recommendations made by the Learning Hub (12-month stage)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>Update on impact after 12 months safeguarding champions events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Priority 3 – Getting basic child protection right

5.4.1 Rationale and success measures

Getting basic child protection right was chosen as a partnership priority in order to address some of the statutory responsibilities of the 3 lead safeguarding partners. Priority 3 also provided a broad enough heading to allow any emerging child protection issues to be included in the scoping of the priority and its eventual focus.

The success measures agreed for Priority 3 were the same as the partnership’s overarching success measures, namely the following:

| Restorative learning with families and children |
| Learning with practitioners |
| A kind and healing system |

5.4.2 Learning Hub activity – adjusting the model

In preparing to lead this priority, the Local Authority proposed an alternative Learning Hub model taking into account existing and emerging evidence (including from both multi-agency audits and children, young people and their families). Evidence collection for this priority took place during March 2019 drawing on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/source of evidence</th>
<th>Comments /further information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Children’s Social Care practice week (4th-8th March 2019): • Practice audits and reports • 4 multi-agency audits focusing on children with disabilities, family wellbeing, looked after children and child in need (see 2. below)</td>
<td>Practice week was titled ‘Back to Bexley Basics’ and focused on children who are in need, in need of protection, are receiving help early, are looked after, are leaving our care and are working with the youth offending team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Multi-agency audits</td>
<td>4 multi-agency audits were completed during Children’s Social Care practice week (4th-8th March 2019) and focused on children with disabilities, family wellbeing, looked after children and child in need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3 | Learning reviews including Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) | • SCR – Baby John handed over by the Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board (BSCB)  
• 3 local learning reviews (handed over by BSCB)  
• SAR – Mr K (Bexley Safeguarding Adults Board)  
• Multi-agency Learning and Improvement Summary following a Serious Case Review-Nadiya, Leicester (December 2018)  
• Multi-agency Learning and Improvement Summary following a Serious Case Review-Robyn, Leicester (December 2018)  
• Vulnerable Adolescents Thematic Review, Croydon 2019 |

| 4 | London Borough of Bexley Complaints team | 23 complaints reviewed from 2018-2019 relating to child protection |

| 5 | Previous BSCB multi-agency audits | • BSCB multi-agency audit on adolescent risk (April 2018)  
• BSCB dip sample on assessments relating to children with disabilities (April 2018)  
• BSCB dip sample/reflective discussion on neglect (June 2018)  
• BSCB dip sample on core groups (June 2018) |

| 6 | Children’s social care quality assurance reports | • April-June 2018  
• September-December 2018  
• January-March 2019 |

The partnership’s operations team reviewed all of the above evidence and noted the following from Practice Week:

**What is working well?**
- We know our families well
- Passion for “good old fashioned social work”
- Social workers and practitioners going the extra mile for children and families
- Value of single practice approach
- Direct work with children and families
- Professional curiosity
- Case records up-to-date
- Reflective practice and supervision.

**Areas for development?**
- Consistency around:  
  - Up to date chronologies and what’s included  
  - Child friendly language plans  
  - Consistency of application of Signs of Safety  
  - Measurement of outcomes over time (need to be relentless to demonstrate making a difference)  
  - Building relationships with academies – Youth Offending Team (YOT)  
  - Joint working with CSC where young person in custody and work with at risk siblings (gangs) (YOT)  
  - More direct work time
- Domestic abuse, mental ill health and substance misuse are all very significant factors in cases
- More evidence on file of reflective supervision
- Gaps in hypothesis being tested and analysis
- Practice observations and family feedback for future Practice Weeks.

A system learning event attended by 95 practitioners was held in April 2019 to launch Priority 3 – an overview of the Learning Hub activity was provided by the Director of Children’s Services, LB Bexley. An introduction to restorative practice was presented by keynote speaker Mark Finnis, Director of L30 Relational Systems and 3 key issues were explored in groups restoratively:
- Multi-agency children and family assessments
- Communication
- Effective Support in Bexley  (levels of support and need).
### 5.4.3 Month 1 – Initial scoping

The Learning Hub met in April 2019 to consider the 18 emerging issues identified by the partnership operations team from all of the above evidence described in Section 5.4.2 and an initial plan for ‘fixing’ these issues in May and June 2019 was developed. This involved regrouping the original 18 issues and identifying 5 issues to take forward outside of the Learning Hub. 10 practice issues were subsequently explored through the Learning Hub:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice issue to be ‘fixed’</th>
<th>1. Restorative practice</th>
<th>2. Section 47 enquiries</th>
<th>3. Contacts to MASH</th>
<th>4. Chronologies</th>
<th>5. Reviewing plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A multi-agency approach needed to ensure children and families are clear about child protection procedures and are fully engaged and supported throughout – feedback and challenge from families to be encouraged.</td>
<td>The decisions to undertake Section 47 enquiries are not always appropriate and do not always result in an Initial Child Protection Conference.</td>
<td>Concerns around the volume and quality of contacts from the Police into the MASH.</td>
<td>Not all practitioners understand what should be included in a chronology.</td>
<td>There are practice issues relating to engaging families where children are being supported by a plan, monitoring the effectiveness of plans, multi-agency decision-making including ending plans and escalating concerns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional representation at strategy meetings – are all partners/agencies in attendance and engaging well? Is the guidance on strategy meetings being utilised and is it effective in ensuring meetings are timely and attended by the right personnel?</td>
<td>The development of young carers can be adversely impacted upon by their family situation.</td>
<td>Some practitioners are not clear about the process for accessing and arranging child protection medicals.</td>
<td>There are differential diagnoses resulting in uncertainty – how do professionals respond and ensure effective safety planning?</td>
<td>Inconsistent awareness by health agencies regarding referral processes into Children’s Social Care for cases of possible FII. The subsequent management of possible FII referrals by Children’s Social Care.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice issue to be ‘fixed’**


### 5.4.4 Months 2 and 3 – Fixing activity

Having spent some time refining the issues and ‘fixing’ activities, Learning Hub members were assigned individual issues to take forward and lead on the ‘fixing’ during June and July 2019. Detailed action plans were developed and progressed with support and coordination by the partnership’s operations team.

### 5.4.4 Learning Hub workshops

In July 2019, a series of Learning Hub workshops took place to further explore 5 of the practice issues and related ‘fixing’ activities. 39 practitioners from across the partnership attended these workshops. A presentation on progress with the Learning Hub’s work was given to the Partnership Board in July 2019.

### 5.4.6 Next steps

The Local Authority provided a detailed update about progress with Priority 3 at the partnership’s first annual conference on 14th October. As of October 2019, the following progress was noted (this was also shared with the Partnership Board at the end of October 2019):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Restorative practice</th>
<th>2. Section 47</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Core group guidance for families and practitioners revised</td>
<td>• Effective Support document refreshed – no clarification required in terms of wording in Chapter 9 on Level 4/specialist support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relationships guide for practitioners produced</td>
<td>• Signs of Safety event on 24/10/19 for partners to include levels of need and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information and guidance for practitioners, parents and young people in preparation for Child Protection Conferences and Child in Need reviews being developed in consultation with families</td>
<td>• Bexley SHIELD e-bulletin article on expectation in relation to strategy meetings commissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proposal for merging current Children’s Social Care training provision on strategy meetings, core groups and conferences into a multi-agency 2-day programme to be presented to training leads at Learning Forum in December 2019</td>
<td>• Partnership Board discussion 28/10/19 on assuring all practitioners have read Working Together 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Core group guidance for families and practitioners revised</td>
<td>• Information-sharing requirements to be included in 2-day training programme 2020/21 (see Issue 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relationships guide for practitioners produced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information and guidance for practitioners, parents and young people in preparation for Child Protection Conferences and Child in Need reviews being developed in consultation with families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proposal for merging current Children’s Social Care training provision on strategy meetings, core groups and conferences into a multi-agency 2-day programme to be presented to training leads at Learning Forum in December 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Contacts to MASH

- MASH Service Manager feedback that MASH team are clear about the difference in thresholds between the Police and Children’s Social Care
- MASH managers meet quarterly across London and this issue has been discussed as a London-wide concern
- Police leads have clarified their internal quality assurance processes for filtering MERLINs
- Police have a quarterly meeting for all MASH sergeants at Scotland Yard to look at Met-wide operating issues
- Raised with the strategic leads from the partnership to mitigate against further drift

4. Chronologies

- Children’s Social Care workshop on chronologies/case summaries in October 2019, to include examples and feedback and learning from families, children and young people
- Chronologies are included as part of the checklist for supervision meetings in Children’s Social Care
- Audit of chronology records completed in September 2019 – findings:
  - Overall significant events are included in the chronology, although further awareness is required regarding importance and inclusion of positive events
  - What is missing is the voice of the child and the impact of the event upon a child
- Test compliance and quality of chronologies as part of Priority 5 (Year 2)

5. Reviewing plans

- A more structured approach to ‘case mapping in core groups’ to be included in 2-day child protection training programme (see Issue 1)
- 18 Section 11 responses from Bexley relevant agencies confirmed escalation procedures are in place and up-to-date
- Multi-agency assessment protocol under review
- Dip sample of Child in Need cases evidenced right professionals in room but that when this is not possible, it is expected that their views are sought and included in the minutes of the meeting

6. Strategy meetings

- Links to work on cases which progress to Section 47 (see Issue 2)
- Multi-agency audits led by Learning Hub members reviewed attendance and quality of discussions at strategy meetings - 16 dip sample cases were audited in total
- Key themes and recommendations identified included in report on Priority 3 to Partnership Board on 28/10/19

7. Young carers

- Information on young carers updated for local offer website
- Young carers forum to take place in October 2019
- Presentation on young carers to SENCO forum in March 2020 booked
- Number of young carers added to monthly performance data report (Children’s Social Care) from August 2019
- Feedback event on young carers scheduled for April 2020 to review the activity of Issue 7
- Imago (service provider) to be invited to Children’s Social Care conference in June 2020

8. Child protection medicals

- The Medical Pathway has been sent to all teams in Children’s Social Care for discussion in their team meetings
- Medical Pathway added to Tri x procedures – to be included in October 2019 refresh
- Revisit performance on this in Priority 5 (Year 2) on Getting basic child protection right
### 9. Pre-mobile babies
- Review of procedures which identify how parents are currently being involved at all stages in cases of non-accidental injury (NAI) in pre-mobile babies or differential diagnoses, and/or when there has been a referral regarding FII – resources guide being produced
- Leaflet offering parents guidance in cases of NAI being produced
- Escalation procedures in place in relevant agencies
- Awareness building about how we manage and achieve safe uncertainty when NAI is a possibility/in cases of differential diagnoses/possible FII – Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. learning reviews event September 2019 and partnership annual conference in October 2019

### 10. Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII)
- Danya Glaser completing government guidance in September 2019 and will support the process of reviewing the local Bexley guidance with CCG lead in early 2020 (see below)
- Danya Glaser keynote speaker on FII at partnership conference 14 October 2019
- CCG leads to look at health guidance for Bexley once revised government guidance issued in early 2020

The table below shows how the work of Priority 2 has been taken forward to date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16/9/19</td>
<td>Working Group to note progress with the actions plan on Priority 3</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10/19</td>
<td>Update on delivery of action plans at safeguarding champions events</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/10/19</td>
<td>Update on delivery of action plans at partnership conference</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/10/19</td>
<td>Local Authority to feedback to Partnership Board on delivery of action plans</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/1/20</td>
<td>Local Authority to feedback to Partnership Board on early impact (6-month stage)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2020</td>
<td>Update on early finding at safeguarding champions events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>Local Authority to provide an update to Partnership Board on the agreed actions and impact of the recommendations made by the Learning Hub</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Learning from Practice Group

6.1 The development of the group’s terms of reference

The Learning from Practice Group met 6 times during 2018/2019. The previously named Learning from Individual Cases Group reviewed its purpose and role alongside the process for managing serious incidents. In 2019, the chair of the group and coordinator for Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. reflected on the changes in Working Together 2018 in order to make amendments to the serious incident procedures. This included refining the notification process as feedback from professionals had indicated that greater clarity was needed around this process. During the review, the group was also renamed to Learning from Practice’ (LFP) in order to capture the focus of the meeting, which is to identify learning from cases to improve practice. These changes were highlighted in amendments to the terms of reference.

2 sub-groups were established in 2019, to consider learning from the cases that are overseen by the Learning from Practice Group:

- **The Multi-Agency Learning Forum** - the purpose of this group is to take forward learning from cases that meet the criteria for ‘multi-agency learning’ and considers how best to disseminate learning points across the network. The forum forms part of a ‘learning framework’ and provides for a static group of professionals to share learning from case reviews, audits, and inspections which have been completed within a range of departments including, adult social care, community safety, professional standards, the learning hub, and DHR (Domestic Homicide Reviews). This forum also provides for local debrief on less serious cases; incorporating learning from a range of cases where similar themes emerge and ensuring the learning is captured and shared through learning events. The forum will ensure schedules for training take account of any case learning identified. A forward planner for events and concentration on where learning can be embedded and or included, will be kept under regular review.

- **The Tri-borough Multi-Agency Learning Forum** – as part of the Early Adopter Programme, Bexley has agreed a Tri-borough Multi-Agency Learning Forum with the neighbouring boroughs of Greenwich and Lewisham, in order to share the learning from recent local learning reviews more widely than just the immediate locality of Bexley. The purpose of the Forum is to discuss learning and share common themes across the three areas, including from local child safeguarding practice reviews, local learning reviews, audits and inspections. Where learning is particular to one local area, neighbouring boroughs can consider how it might apply to them and pre-empt potential issues. This is particularly important given that all three areas share a Basic Command Unit (BCU) and an acute NHS hospital trust. The Forum will meet formally in early 2020.

The updated terms of reference for the Learning from Practice Group and the newly established Multi-Agency Learning Forum were shared with the Partnership Board during in July 2019 and the new serious incident procedures were agreed at the October 2019 Partnership Board and will be referred to in the partnership’s revised published arrangements document. An independent trainer has been commissioned to lead on 2 training sessions in January 2020, to service managers in Children’s Social Care on completing Individual Management Reports and chronologies for the purposes of reviews.

The updated terms of reference for the Learning from Practice Group included the provision of a standard agenda item at all meetings to include examples of good practice: “Members are encouraged to bring examples of good practice as another means of developing our understanding of what works well.” An example of this was during in a rapid review meeting in July 2019, in which, following a serious incident to a child, the out-of-hours team in Bexley responded well and sensitively to the needs of the child and their family. The Independent Reviewer agreed along with panel members that the terms of reference should include identifying positive practice as a key component.
6.2 Learning reviews

6.2.1 Serious Case Review – Baby John
A final version of the SCR report for Baby John was published in September 2018 and a multi-agency action plan, which focused on how learning from the review will be shared with frontline practitioners, was produced to accompany the report. Learning events relating to the SCR took place over a number of safeguarding champions events in September 2018. September 2019, professionals were invited to attend a ‘Learning from Reviews’ event, which additionally incorporated themes learned from other reviews (Child H, Baby G). The mother of Baby John attended the Learning from Reviews event. The event also included contributions from parents from other boroughs to illustrate further the impact of professional involvement on families. The feedback gathered from the multi-agency professionals in attendance, confirmed that involvement from parents and sharing the lived experience had a powerful impact on professional learning.

6.2.2 Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review – Child O
This review relates to a 4-year-old child on a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) to his grandmother who had been in an unsupervised contact session with his mother. Child O ingested a toxic substance from a Lucozade bottle he found in his mother’s handbag, the contents of which were reported as GHB. His condition was treated as life threatening and therefore considered as a ‘near miss’. The case was formally notified to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. on 11/07/19 and a Rapid Review meeting took place on 18/07/19. Members recommended a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review should take place and notified the National Panel on 29/07/19. The National Panel replied on 28/08/19 and agreed with this recommendation by writing the following:

“We agreed that there is learning to be drawn from this case and with your decision to carry out a local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) as set out in Working Together (2018). We thought your rapid review had already drawn out a lot of learning from this case and that formed a good basis for your LCSPR, which should be proportionate and engage with practitioners, the family and where possible the children involved. Any learning in relation to Special Guardianships will be of particular interest.”

An initial meeting with the Independent Reviewer and panel team on 4th November 2019, identified some key areas of concerns which agencies are asked to apply focus to when completing Individual Management Reports. The review will include agencies from health, police, probation, children’s social care, adult mental health services and will work closely with the London borough of Lambeth where the child originally lived. The review is expected to complete in March 2020 and will be shared with Board members before it is published and sent to the National Panel.

6.2.3 Partnership reviews (previously known as multi-agency reviews)
2 partnership reviews were commissioned by the BSCB in 2017/18 – from events that didn’t meet the criteria for a Serious Case Review (now Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review) but where the Learning from Practice Group identified a local review should take place to identify ‘lessons learnt’ from the multi-agency practice in those cases. These reviews are expected to be completed by December 2019, as one review was previously put on hold pending legal proceedings relating to the case.

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. is also liaising with boroughs where learning reviews in those local authorities have links to Bexley and where there may be learning for Bexley agencies (as identified in the Child O review). A SCR from Dorset was discussed at the Learning from Practice Group in September 2019 and will be shared with the Multi-Agency Learning Forum in December 2019, in order to identify any learning or training opportunities for Bexley’s training programme and within individual agencies. The Tri-Borough Multi-Agency Learning Forum with Greenwich and Lewisham, is to ensure that learning from reviews is shared across boroughs to achieve a broader scope of learning and to share areas of practice that have shared focus areas such as adolescent risk and vulnerability.
6.2.4 Multi-agency audits
The Learning from Practice Group has completed 2 multi-agency audits and recommended 1 single-agency audit in 2019, following children’s records that were identified by group members and brought to discussion but did not meet the criteria to hold a learning review and or multi-agency audit. For each multi-agency audit, the practitioners involved were asked to complete an audit tool and attend a reflective discussion facilitated by the LFP chair and a panel formed of professionals from agencies across health, social care, police and education. The findings from these audits helped to identify areas of both good practice and areas for development, and were recorded in a summary briefing note for practitioners.

6.2.5 Cases discussed in the Learning from Practice group 2018/19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Serious Incident</th>
<th>Action taken / expected</th>
<th>Themes identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child O</td>
<td>Serious incident resulting in life saving interventions involving 4-year-old child on a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)</td>
<td>Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review initiated September 2019</td>
<td>• Information Sharing between agencies and boroughs who have been involved with the family • Special Guardianship Order arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby G</td>
<td>7 week old baby admitted to hospital with injuries which were suspected to be non-accidental.</td>
<td>Local Learning Review initiated May 2017: • Report – September 2018 • Briefing note – May 2019</td>
<td>• Engaging with fathers • Escalation • Parental Mental Health • Strategy discussions • Unexplained Injuries – differential diagnoses • Unexplained Injuries in pre-mobile babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby John</td>
<td>13 month old baby presented at Accident and Emergency with an unexplained head injury.</td>
<td>Serious Case Review initiated June 2017: • SCR Report – September 2018 • Executive Summary – September 2018 • Briefing note – September 2018</td>
<td>• Suspected Non Accidental Injury (NAI) • Engaging with fathers • Parental Consent • Unexplained Injuries – differential diagnoses • Professional Curiosity • Strategy discussions • Safe Uncertainty • Unexplained Injuries in pre-mobile babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby L</td>
<td>2-month-old baby sustaining life changing injuries.</td>
<td>Local Learning Review initiated April 2017: • Report and briefing note postponed due to court proceedings</td>
<td>• Fabricated Induced Illness (FII) • Unexplained Injuries in pre-mobile babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby L</td>
<td>3 month old baby presented to A&amp;E possible non-accidental injury.</td>
<td>Local Learning Review initiated October 2017: • Report - Quarter 1, 2020 • Briefing note - Quarter 1, 2020</td>
<td>• Engaging with fathers • Joint pre-birth assessments • Genograms • Professional Curiosity • Safe Uncertainty • Unexplained Injuries – differential diagnoses • Unexplained Injuries in pre-mobile babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>14 year old from Wolverhampton who admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for self-harm.</td>
<td>Single-Agency Audit initiated in May 2019: • Recommendations discussed at Learning from Practice meeting November 2019</td>
<td>• Children Missing Education • Respectful Practice • Voice of the child • Communication between Local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.6 Safeguarding Adults Board
The Learning from Practice Group worked closely with the Bexley Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) in 2018/19 to ensure that all reviews completed by the Adults Board, where there is involvement from and learning for children’s services, are discussed and the action plans monitored at each LFP group meeting. The LFP chair attends the sub-group meeting for SARs and ensures there is representation from Children’s Social Care at adult review meetings where relevant. The Safeguarding Adults Board manager also sits on the Multi-Agency Learning Forum to share significant learning from the BSAB.

Under the recommendation from SAR Mr K, the Learning from Practice Group produced one briefing note in 2019, in which the learning was shared with a multi-agency audience at a Learning from Reviews event in September 2019. The briefing identified learning for all services, by noting, ‘there was not a sufficient coordinated multi-agency approach when considering the needs of the family, both individually and as a whole’. This highlights the importance for close collaboration between Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. and the BSAB to adopt a ‘whole family approach’ where there are children involved in Adult reviews.

6.3 Learning reviews event – September 2019
Following recommendation from the Baby John SCR, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. held a learning from reviews event on 13th September 2019 for its multi-agency partners. The event started with the parents’ perspectives and included the following elements:
- Themes emerging from Bexley and other reviews
- Partner led sessions
- Group discussions on the learning from each review which parents helped facilitate
- Final reflections on the event from parents including the group singing of the song ‘Stand By Me’.
Attendance included 50 professionals across agencies including; adult and children’s social care, health, police, education, early years providers, youth service and the voluntary sector. Feedback from professionals who attended was very positive about the event; this included in relation to the parents “who were courageous to take part and speak about their personal experiences of social care”. One other attendee said, “I learnt a lot because the subject was interesting and the stories were real”.

[Image: Parental Experience, Positive Outcomes, Powerful Testimony]
7. Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) – until September 2019

7.1 Introduction

Bexley Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) has been reviewing the death of every child aged under 18 resident in Bexley since April 2008. CDOP functions are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. The CDOP works to a national methodology which assists with clarifying the cause and circumstances of a child death. The CDOP also identifies whether there were modifiable factors which may have contributed to the death and what, if any, actions could be taken to prevent future deaths.

Bexley CDOP has been accountable to Bexley SHIELD, the Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People (previously Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board), and was required to prepare an annual report, which was presented to the Partnership Board. Bexley SHIELD agreed that this report will include deaths over the extended period of April 2018 – 29 September 2019 and will be the final report of Bexley CDOP under these arrangements. The new arrangements are set out below in 2.

7.2 New Arrangements

Changes to child death arrangements were part of the wider system transformation for safeguarding proposed by the Wood Review and incorporated into the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Responsibility for child death processes moved to local authorities and CCG’s with a deadline of 29 September 2019.

Going forward, Bexley, Lewisham and Greenwich have agreed to combine and be treated as a single area for the purposes of Child Death Reviews. The Child Death Review Partners (the local authorities and CCG’s in these boroughs) have committed to contribute shared funding to support a single central team to support all aspects of the management and administration of the Child Death Review Process from notification of the child’s death and assignment of a keyworker through to review at the monthly Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) including future costs of e-CDOP. The e-CDOP system is used in the tri-borough and across London to ensure that information can be shared securely and that the National Child Mortality Database receives the required information for each child death. Joint funding has been agreed to continue use of the system.

7.3 2018/19

The annual numbers of child deaths notified to Bexley CDOP have varied over the period 2008 to 2019 with between 11 and 20 cases being considered by the CDOP each year. In the 18 mth period covered by this annual report, 29 child deaths occurred (16 deaths in financial year 2018/19 and 13 deaths in the period April and September 2019).

Table 1. Summary of all child deaths in Bexley, April 2008 to Sept 2019

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<td>1-4 year</td>
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<td>10-14 year</td>
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The number of deaths each year varies but numbers are too small to comment on trends. The number of rapid response meetings is lower than in the last 2 years. This could be linked to the higher number of deaths in the first month of life, many of these were on the cusp of viability and were therefore expected deaths. Data for 2019/20 will be reported in the new arrangements by the Tri-Borough CDOP.

7.4 Learning from child deaths in Bexley

Learning from expected child death is valuable in terms of improvements that could be made in supporting families in preparation for the death of a child. Learning from cases of unexpected child death is valuable in terms of action to prevent similar future deaths. Three cases reviewed this year were subject to detailed multi agency review. The reviews made recommendations which have been actioned with outcomes monitored.

Developments linked to two themes from previous reviews have continued, with Bexley SHIELD promoting young people’s emotional wellbeing and public health, maternity and the universal 0-19yrs service continue to provide safer sleeping messages.

7.4.1 Neonatal deaths

Learning form sudden infant deaths (SIDS) is ongoing. With these type of cases there is no one obvious cause of death. Death could be due to a combination of factors. Experts believe SIDS occurs at a particular stage in a baby’s development, and that it affects babies who are vulnerable to certain environmental stresses, including tobacco smoke, getting tangled in bedding, overheating, put to sleep on front/side, a minor illness or a breathing obstruction. There is also an association between poor and overcrowded housing and co-sleeping on a bed, sofa or chair particularly with an adult who may have used alcohol or drugs.

Safer sleeping conversations are included in routine antenatal and new birth visits for health visitors and midwives. This includes a routine request to see where a baby will sleep by midwife or health visitors, enabling a more meaningful and tailored conversation about safer sleeping. This was reinforced during training delivered by the Lullaby Trust in 2018. The training was also commissioned by the Safeguarding Board for the wider children’s workforce.

Smoking cessation reduces the risk of sudden infant death, chest infections, asthma and meningitis. It also lowers the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth or the delivery of a premature of sickly baby. Two babies die suddenly every week in the UK because their mothers smoked during pregnancy or after birth. The Public Health Stop Smoking Team works closely with the three external maternity services providers at Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford, the Princess Royal Hospital in Farnborough and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich to ensure that all midwives are aware of the referral pathway for stop smoking support during pregnancy and beyond.

Training and carbon monoxide monitors have been provided by the Public Health Team to ensure that all midwives and health visitors prioritise discussing smoking and the availability of free quit support with all smokers they engage with during ante-natal and post-natal visits. Evidence shows that pregnant smokers want to know the hard facts about the risks of continuing to smoke during pregnancy and that hearing this message from their midwife is a powerful trigger to engaging with quit support. Despite training on effective delivery of smoking cessation messaging being delivered to midwives and health visitors, of the 188 referrals made to the team during 2018/19 only 46 attended
an initial appointment with 15 successfully quitting. There is more to be done by maternity and 0-19
providers to check that smokers referred take up the offer of quit support.

7.4.2 Bereavement services for families

Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) and Darent Valley Hospital (DVH) have a bereavement midwife who supports families whose babies die whilst receiving care in the neonatal unit. Bereavement support is also provided by the hospice team, health visitors and GPs.

Information provided by NHS England ‘When a child dies, A guide for parents and carers’ is included with a letter sent to parents explaining the child death review process. The booklet provides contact details of additional sources of support and advice. The new triborough review process will include increased provision to support and signpost families to bereavement services.

Bereavement midwives and hospice workers, who currently undertake many aspects of the keyworker role for neonatal deaths and children who die in hospice (approximately 60% of child deaths) will continue to undertake this function. A dedicated part time key worker will be based in the central team and will act as keyworker for all families that do not have a bereavement midwife or a hospice worker.
8. Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE)

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D., the South East Basic Command Unit (Metropolitan police) and safeguarding partners are committed to protecting children and young people who may be at risk. The Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting (MASE) is a strategic partnership group that ensures a tactical response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and other identified areas of exploitation including gangs, criminal exploitation and trafficking. It is responsible for developing the local multi-agency response in Bexley linking across with activities undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership and other strategic groups to ensure contextual safeguarding forms part of understanding the impact of exploitation and our response.

The Operational MASE meets weekly and acts as a platform to share and clarify information, establish risk, consider disruption and develop safety plans to meet the needs of young people who are or may be at risk of exploitation. The Strategic MASE meets monthly, and considers themes emerging from the Operational MASE. This meeting provides opportunity for strategic decision-making and consideration such as when there are systemic blockages in responding to exploitation. It is also a space for considering practice across all partner agencies and developing and reviewing current and new processes to adapt to the needs of local young people in Bexley.

8.1 Activities in the last 12 months

This year has seen the relaunch of the Strategic MASE in December 2018 to coincide with the merging of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) South East Basic Command Unit. This has seen the strengthening of partnership working and information sharing between police and other partners along with dedicated CSE and OCSAE (Online child abuse and sexual exploitation) teams, focusing on the safety of young people and providing clear reporting pathways for multi-agency referrals. Training has been delivered to staff and every MPS schools officer to raise awareness around spotting signs and symptoms of children and young persons at risk.

In March 2019, the first phase of Operation MAKESAFE took place on the Borough. MAKESAFE is a MPS initiative promoting awareness of CSE to local businesses enabling them to spot the signs and will continue with the second phase taking place in November 2019.

In April and July 2019, Bexley undertook local reviews to assess the working effectiveness of the MASE along with a presentation to the Partnership Board. This revealed the MASE to be a focused forum tackling adolescent risks within Bexley.

There are currently some excellent examples of prevention and partnership work within schools and early intervention projects.

8.2 Key decision-making and further development

The weekly Operational MASE and monthly Strategic MASE have consistent attendance and a good commitment from members including police and partnership safeguarding leads. Key workers attend the weekly Operational MASE to present cases and this provides for increased accountability and allows for robust multi agency action plans. The mapping of young people has created an enhanced picture of the young people concerned and their associates, which focuses on the VOLT model - victim, offender, location and themes.

Through the work of the weekly Operational MASE and Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D., it has been identified that there is a need to address the bigger themes around risk and safety more holistically. Far too often children and young people do not recognise they are at risk and CSE, and other forms of exploitation, which continues to be a priority and largely a hidden problem.
There is continued commitment to address the increasing and emerging threats to children and young people. Bexley continues to develop ways in which to ensure there is intelligence shared at the weekly Operational MASE from all panels that look at all aspects of adolescent risk including modern day slavery, missing, CSE, radicalisation, county lines, serious violence and youth offending. This will provide services with a better understanding of contextual risk.

Co-chairing by police and Children’s Social Care along with a strong commitment across relevant partner agencies has seen information sharing strengthened to improve protection, identification and prosecution. The current terms of reference is under review in order to incorporate a new multi-agency meeting, which will see all risks affecting children, and young people brought under one multi-agency panel.

The weekly Operational MASE is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of safety plans, and to reduce harm to young people as well as focussing on preventative aspects and early support. This will ensure a cohesive, timely and effective way of reducing harmful activity, providing problem profiles to achieve better protection and swiftly bring perpetrators to justice.

8.3 Future plans

The revised terms of reference for the weekly Operational MASE and monthly Strategic MASE will be disseminated to partners and will provide clear aims, responsibilities and accountability within both meetings. In addition, the membership for both meetings will be continually reviewed to ensure that it is effective and has the right level of representation, and an appropriate focus on all areas of adolescent risk including CSE, criminal exploitation, county lines, modern day slavery and radicalisation.

Formulated data sets will be provided from all key partners involved in responding to vulnerable young people. The data and information from individual panels will collectively be used to develop more informed action plans and a robust, coordinated multi agency response. For example, the police will share information on arrests, prosecution, missing persons, county lines and CSE. Education will provide data on missing, exclusions and harmful behaviours. Health will provide data on sexual health, mental health, substance misuse.

The weekly Operational and monthly Strategic MASE will be renamed to reflect the full scope of responsibility, which is to consider all aspects of adolescent vulnerability. A template for collation of information from the Operational MASE to feed into the Strategic MASE is being developed to ensure there is information shared with strategic leads, which can be analysed and considered for decision making purposes. The need for a dedicated analyst role has been identified to ensure there is a more in-depth analysis of information to inform both meetings.

Finally, a local mock Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) took place in November 2019. The outcome from this JTAI will build on our work and inform on how agencies work together to support and protect vulnerable children and young people around adolescent risks.

The collaborative work of SHIELD, and partner agencies, through audits has identified that young people need to be supported in participating in safety planning. This essential involvement will ensure that young people have a say in how they are best protected and cared for whilst also ensuring that families are informed of any issues that may affect them throughout. The learning from audits in respect of young people and family participation continues to be embedded in the multi-agency work of the partnership.
9. Feedback from relevant agencies

The organisations included in the tables below were selected by the 3 safeguarding partners as relevant agencies for Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. for 2018/19 and were asked to complete a Section 11 response in June 2019. In order to identify each agency’s key achievements and future plans in respect of safeguarding, the following 2 questions were asked:

- What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?
- Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

Responses to these questions are set out below:

### 9.1 Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- The CCG is continuing to work with Lewisham and Greenwich CCGs to develop new child death review processes which meet the statutory guidance which is due to be published in June 2019.
- Developing the work plan and addressing the recommendations of Priority 2 of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.: partners will respond effectively to the mental ill health of parents so that they are supported to give their children the best start.
- The CCG has started the process of succession planning for the Designated Nurse post to ensure there is a smooth transition for when the current post holder leaves.
- The CCG has worked in partnership with Oxleas and the local authority to develop a new process for care leavers. This process involves the young person receiving a summary of their health for the period they have been in care. It is anticipated that this new process will ensure that all young people leaving care receive their health summary prior to their 18th birthday. To date every young person has received a health summary prior to leaving the service.
- Specialist training was delivered on supporting good health outcomes for children looked after. The training was delivered to foster carers on the management of withdrawal from substance misuse.
- Foster carers have fed back that they found the session very informative and had a better understanding of how to support their children.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- Work in partnership with SE London CCG Alliance to identify areas for joint working, aligning systems and processes in preparation for moving to a single SE London CCG.
- To deliver on the health recommendations for Priority 2 and ensure learning is embedded into practice.
- To continue to work in partnership with the Bexley Partnership Board to ensure that the three priorities set for 2019 -2020 are achieved by the 3 partners.
- To develop the quality of the existing performance dataset. This information is obtained from providers to facilitate accurate monitoring against national and local performance indicators.
- To increase the focus of systematically capturing the voice of children and young people across Bexley CCG and its commissioned services. The aim is to ensure that children and young people’s views are included and reflected in their care plans and subsequent care. In addition, that their voice is heard in any changes required to relevant services.

### 9.2 Bexley Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- Reviewing and amending our membership application process to include submission of a Safeguarding Policy.
- Providing increased resources and guidance to improve the quality of Safeguarding policies and procedures where necessary.
- Our Community Development project in Thamesmead has supported many small groups to develop safeguarding practice.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- Assuring that the local VCS is aware and implementing all current guidance- with a focus on small community groups.
- Relaunch the Safer Bexley Mark (which supports the achievement of the first priority).
- Support the Partnership to grow the VCS involvement in the Safeguarding Champions, and Domestic Abuse Champions.
9.3 Bromley Healthcare

What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?

- Safeguarding Champions have been embedded in the Bromley Healthcare Bexley 0-19 Children’s Public Health Service and are the conduit for disseminating information. They also provide feedback to help identify priority areas, and are members of the learning hub as required.
- The Safeguarding Children’s Team has continued to deliver Level 3 Training to 100% and have offered bespoke training as needed to all Bromley Healthcare staff working in Bexley covering learning from any Serious Case Review (SCR) such as making staff aware of the escalation process, professional challenge and professional curiosity. The training also includes assessing risk factors in vulnerable families based on the framework for assessment of need, update on Working Together 2018, LADO, information on CSE/Missing, FGM, the toxic trio, fabricated and induced illness and protective factors. Face to face safeguarding supervision has been at 100% and the Safeguarding Children’s Team has also been able to provide both an email and telephone consultation line to support staff in their decision making processes. The Safeguarding Children’s team has completed two audits to look at the quality and accuracy of the reports for initial and review case conferences and the quality of referrals to Children’s Social Care, provided by the Bexley 0-19 Children’s Public Health Service. They have shared the lessons learnt from these audits in bespoke training such as adding family history and functioning and evidence role of fathers in the reports.
- The Safeguarding Children’s Team have worked closely with the new Bromley Safeguarding Partnership Board. They have taken an active role in each of the Priorities by Bromley Healthcare staff taking on multi agency audits, feedback and attendance at key meetings. The Safeguarding Children’s Team have implemented learning from the Serious Case Review (SCR) on bruising in a non-mobile baby by sending out an organisational wide memo with implications for practice and how to refer. The organisation wide procedure was also updated in line with the NICE guidance, when to suspect child maltreatment. This learning is embedded in our training programs.
- Learning from John SCR has also been embedded in training considering the role of and including fathers in their work with families and the need for professionals to maintain an attitude of respectful uncertainty and how to be curious.

Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

- Bromley Healthcare Bexley 0-19 Children’s Public Health Service to continue to evidence maternal mental health in their Family Health Needs assessments, looking at parenting capacity and include an analysis of the impact of mental capacity on the ability to parent and exercise parental responsibility. This will include consideration of early intervention, support and sign posting as part of the Priority 2. There will be a continued focus on listening to the child and young person, formally documenting this to ensure that the voice of the child as well as the voice of vulnerable and hard to reach families is heard and documented on EMIS. Bromley Healthcare’s electronic record keeping system. This will also include young carers to be identified and supported at an early stage.
- A safeguarding supervision audit will be completed for 2019-2020 to capture the Bromley Healthcare’s supervisees’ perspective of supervision to ensure the Safeguarding Team are supervising staff effectively in order to enhance safeguarding practice and that policy and procedures are being followed. The Bromley Healthcare Safeguarding Children’s Team will include Contextual Safeguarding and Adverse Childhood Experiences into case scenarios in Level 3 training to equip staff to be better skilled and informed to meet the needs of our families, children and young people. In addition training will be linked with the Vulnerable Adolescents Thematic Review (Croydon 2019) and learning from Serious Case Reviews from both surrounding boroughs and London wide as well as adding learning from the three priorities on missing children, perinatal mental ill health and getting basic child protection right.
- Bromley Healthcare Bexley 0-19 Children’s Public Health Service to attend the domestic abuse training on the DASH risk assessment tool and be equipped and skilled to make robust assessments and be able and confident to refer into to MARAC for support and safety planning. The service to identify 2 Domestic Abuse Champions in the Bexley 0-19 Children’s Public Health Service. These 5 priorities to be added to an Action Plan for the Safeguarding Team and reviewed at the Named Nurse’s one to one’s with the Operational Safeguarding Lead who manages the service on a day to day basis.

9.4 Dartford & Gravesham NHS Trust

What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?

- Robust level 3 safeguarding training programme that is now being accessed by outside agencies.
- Robust safeguarding supervision programme that is available Trust wide.
- Joined up working with maternity services about pregnant women – Maternity Safeguarding Hub.
- Daily presence in paediatric and adult Emergency departments by Safeguarding Children’s Team to ensure a higher safeguarding profile and to provide advice and support.
- Introduction of Was Not Brought Policy. This will ensure any safeguarding risks of non-attendance are reviewed.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- All of the safeguarding priorities below are included and reviewed in the safeguarding report for Trust Safeguarding Committee and the Quality and Safety Committee.
- Review of safeguarding audit plan.
- Review of Liaison processes.
- Keeping training compliance above 85%.
- Liaison between CAMHS and children’s social care when a child has behavioural or mental health problems.
- Management of children with difficult and disruptive behaviour when in-patients on the children’s ward.

9.5 Healthwatch Bexley

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- Presenting the Healthwatch Bexley’s Young Carer’s report to the Safeguarding Partnership in April 2019, with resulting actions which are in the process of being taken forward.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- To continue to engage with children and young people and listen to them in schools in Bexley.
- To continue on from our Young Carers report by following up the recommendations made.

9.6 Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- All levels of safeguarding children training are evaluated, and the feedback is positive. In maternity, the training has become more interactive, scenario-based and includes learning from SCR’s (Serious Case Reviews). In addition a workshop is run 6 times each year (3 on each site). External partner agencies such as FNP, Social care, Domestic abuse agencies participate, giving staff an opportunity to meet and interact with teams external to the acute service.
- Level 3 training now includes a session delivered by the Named Nurses; the session is dedicated to disseminating learning from local serious case reviews. The Trust Lead Named Nurse has commenced a Safeguarding Forum, which is aimed at providing service leads the opportunity to participate in service delivery and changes related to safeguarding children. In addition, the session includes an enhanced safeguarding supervision session, which brings together professionals from different disciplines working with the same child/family. The purpose is to resolve issues or identify cases which require further escalation.
- The new Bexley Partnership Board put forward three priorities for 2018-2019 with partner agencies to undertake one each. Health was allocated Priority 2 (January - April 2019) which focused on the effects of parental mental health on children. Staff from QEH played a pivotal role in the Learning Hub activities and contributed to several audits.
- Safeguarding Supervision has recently been reviewed and this has enabled the team to extend supervision to staff working in specialist children’s areas within the Trust. In maternity routine safeguarding supervision has been established for all community midwives every 6-8 weeks, Midwives working in specialist teams have supervision every month.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- To continue to build frontline staff knowledge and competence in the early identification of vulnerabilities and thereby enable a quick response (early intervention). To increase training rates and support staff, greater flexibility will be offered around L3 safeguarding training to accommodate staff requests. This will include raising the profile of contextual safeguarding and an understanding of early help services, across all sites.
- To review and strengthen safeguarding processes, safeguarding supervision and practice within maternity services.
- To develop a robust training strategy (Trust wide) which demonstrates responsiveness to the ever-changing safeguarding agenda – i.e. share learning from Serious Case Reviews and audits to improve practice.
• To ensure appropriate activity databases are in place to accurately capture and assess emerging themes from ED attendances and maternity safeguarding services.
• To strengthen safeguarding supervision provision and embed a new enhanced (multi-agency) supervision model.
  To continue to roll out safeguarding supervision across site for community midwives and specialist midwives.

9.7 London Borough of Bexley Children Social Care

What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?

• Practitioners know the children and families and relationships are central. There is great progress with participation and engagement with families and young people. Children & Young people are seen on a regular basis with their wishes and feelings being sought and considered as part of the Signs Of Safety approach to safety planning. There is a commitment to caseloads of 17 – unless exceptions sign off by head of service, and this is a critical factor in enabling social workers time for direct work with children / young people. Caseloads are holding for the most part. It has been recognised that there is pressure in the Referral & Assessment Teams and plans are progressing to create a fourth team.
• There is significant Investment in practice & workforce –
  o Phase 2 of Signs of Safety – our independence from the England Innovation
  o Signs of safety team, new action learning sets, participation team and young care experienced apprentices (x 8 now across Council)
  o Migration to ‘signs of safety’ case management - child protection and family support.
• Our vision continues – ‘Children should grow up and achieve in their families and networks when it is in their best interests and safe enough for them to do so – continuing to check and balance:
  o Emerging new families together strategy
  o Family well-being remains good – now has capacity for 400 children across 3 teams
  o ‘staying together’ is a good service – but sometimes involved too late
  o Looked After Children numbers remain stable between 223 and 230 – lower rate /10000 compared to national and SN - 40/10000 – 228 at March 2019 - 40 are unaccompanied children
• There is evidence of good management oversight – with regular audits (1 /month and 25% moderated, manager reports and performance board) & complex families known in each team. Q4 Practice audits typically showing quality of practice is good. Regular supervision - 96% in March 2019, with group supervision also offered
• MASH remains strong with great multi-professional profile – 20% in March 2019 contacts convert to referral and therefore assessment. Timeliness in the social work service remains good – 50% of assessments where completed in first 7 weeks and 89% within 9 weeks in March 2019. Audits graded the quality of assessments as mostly good.

Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

• Continued development, refining and embedding of Signs of Safety model including
  o Our use of family networks and ‘staying together’ for all crises
  o The quality of assessment – using all (7) Signs of Safety domains - analysis ( specifically danger statements, safety goals and actions with families)
  o Use practice intensive to examine decisions to go to child protection enquiry, revise our practice dependant on emerging themes.
  o Our decisions, actions, pace and bottom lines need to be consistently good – timeliness not timescales
  o Team manager confidence in use of ‘signs of safety’
  o Consistent use by practitioners and managers of Signs of Safety basics.
We need to develop a Signs of Safety Quality Assurance Framework to improving our understanding of practice. Critical to this process is collaborative use of audits to answer ‘have we helped family/child to achieve their goals’ – i.e. impact and difference
• The trend in high rate of re-referral has continued and we need retain our focus on re-referrals and quality of initial practice. Implement the recommendations of the short re-referrals review in April 2019 to ensure that social workers are consistently being rigorous in understand the family history and analysing the current risks in the context of any past harm, and that managers are ensuring they are satisfied that social workers understand the family history. Resubmit a 2nd review at the end of June 2019, updating on the actions now in place, evidencing improved practice.
• Improve staff recruitment and retention – frontline and senior team. 2017/18 and 2018/19 - 22-24% turnover at frontline – largely less than 3 years qualified. We need to work with HR to refresh the Workforce Strategy – setting out our vision for the recruitment, development and retention of staff.
• The trend in low conversion rate from Section 47 child protection investigation to children being subject to Child Protection Plans continues. This trend implies that too many families may be subject to child protection
enquiries when there is not sufficient evidence of risk of significant harm and we should undertake robust Section 17 child in need assessments in some cases instead. Task and Finish Group to be created to look at:

- **S47's frequency**
- **S47's proportion going progressing to Child Protection Plan**

Performance data and audits should be utilised to monitor and evidence progress.

- We need to develop our multi-agency strategic response to Vulnerable adolescents; including an increase in disruption activity between groups of young people who are at risk from organised abuse and criminal exploitation; improved collation and use of performance information to understand our local context and target our response accordingly. We need to improve our understanding of what the return home interview data is telling us, currently data collation is from different sources and is not being utilised strategically.

### 9.8 London Borough of Bexley Community Safety

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- Producing notification template with LBB housing for occasions when gang members present at Bexley for housing. Risk assessments carried out to consider safeguarding, threat and harm and potential opposing gang risks.
- Moving families from borough when risk identified and can not be managed locally or implementing robust safeguarding plans for gang members and domestic abuse in borough.
- All secondary school staff received gangs training enabling early identification and promoting local processes for notification providing an early response to safeguarding against risk, threat and harm.
- Escalation of cases to child protection when risk identified and co-location of an IDVA in MASH
- Training social workers in responding to domestic abuse (safe enquiry) and Level 3 Domestic Abuse Dynamics including Safe Lives DASH Risk Assessment ensuring early identification and notification of MARAC referrals.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- To continue to identify and risk assess gang members and provide multi agency response to safeguarding these individuals and their families
- Protecting vulnerable victims from crime, disorder and ASB including DA
- Ensure a robust notification procedure is in place following critical incidents aligning with all appropriate agencies.
- Monitoring and identifying emerging trends and providing a robust response to areas such as knife crime and serious youth violence.
- Continue to promote safeguarding training offered by Community Safety Services such as gangs, Prevent, Problem Solving and Domestic Abuse.

### 9.9 London Borough of Bexley Education and Inclusion Services

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- Joint protocol between Youth Offending and Children’s Social Care developed and improved.
- Link social worker in all schools.
- Agreeing principles of “no need to exclude” with schools.
- Ofsted HMI presentations to Bexley headteachers regarding new framework.
- Preparation for inspection of youth offending services.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- Implement “no need to exclude” in schools.
- Increased joint work across education and social care inc. youth offending, CME, gangs, CSE.
- Review impact of link social worker in schools.
- Audit all safeguarding training.
- Achieve a successful YOT inspection outcome.
### 9.10 London Borough of Bexley Libraries

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- Annual review of the departmental Safeguarding Children Policy carried out in January 2019 and circulated to all library staff.
- All library staff are aware of the Safeguarding Policy, processes and procedures and the escalation process.
- New library staff undertake the mandatory training on Evolve and read the Safeguarding Policy as part of the induction process. Progress is recorded centrally for the department.
- No child safeguarding incidents were recorded in libraries between October 2018 and June 2019.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- Annual review of the departmental Safeguarding Children Policy to be carried out in January 2020 and to be circulated to all library staff.
- Ensure all new library staff read the Policy and undertake the mandatory course, “Safeguarding - child protection for non-children’s services workers” as part of their induction process. This will be monitored centrally for the department.
- Ensure all library staff remain aware of the departmental Child Safeguarding Policy, processes and procedures and the escalation process.
- Departmental Safeguarding Children Policy to be discussed at Library Managers Meetings.

### 9.11 London Borough of Bexley Public Health

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- Public Health is linked into the Board’s priority ‘Respond effectively to the mental ill health of parents during the perinatal period so that they are supported to give their children the best start.’. Local parents have asked for peer support groups around mental health. Public Health is part of the working group that is scoping this out, along with partners from LBB, CCG and the voluntary sector.
- Safeguarding is an important facet of the System-wide Prevention Strategy both for children and adults. By placing the wellbeing and safety of children at the heart of the strategy in the thematic area of children and having an overarching priority of person-centred care in the People’s domain – it links prevention with safeguarding explicitly.
- We have recruited a full-time permanent consultant in public health who will be the Bexley Public Health lead in the CDOP process and safeguarding, in conjunction with the Director of Public Health.
- Making every contact count is a major part of the Policies and Practices part of the System-wide Prevention Strategy – this has important implications around making safeguarding everybody’s business and counteracting “wilful blindness” in the workforce.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- To work in partnership with Children’s Services to ensure that (i) the children of substance misusers in treatment are appropriately identified and referred to children’s services as necessary, and (ii) substance misuse issues in parents of children engaged with social care are appropriately identified and referrals made as require
- Safeguarding is an important facet of the System-wide Prevention Strategy both for children and adults. By placing the wellbeing and safety of children at the heart of the strategy in the thematic area of children and having an overarching priority of person-centred care in the People’s domain – it links prevention with safeguarding explicitly.
- Making every contact count is a major part of the Policies and Practices part of the System-wide Prevention Strategy – this has important implications around making safeguarding everybody’s business and counteracting any “wilful blindness” in the workforce.
- With the added capacity, ensuring that the CDOP processes (which are still being developed at Tri-Borough level) work for Bexley and are robust.
- Ensure that the design of the future IUCS takes into account the views and ideas of children and their parents, and that safeguarding is factored into the design of the system.
9.12 London Borough of Bexley Sports and Leisure Services

What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?

- Ensured that all London Youth Games volunteers for the were DBS checked and had appropriate qualifications for the activity they were assisting in.
- GDPR - Challenged organisers of the London Youth Games regarding data protection of young people to ensure GDPR compliance. We were proactive in designing a bespoke agreement to resolve this (that was signed off by the LYG acting CEO). We also changed registration and parental consent forms to ensure GDPR compliance. Our PE and School Sport team have also been proactive in working with the Bexley Services Network to drive change around GDPR (this includes registers, information distribution via email etc).
- At the start of each academic year, a safeguarding checklist is sent out to all schools in the borough from the department’s PE and School Sports team advising the schools of best practice in terms of checking qualifications, DBS, First Aid and/or appropriate qualifications for delivering activities within the school setting.
- Staff at Erith Leisure Centre (operated by Parkwood Leisure) demonstrated the fact that they were well trained in identifying issues and following procedures appropriately to report any concerns to the correct agencies following a safeguarding incident at their swimming pool. The incident was appropriately recorded, reported (to the Council’s Safeguarding Team) and escalated, with additional support offered to the young person’s family.
- The Sport and Leisure team led on developing and validating destination sites for Children’s University – offering structured learning beyond the classroom. Through our work Danson Park Adventures, Barnehurst Golf Course, Sporting Club Thamesmead, Crook Log Leisure Centre and Sidcup Leisure Centre were all validated. The Children’s University validation process assures the quality of the learning and includes agreement (by validators) that each site is committed to safeguarding.

Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

- Ensuring volunteers are compliant with the Governments GDPR standards for example, storing, obtaining and destroying data in accordance with the guidelines. This includes sharing personal data and photos and understanding the importance of involving third party agencies when obtaining the information.
- Increasing the number of volunteers and volunteer managers involved in the London Youth Games attending the free of charge safeguarding course.
- Review the department Safeguarding and Protection of Children and Young People policy on an annual basis to ensure it is kept up to date and in liaison with the BSCB.
- Carry out review of the Leisure Centre’s safeguarding policies as put in place by Parkwood Leisure to ensure they are adequate and implemented and that staff are trained accordingly, including undertaking due diligence spot checks.
- Review of whether more formalised feedback should be undertaken with young people (in the past we have been guilty of requesting too much feedback without necessarily being able to do anything with this).

9.13 London Borough of Bexley Youth Offending Services

What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?

- Review of YOS Risk Policy to give clear and updated guidance to staff, including reference to Modern Day Slavery and NRM process.
- All staff have been trained in trauma-informed practice.
- Review of Triage assessment tool to make this more robust and introduction of Signs of Safety principles to aid co-production of Triage intervention plans with young people and families.
- Review of Out of Court processes to ensure young people’s voices inform decision making and relevant safeguarding and vulnerability concerns are considered as part of determining disposals.
- Girls champion role established in the service, to look at specific needs of girls including how to keep them safe in a male-dominated service.

Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

- Improve collaborative working with CSC, ensuring joined-up planning.
- Contribute to developing the understanding and response to Child Criminal Exploitation through
  - Partnership working
  - Learning and sharing of best practice and new initiatives
  - Increase understanding of role of the YOS across the partnership
  - Contribute to review of prevention offer.
- Embed trauma informed practice across the service & develop family worker role in the YOS (specifically: intervention re: child on parent violence/abuse; and considering Solihull approach).
• Improve health offer for YOS young people, through reconfigured YOS nurse role.
• Enhance processes for seeking and analysing of feedback from children, young people and families through implementation of Viewpoint.

9.14 London Community Rehabilitation Company

What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?

• Implementation of Subject Matter Expert within each individual borough to support partnership working and information sharing.
• Development and implementation of ‘Lunch & Learn’ format to up-skill frontline practitioners and to disseminate learnings from Serious Case Reviews.
• Implementation of area specific Public Protection Boards to ensure greater operational oversight to key risk management areas including safeguarding.
• Review of internal MASH procedures to develop action plan and identify current operating risks.
• Implementation of new case recording and assessment IT system, Omnia, to support practitioners in the identification, assessment and management of safeguarding risks.

Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

• Improved use of and further embedding of Safeguarding Assessments (REACTA) and the required follow up actions in operational practice.
• Strengthen partnership work between LCRC and Children’s Social Care.
• Support development of workforce to up-skill in the realms of safeguarding practice.
• Ensure utilisation of LCRC MASH request process by Bexley Social Care to ensure adequate and timely information sharing.
• Develop suite of interventions to include work that is family focused and supports holistic risk management.

9.15 London Fire Brigade

What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?

• We have reviewed our referral process and secured provisional agreement to update this (subject to full staff consultation). The aim of the update is to create a more streamlined, efficient process that will improve internal turnaround times from raising of concerns through to sharing referrals with social services.
• We have contributed to the creation of a national safeguarding guidance for all Fire and Rescue Services, via our involvement with the NFCC Safeguarding Working Group. This content of this guidance has now been finalised and we are awaiting publication.
• In order to improve internal awareness of safeguarding across all staff groups we have started using existing communications platforms to highlight important issues/themes around the subject.
• We have offered a £1,000 2018/19 contribution to every London borough in support of local safeguarding boards and this offer has been accepted by 23 boroughs to date.
• We have included safeguarding awareness within the new Community Safety element of our Firefighter Development (new recruits) training package.

Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

• Subject to approval being secured to update the referral process, we will update our Safeguarding Children policy to incorporate these changes.
• We are reviewing our training provision and will be looking to extend/enhance our offering for those most heavily involved in the referral process.
• In relation to safeguarding referrals, we are currently developing a Person At Risk form to help improve the quality of our information capturing, sharing and monitoring. The form is currently in the test stages and we plan for this to go live in 2019/20.
• We have committed to adopting a more coordinated approach to our involvement in SAR/SCRs, particularly in relation to a) supporting Borough Commanders through the process and b) sharing the learning afterwards. We are already trialing this approach following a 2018/19 SAR in Haringey and, once we have incorporated any lessons learned, we plan to roll this out pan-London.
• In order to build upon work already underway to improve internal awareness of safeguarding, we will be trialing the use of previously underutilised methods of internal communication. For example, we have created a new...
area of the intranet which (once populated) will be dedicated solely to safeguarding. We also plan to create a familiarisation DVD for station-based, frontline staff as part of a Watch Briefing/Reference pack.

9.16 Metropolitan Police Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The move to the BCU model which has led to a more joined up approach to child and adult safeguarding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Launch Of Operation Encompass.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Launch Of Daily Multi agency meetings to discuss merlin reports particularly commented upon by Ofsted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Working with Safer lives to trial new working practices for Domestic violence within Bexley MASH and the police.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The role out of the VAF template across all Merlin reports on the BCU which is now being used on the majority of merlin reports allowing for better safeguarding and reports.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Protect and support: Focus on what matters most to Londoners:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Quality assurance processes by the safeguarding boards and partners provide reassurance that basic practice across all agencies is effectively safeguarding young people</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Enduring support to vulnerable adults, children and young people who have been exploited is delivered, ensuring that what is offered is appropriate for each individual, child or young person based on their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and the nature of the exploitation that they have experienced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o The Safeguarding boards develop their individual and collective expertise through joint learning exercises and strong collaboration across the South East. Partnerships to be open to joint commissioning opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Set strategic direction for safeguarding across the BCU, understanding the strategic partnerships to deliver a best framework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowing our problem and knowing our response / mobilise partners and the public:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Continually developing and understanding our problem profile in the context of vulnerability, perpetrators and the spaces and places they frequent online and offline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Professionals who come into contact with adults, children and young people. They have relevant and proportionate knowledge of the broader profile of vulnerability. This includes the factors that exacerbate risk and the consequential vulnerabilities arising from exploitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Engaging, educating and empowering the broader community forums a critical element and this work will be directly supported and informed by the Adult and Child Safeguarding boards of Bexley.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Analytical support – to be coordinated across a range of agencies to identify themes, patterns and trends relating to vulnerability. Stronger intelligence gathering and sharing across the partnerships on individuals, peer groups and geographic hotspots engages a tactical response from the partnership to make young people and vulnerable adults safer. This intelligence should include information gathered from young people, their families and the wider community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Contextual safeguarding – We will ensure that our safeguarding response is contextual in relation to the people and places we, as a partnership, are protecting from harm. This approach will be from cradle to grave in all safeguarding matters that officers come across on a daily basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Disruption and Prosecution / achieve the best outcomes in the pursuit of justice and in support of victims:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Working with Professionals to identify, assess and mitigate any vulnerabilities that might reduce the chances of young people exiting gang culture or involvement in youth crime and violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Ensure robust policing responses to perpetrators are in place: agreeing and monitoring investigation plans to run alongside support plans developed in response to a child sexual exploitation referral.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Engage with agencies to effectively share information and routinely utilise intelligence-led disruption in relation to any local businesses, individuals or groups associated with exploitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Through Intelligence and partnership meetings ensure all agencies flexibly apply the full range of disruption tactics available through both criminal and civil routes to protect children and young people, including powers available in relation to licensing, health and safety, fraud, housing provision and other related legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Mechanisms put in place to ensure Young people demonstrating harmful sexual behaviours are identified and support put in place to address their behaviours, with their own vulnerabilities and developmental stage being considered within any response.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Robust offender management strategies post-conviction and/or effective intervention strategies that reduce the risk presented by identified abusers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Learning, developing & support:
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to capture learning from a number of sources; Local, Partnership, OFSTED, JTAI, HMIC, SCR, SAR, DHR. We will be able to demonstrate how that learning informs practice. Internal and multi-agency audits used to support learning and development of practice.
- Completing the implementation of the Bexley local learning hub (which brings frontline practice challenges to the board) to evaluate the other authorities learning models and to work towards a hub model and priorities as part of tri-borough multi-agency safeguarding arrangements supported by the early adopters bid to Department of Education.
- Establishing an annual programme of safeguarding partnership improvement and delivery priorities that are shared across the new BCU.
- Establishing shared mechanisms and processes for initiating local serious case reviews, which incorporate a shared tri-borough, multi-agency serious incident and learning sub-group. Each review to be led by one of the three participating local authorities and published across the local areas. This strand will also consider the provisions of a bi-annual learning and improvement report (with conference) for the local tri-borough area.
- Establishing Tri-Borough arrangements following the death of a child. Ensure that we learn from these as part of business as usual.
- Explore Omni-competence and continual professional development in the safeguarding arena. Look for local, regional and national best practise to support the development of Police Safeguarding Professionals.
- Deliver training around Mental Health training to all SE BCU frontline officers.

Prevention and early intervention:
- The performance of early help systems to reduce the need for statutory interventions – effectively dealing with need and vulnerability. Early help is subject to ongoing scrutiny by the safeguarding boards testing the difference it is making to children and young people’s lives.
- Young people who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation (i.e. looked after children, missing children) are identified early and supported by their families/carers, professionals, and their community to prevent and build resilience against exploitation.
- Schools deliver high quality Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and take a whole-school approach to gender equality, safeguarding, and preventing exploitation.
- Professionals engaged in providing universal and targeted services to adults young people, empowering them to identify harmful behaviours and supporting them to build positive and healthy attitudes towards relationships and friendships, gender identity, and sexuality.
- Public trust is built through proven and visible positive attitudes towards all cases involving vulnerable persons. It is essential that Police and the local authorities of Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley have current and effective information sharing agreements.
- Attending all initial case conferences – achieving 100% performance following onto 100% attendance at follow-up conferences.

9.17 National Probation Service – London Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich Cluster

What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?

- Improved sharing of information between agencies including in MAPPA forums.
- From HMIP Inspection published in May 2019: Officers engaged well in the assessment and planning stages of supervision and offending-related needs were appropriately considered and analysed.
- Dedicated Safeguarding SPOC to deal with all Safeguarding queries within required timescales of the MASH framework.
- Dissemination of information/updates from the Safeguarding partnership to all staff.

Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

- To ensure that risk of harm is fully considered in all cases, including to children and victims, using all relevant assessment tools, including ARMS.
- To develop an administrative process to deal with MASH Safeguarding requests for information.
- To ensure all staff (including new staff) complete required safeguarding training.
### 9.18 Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

**What were your agency’s top safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing your Section 11 response (June 2019)?**

- We continue to ensure compliance with safeguarding children supervision, which is a mandatory requirement for all practitioners working with children and young people. Our most recent supervision survey undertaken in April 2019 evidenced a positive impact on practice through raising staff confidence in decision making, contribution to partnership working and challenging professional practice. In response to staff feedback in relation to practical arrangements of the sessions, we are now working with managers to ensure that we alter times of sessions to suit part-time staff.
- We have fully participated in the BSCP Learning Hubs.
- We have ensured regular representation at the MASE panel.
- CAMHS have introduced community based consultation to schools to proactively support colleagues in education. The aim is for school safeguarding teams/designated leads develop understanding of the overlap and distinguishing features of clinical and safeguarding needs and risks. Consultation sessions are now successfully run on a termly basis.
- Embedding and integrating a Safeguarding Form within the clinical recording framework Rio within CAMHS service.

**Can you set out your agency’s top safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?**

- **Basic safeguarding and child protection practice across services underpinned by Think Family approach:**
  - Focus on ensuring robust safeguarding practice including clarity and consistency of processes for record keeping, information sharing, children’s social care referrals, child death and RIO documentation of children within adult networks;
  - Raise awareness of the role of fathers and men in families;
  - Adult mental health staff to consider service users as parents.
- **Perinatal mental health and under 1’s:**
  - Raise awareness of mental health difficulties in pregnancy and postpartum and potential impact on parenting capacity and mother-infant and family relationships;
  - Raise awareness of the link between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and mental health difficulties;
  - Continue to raise awareness of vulnerabilities of babies under 1 year old.
- **Children with specific vulnerabilities (including contextual safeguarding) and complex health needs:**
  - Continue to develop practitioner confidence in recognising and addressing risks associated with extra-familial risks, such as FGM, Exploitation, CSE, Missing, Gangs and Radicalisation;
  - Develop the role of a health coordinator for children with complex and chronic health needs;
  - Raise awareness of safeguarding issues of children who are disabled.
- **Adolescent neglect and emotional wellbeing with focus on self-harm:**
  - Continue to raise awareness of Adolescent neglect and emotional wellbeing, particularly self-harm;
  - Introduce additional support to CAMHS services through provision of additional consultation sessions run by the Safeguarding children team.
- **Continue to promote culture of learning arising from child safeguarding reviews, audits and inspections:**
  - Actively contribute to Child Safeguarding Reviews, Multi-agency Audits, inspections and other relevant forums and provide a variety of ways to disseminate learning;
  - Work in collaboration with Oxleas Safeguarding Adults team towards embedding Think Family Safeguarding;
  - Promote partnership working.

*Section 13.5 describes in more detail the partnership’s Section 11 activity.*
10. Multi-agency training

10.1 Training and development activity 2019

Working Together 2018 includes the responsibilities of the 3 safeguarding partners (CCG, Police and Local Authority) in relation to training: “The three safeguarding partners should consider what training is needed locally and how they will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any training they commission” (page 14).

10.1.1 Developing the partnership’s training and development plan

The partnership’s training and development plan for 2019/20 was agreed by the Partnership Board in January 2019. The plan included events planned by Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board (BSCB) and scheduled to take place after September 2018 when the new safeguarding partnership was established and the BSCB ceased to be operational. These events are described in full in Appendix 1. Training and development activities have targeted staff with the following levels of need:

- Level 1 – Staff / volunteers who have occasional contact with children and young people
- Level 2 – Staff/volunteers who might get involved in safeguarding processes
- Level 3 – Staff where a substantial amount of time is spent working with vulnerable and at risk children young people
- Level 4 – Safeguarding champions.

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. committed to maintaining the following elements of the BSCB’s approach to multi-agency training:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>How Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. has taken forward the BSCB recommendation</th>
<th>Impact and effectiveness</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic safeguarding Level 1 e-learning</td>
<td>The new partnership has continued to fund the e-learning module and promoted it to partner agencies.</td>
<td>Smaller agencies (for example, nurseries and childminders) have welcomed access to the basic online module and the revised materials with additional Bexley content have led to greater usage of the course. 270 practitioners have completed the e-learning module in 2018/19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership monthly e-bulletin</td>
<td>Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. has produced monthly e-bulletins featuring partnership news, updates on guidance and legislation, training opportunities and useful resources.</td>
<td>Practitioner feedback has remained positive about the content and format of the e-bulletins as a mechanism for conveying a range of information to the wider partnership. 12 e-bulletins have been issued in 2018/19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchtime briefing sessions on statutory basics</td>
<td>The content of the briefing sessions has been reviewed in line with the partnership’s priorities and Working Together 2018 and has been delivered on a monthly basis (10 sessions per year).</td>
<td>Practitioner feedback has been positive in terms of the usefulness of the sessions. Numbers attending has been variable depending on the numbers of new starters identified. 61 practitioners have attended briefing sessions during 2018/19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masterclasses</td>
<td>Practice issues continue to be explored using the masterclass format. Topics included domestic abuse and contextual safeguarding.</td>
<td>The BSCB has had very good feedback about the masterclass format and approach. Attendance has remained high.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safeguarding champions events</td>
<td>A review of the safeguarding champions network was completed in 2019 – see Section 10.2.3 below.</td>
<td>Engagement and feedback from participants has been good but numbers of attendees have remained lower than expected. A cohort of ‘active’ champions has been identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>2 system learning events and a full partnership conference have taken place in the last 12 months.</td>
<td>Feedback about the events and conference has been very positive in terms of the content/learning and networking opportunities. 315 practitioners attended these 3 events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance and agency representation at all training and development activities is set out in Appendix 1.
### 10.1.2 Learning Hub recommendations

As set out in Section 5 of this report, the Learning Hub has made recommendations and suggested actions to improve multi-agency practice. This includes the following training and development activity for the multi-agency workforce:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Training and development-related recommendation(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 - Reduce the number of children and young people missing from home or care including those subjected to criminal and sexual exploitation | The partnership to commission multi-agency training on agency reporting in relation to missing and information-sharing/joint working. Material to include:  
  - Information-sharing procedures  
  - Reporting procedures  
  - Single Points of Contact (SPOCs)  
  - Role of MASE  
  - Case study (day in life of a missing young person) – what could we have done differently? |
| 2 - Respond effectively to the mental ill health of parents so that they are supported to give their children the best start | The partnership to commission and deliver multi-agency learning events to examine a range of practice issues relating to parental mental health:  
  - Benefits of early contacts  
  - Importance of taking a “think family approach” (i.e. who are the family’s support networks, what is the quality of the support?)  
  - Family-led support and offering flexible services  
  - Recognition of the impact of parental mental health on all members of the household  
  - Support for men/male parents and carer in that household/other male partners not necessarily related  
  - Awareness of childhood trauma and its impact on a family’s social history  
  - Referral pathways  
  - Processes for closing cases  
  - Importance of listening to the lived experience of parents. |
| 3 - Getting basic child protection right | Recommendations were made in response to a number of practice issues:  
  - Merge the current training provision on strategy meetings, core groups and conferences (within the Children’s Social Care learning offer) into a 2-day programme to be offered to partner organisations  
  - Ensure mandatory induction training on use of chronologies being monitored and followed up  
  - Plan and deliver communications, training and briefings across the partnership regarding the purpose of core groups  
  - Awareness building through future learning events specifically about how we manage and achieve safe uncertainty when Non-Accidental Injury (NAI) is a possibility and or in cases of differential diagnoses and or possible Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII). |

Recommendations from the Learning Hub for training and development activity were discussed in Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive and confirmed at the Partnership Board.
10.1.3 The partnership’s first annual conference

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. held its first annual conference in October 2019. The content of the conference included the following:

- Highlights from Priority 3 – Getting basic child protection right – presentation by Stephen Kitchman, Director of Children’s Services, LB Bexley
- Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII): A Wider View and an Alternative Approach – keynote presentation by Dr Danya Glaser
- Highlights from Priority 1 – Reduce the number of children and young people missing from home or care including those subjected to criminal and sexual exploitation – presentation by Jim Foley, Detective Superintendent, SE BCU
- Highlights from Priority 2 – Respond effectively to the mental ill health of parents so that they are supported to give their children the best start – presentation by Jill May, Head of Safeguarding, Bexley CCG
- Overview of Year 2 priorities
- Signs of Safety and restorative practice – presentation and group activity led by Barry Tilzey, Signs of Safety Practice Development Lead, LB Bexley
- Group discussions on 3 key questions:
  - Engagement with multi-agency work – what are you going to take forward from the partnership’s work in Year 1 within your own organisation?
  - Relationships between agencies – do you know your professional networks well?
  - Restorative working with families – what does this really mean?

85 practitioners attended the conference. The visual record of the conference can be found on page 29 of this report.

10.1.4 Other learning activities

A number of other learning activities have taken place during the reporting period:

- The safeguarding champions events are referenced below in Section 10.2 and described in full in Appendix 1
- An event focused on Bexley’s learning reviews (as well as some review from other areas) took place in September 2019 and is described in Section 6.3 above
- The system learning events (linked to the Learning Hub priorities) are described in Section 5 above.

10.1.5 Evaluating the impact of training and development activities

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive has commissioned one focused report on the impact of the partnership’s safeguarding champions network (see Section 10.2.3 below) during the reporting year and a wider report on the impact of the learning and development programme will be presented to the Partnership Board in January 2020.

10.2 Safeguarding champions

10.2.1 The role of a Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. safeguarding champion

The safeguarding champion role is central to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.’s ‘Back to Practice’ model. A breakdown of the safeguarding champion’s role and responsibilities is set out below:

- To be a focal point for the safeguarding partnership in passing on learning from learning reviews, audits and local/national priorities to staff within their setting
- To attend occasional workshops, where they will be given information in a multi-agency setting and have the opportunity of talking it through with colleagues from other agencies
- To cascade information to their colleagues within their work setting through team meetings/training events/supervision (for example, to publicise the partnership’s briefing sessions on statutory basics to new staff working in their agency)
- To meet with their line manager to discuss their role as a safeguarding champion
- To be on the partnership mailing list to receive bulletins/updates on relevant information to pass on to their colleagues
10.2.2 Safeguarding champions activities 2018/19

3 series of learning events for safeguarding champions have run during 2018/19 and are described in Appendix 1.

10.2.3 Review of the safeguarding champions network

As champions may have been nominated by managers or volunteered themselves for the role, previously Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board (BSCB) had limited control over nominations and whether individual champions held appropriate positions to be able to fulfil the requirements of the champions role profile. The BSCB recommended in its handover to the new safeguarding partnership in September 2018 that the champions network be reviewed and in particular the champions engagement strategy be refreshed.

In January 2019, the partnership held the details for 405 champions, consisting of professionals across a number of key agencies and organisations. An initial review by the partnership’s operational team as part of the BSCB handover indicated that the champions database required a review of members based on current attendance of individual champions at champions events (approximately one fifth of champions are attending learning events). Currently, safeguarding champions represent the following agencies:

- Early Years
- Schools
- Police
- Health
- Children’s Services (including Children’s Social Care)
- LBB staff (non-Children’s Services)
- Voluntary sector
- Emergency services.

The operational team undertook a review of the role of the safeguarding champion to identify whether the requirements are still appropriate, and if the arrangements currently in place support the individual to fulfil their duties as champion. Additionally, they reviewed the current list of champions to identify any gaps in representation by considering the current lists of champions by agency/organisation (in discussion with the training leads from those agencies/organisations). Attendance records at events over the last 12 months were considered as part of this work and champions were surveyed to obtain their feedback about the effectiveness of the network.

An analysis of attendance records from February/March 2019 and May/June 2019 events shows good representation from several agencies. However, historically only one fifth of the network had been attending each series of champions events despite the BSCB previously offering twilight sessions in response to requests to run sessions outside of main office hours. An emerging need to separate out ‘active’ champions – those who were committed to attending sessions and engaging in conversations about partnership working – from those on the network mailing list – those who wanted to receive resources, training materials and partnership updates – became apparent. 101 champions were found to be ‘active’ by this review.

A review of the number of registered champions within Children’s Social Care (LB Bexley) identified the need to increase the number of champions in this area. Elsewhere, training leads fed back that the current numbers of champions per agency was appropriate.

Verbal feedback given at champions sessions (as well as what was communicated via the survey) suggests that the material covered in the sessions has been well received and useful to the champions themselves and their colleagues in their respective work settings. However, an opportunity to use the network more effectively in the work of the Learning Hub was identified. Both written and verbal
feedback from champions noted the usefulness of the sessions in connecting individuals from different agencies, ‘putting names to faces’, and helping to demystify the working methods and priorities for the different agencies represented at champions sessions.

The review was shared with the Partnership Board in July 2019 and the following next steps were agreed following the review:

- Update the champions network list with additional champions from Children’s Social Care (LB Bexley)
- Issue information to the network to clarify the two-tier system of ‘active’ champions and those on the mailing list to receive resources
- Use future champions sessions to scope practice issues relating to the partnership’s priorities for Year 2 (to feed into the work of the Learning Hub)
- Review attendance numbers after each series of champions events to ensure the number of ‘active’ champions is closely monitored and any attendance issues addressed to ensure ongoing appropriate and sufficient representation.

10.3 Multi-agency auditing

Multi-agency auditing forms part of the Learning Hub’s 4-monthly cycle of activity. Audits have been planned accordingly by the Learning Hub, led by the Practice Review and Learning Manager, and coordinated by the Operational team as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Hub Priority</th>
<th>Multi-agency auditing activity undertaken</th>
<th>Number of children’s records considered</th>
<th>Agencies represented by the auditing team</th>
<th>Practitioners taking part in reflective discussions</th>
<th>Agencies represented in the reflective discussions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A sample week of children’s cases discussed at the weekly Operational MASE was chosen and of these, some were selected for audit and reflective discussion</td>
<td>4 cases were selected for deep dive review</td>
<td>Bexley, S.H.I.E.L.D., Police, Children’s Social Care, Bexley CCG, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, Education</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Education, Targeted Youth, Youth Offending Service, Voluntary Sector, Police, Family Wellbeing, Children’s Social Care, Children’s Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Of the 107 contacts and referrals into MASH between April 2018 and December 2018 where mental health</td>
<td>8 (4 where only the audit panel discussed the records)</td>
<td>Bexley, S.H.I.E.L.D., Children’s Social care, Education</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Children’s Social Care, Bromley Healthcare, Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noted as an issue were reviewed and of these cases, a sample of cases were considered for ‘deep dive’ &amp; ‘light touch’ audit discussions, to identify some of the challenges in the multi-agency response to parental mental health</td>
<td>• Health • CAMHS • Police (Adult mental health services provided written feedback which contributed to the process and subsequent findings)</td>
<td>• Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust • Bexley Moorings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Multi-agency auditing formed part of the activity during Children’s Social Care Practice Week (March 2019) and the findings were used to inform the scoping of Priority 3</td>
<td>4 (records were reviewed by the Practice Review and Learning Manager)</td>
<td>Not included for this audit type Not included for this audit type Not included for this audit type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In line with the practice model, Learning Hub members contributed to the case file audits and practitioners working with the children’s records selected were invited to reflective discussions facilitated by the Practice Review and Learning Manager and designated leads from the 3 safeguarding partners. The emerging findings from the multi-agency audits were used to inform the recommendation-setting by the Learning Hub for each of the partnership’s priorities – see Section 5 of this report.
11. Independent Scrutiny

11.1 The requirement for independent scrutiny

The independent scrutiny function is described in *Working Together 2018*. The 3 safeguarding partners are responsible for determining local arrangements. Independent scrutiny provides the critical challenge and appraisal of Bexley’s multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements in relation to children and young people by doing the following:

- Providing assurance in judging the effectiveness of services to protect children
- Assisting when there is disagreement between the leaders responsible for protecting children in the agencies involved in multi-agency arrangements
- Supporting a culture and environment conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge.

The independent scrutineer works independently of the 3 safeguarding partners and in liaison with Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.’s operations team.

11.2 Feedback from Nigel Richardson, Independent Scrutineer

In contributing to this first annual report reflecting on the Independent Scrutineer’s contribution to the revised safeguarding arrangements as required under new requirements laid out in *Working Together 2018*, it seems appropriate to make comment under the following headings:

**Initial thinking and inception**

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. was, to its credit, one of the first in the country to move from its existing safeguarding arrangements to new. As such, it had the benefit of joining a group of other Local Authority areas as an Early Adopter and has therefore been able to benefit from combined thinking around this issue and from independent research led by the University of Bedfordshire (locally) and the National Children’s Bureau (nationally).

The original scoping papers were thorough and well shared across the partnership and they clearly outlined the initial vision for Independent Scrutiny and as far as possible prescribed the parameters for the role in line with statutory requirements. Flexibility to respond to local learning did however remain key.

**Implementation and transition**

The role of Independent Scrutineer was subsequently formulated, approved by partners and advertised. An appointment was made and work formally commenced in October 2018. At this point, the overall vision for Bexley’s new partnership arrangements had been articulated – perhaps most succinctly as a clear move towards ‘a kind and healing system’ and the detail and architecture to support this is outlined elsewhere within this annual report.

Throughout Year One the Independent Scrutineer has provided support and challenge to the Partnership Boards, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive, the Learning Hubs linked to the key priorities, and the appropriate partnership conferences (called system learning events). He has also maintained regular contact with Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive and the operations team throughout the year.

Perhaps most striking in the Year One move from ‘the old’ to ‘the new’ way of working was the attention to the actual and practical elements of transition. Put another way, the challenge to Bexley was to ensure that the new arrangements still enabled the safe and secure adherence to national best practice and statutory requirements.

The ‘handover’ report from the previous Chair of Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board was key in this regard (and is available here: [BSCB Annual Report 2017/18](#)) as it acted as an ‘assurance blueprint’ to help ensure that some of the fundamentals of good safeguarding practice were not lost in transition. This ‘assurance check’ is something that is ongoing and it will undoubtedly continue into Year Two.

It is probably fair to say that this is a process of reflection that should be undertaken on a regular basis as part of the partnership’s ‘high support and high challenge’ commitment to safeguarding. The ‘check against statute’ elsewhere in this report (see Section 13.6) is to be commended.
**Assurance and Prioritisation**

While the ongoing ‘assurance checks’ remain vitally important one of the key challenges repeatedly introduced into the partnership’s thinking by the Independent Scrutineer has been the adoption of the three outcome-based accountability questions: How much have you done (quantity)? How well did you do it (quality)? And is anyone any better off (impact)?

The use of these questions (with the third being the most important) has continued and improved over the first year but further work on embedding this type of outcome-orientated language coupled with a stronger evidence base will be a priority for Year Two onwards.

To help with this thinking and to try and support the new partnership to be more rigorous in its pursuit of the answer to the ‘Is anyone any better off?’ (impact) question, the Independent Scrutineer also helped introduce an increased commitment to restorative practices as an approach that would help improve the all-important relationships, not only between partners in the professional network but also between professionals and children and families.

Continued investment in relationship building across the partnership will be key to the safeguarding of children across Bexley.

The background philosophy of the restorative approach can be found here: [https://l30relationalsystems.co.uk/](https://l30relationalsystems.co.uk/).

In a nutshell, it is about working ‘with’ people as opposed to doing things ‘to’ them, ‘for’ them, or doing nothing at all. The further embedding of the language and behaviours of restorative practice must be a key priority for Year Two onwards if the reality of ‘a kind and healing system’ is to be realised.

Further work on outcome-based accountability is also recommended as it will provide an increased transparency to the all-important ‘so what?’ question at the heart of the multi-agency safeguarding activity across Bexley.

**Future Planning**

The priorities outlined elsewhere in this report – for Year One and Year Two – are to be commended. A disproportionate focus on a small number of key issues is a real test for partnership working and for the potential of collective impact.

Bexley has already shown a strength in being able to make transparent how much it has done (quantity) and to a degree how well it has done things (quality) against its existing priorities for Year One. The outstanding challenge is to get much better and more confident in answering the final ‘so what?’ question – ‘Is anyone any better off?’

Whilst it can look back on Year One with some satisfaction, being able to answer that key third question with confidence that a positive difference has been made is a key challenge, particularly when considered from the lived experience of a child, young person or a family, and it is therefore critical to future planning for this partnership as it moves into Year Two and beyond.
12. Early adopter programme

12.1 Background

In May 2018, Bexley submitted a joint bid to the Department for Education (DfE) with Lewisham and Greenwich for ‘early adopter’ funding to test some specific elements of the proposed new arrangements in line with changes made within the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and new statutory guidance (Working Together 2018). The application was successful with initial notification being made by the DfE at the end of June 2018.

12.2 The shared priorities

The table below shows the 5 issues relating to key aspects of statutory guidance (Working Together 2018) that Bexley, Lewisham and Greenwich set out to explore in partnership, noting that for each local authority area, the safeguarding partnership arrangements are sovereign and remain separate in governance terms from each other. The table also includes an update on progressing each priority:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key aspect of statutory guidance</th>
<th>Tri-borough priority and focus</th>
<th>Update</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Addressing local practice challenges</strong></td>
<td><strong>Priority 1</strong>: To complete the implementation of the Bexley local learning hub, (which brings frontline practice challenges to the board) to evaluate the other authorities’ learning models and to consider roll–out of a hub model and priorities.</td>
<td>Bexley’s first Learning Hub focusing on missing children and young people took place on 30/10/18. Observers from Lewisham and Greenwich attended to consider the usefulness of the Learning Hub model. The Learning Hub model is fully established in Bexley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical areas</strong></td>
<td><strong>Priority 2</strong>: To establish an annual programme of safeguarding partnership improvement and delivery priorities that are shared across the new police Basic Command Unit and 3 neighbouring boroughs.</td>
<td>A tri-borough learning event on responses to missing young people took place in October 2019. Bexley will share a priority on adolescent vulnerability with Greenwich and Lewisham in Year 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent scrutiny</strong></td>
<td><strong>Priority 3</strong>: To explore the role of independent scrutiny across all 3 boroughs where a range of scrutiny arrangements will be tested. The focus will be on the impact of the partnership arrangements rather than processes. Establish a children and young people’s partnership board to enable children and young people to influence local safeguarding arrangements.</td>
<td>Bexley has developed its independent scrutiny programme for Year 2 in response to learning from the Early Adopter programme. Both Greenwich and Lewisham have independent scrutineers in post. The children and young people’s partnership board was not developed as a tri-borough arrangement but is part of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.’s work programme for Year 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local reviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Priority 4</strong>: To establish shared mechanisms and processes for initiating local serious case reviews, which incorporate a shared tri-borough, multi-agency serious incident and learning sub-group. Each review to be led by one of the 3 participating local authorities and published across the local areas. This strand will also consider the provisions of a bi-annual learning and</td>
<td>This priority established a project group in October 2018 looking at shared learning opportunities from local and national (formerly serious case) reviews as well as understanding and aligning local serious incidents procedures. The latter were developed locally in Bexley and agreed at the Partnership Board in October 2019. Terms of reference for the Tri-borough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Early Adopter programme ran from September 2018 until June 2019. Some key points to note about the programme:

- A steering group was established made up of senior leaders from children’s services, police, and health
- A project lead was appointed to coordinate activity across the tri-borough
- The University of Bedfordshire successfully applied to be the programme’s academic partner and provided an internal evaluation of progress with the 5 shared priorities
- The National Children’s Bureau (NCB) facilitated the learning across all 17 Early Adopter sites around the country and published its findings in August 2019 ([http://www.ncb.org.uk/what-we-do/together-we-deliver-better-childhood/building-integrated-child-centred-health-services-1](http://www.ncb.org.uk/what-we-do/together-we-deliver-better-childhood/building-integrated-child-centred-health-services-1)).

12.3 Next steps

The steering group met in September 2019 and agreed to continue to meet as a group to ensure the strategic oversight of the following tri-borough arrangements and activities:

- Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham will share a practice priority focused on adolescent vulnerability during 2020 and share any learning via the Tri-borough Learning Forum (see below)
- The role of independent scrutiny will remain a focus of steering group discussions with the view to consider opportunities for peer scrutiny and shared learning
- The Tri-borough Learning Forum will meet twice a year to coordinate shared learning across Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham and to feed into an annual learning event.
13. Governance

The following changes to the governance arrangements have been made since the partnership was launched in October 2018:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance meeting</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Section in annual report where change described</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive</td>
<td>Name change from Working Group</td>
<td>See Section 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE)</td>
<td>Revised terms of reference</td>
<td>See Section 8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)</td>
<td>The child death review arrangements have become tri-borough with Greenwich and Lewisham and sit outside of Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D</td>
<td>See Section 7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from Practice Group</td>
<td>Revised terms of reference</td>
<td>See Section 6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Agency Learning Forum</td>
<td>Newly-established group (linked to Bexley Safeguarding Adults Board and the Community Safety Partnership)</td>
<td>See Section 6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.1 Formal handover from Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board

Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board (BSCB) formally handed over the following at the point of the transition to new partnership arrangements in October 2018:

- BSCB development plan 2018/19 (any outstanding actions or ongoing priorities)
- Work of the Learning Hub under the BSCB
- 4 Serious Case Reviews and multi-agency local learning reviews
- Training and development plans for 2018/19.

Actions and recommendations from the Learning Hub were added to the partnership’s work plan for 2018/19. The 4 individual reviews handed over by the BSCB are noted in Section 6.2 above. The training activity handed over by the BSCB is described in Section 10 above and Appendix I below.
13.2 Voice of children, young people and families

The ‘Back to Practice’ model ensures that children, young people and families have the opportunity to engage in the work of the partnership and offer their views on the support we are providing to them in Bexley. The Learning Hub cycle (described in Section 5.1) includes provision for collecting feedback from children, young people and families through existing mechanisms and bespoke feedback events. Learning Hub members for each of the partnership’s Year 1 priorities have supported these engagement activities in conjunction with the partnership’s operational team. These are described in Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. set out in its published arrangements document in October 2018 to do the following in relation to seeking the views and active engagement of children, young people and families:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement activity</th>
<th>Update</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will continue to ask our relevant agencies and other partners how they ensure they have captured the voices of children, young people and families in their work as well as identifying other innovative ways to gather this feedback through the partnership</td>
<td>Requested as part of the Section 11 survey of relevant agencies in April 2019 and responses received will be used to inform the development of the Children and Family Learning Circle (see Sections 13.5 and 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where possible, we will involve families in learning reviews and events</td>
<td>See Section 6.3 on the learning reviews event that took place in September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A children and families partnership board will be a central element of the new arrangements – they will work with the system and professionals to influence the improvements we will continuously make</td>
<td>See Section 14 on the development of the Children and Family Learning Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate to the children and families partnership board will be a consultation group for young people to engage with the views of adolescents</td>
<td>See Section 14 on the development of the Children and Family Learning Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Bexley young Director and the participation team will support this work and advise on how best to link in with existing forums for children and young people in Bexley</td>
<td>See Section 14 on the development of the Children and Family Learning Circle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.3 Role of early years settings, schools and other educational establishments in the partnership including Designated Safeguarding Leads Network

Early years settings are well represented within the safeguarding champions network and at partnership learning events (see Appendix I for a breakdown of attendance at individual training events) – this includes representation by nurseries, playgroups and childminders. The partnership operations team also met with a group of childminders in May 2019 to obtain feedback on a range of safeguarding topics and will present at the childminders conference in February 2020.

Schools have fed back their views via the Designated Safeguarding Leads Network (formerly called the Designated Teachers Forum), the head teacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads Network representatives on the Partnership Board, the safeguarding champions network, and other learning events including the Learning Hub. The Designated Safeguarding Leads Network relaunched in October 2019, meets on a termly basis and is the main link to the partnership. The partnership’s operational team attend the network meetings to listen to feedback from the schools attending.

13.4 Role of youth offending and custody services, children and young people who run away and/or are missing from education in the partnership

Youth services in Bexley are well connected to the partnership and are key contributors to the ongoing work of the MASE. Youth services also contributed to the work of Priority 1. The work of
the MASE (including the weekly Operational MASE meeting that considers children and young people who go missing) is described in Section 8.

13.5 Section 11

In April 2019 and as part of the Learning Hub’s activity for Priority 3 on Getting basic child protection right, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. carried out a Section 11 audit of its relevant agencies. 18 requests for information were made and 18 responses were received. The survey questions included the following:

- How does your agency ensure that children are protected and their welfare is promoted?
- How do you listen to children and young people and take account of their wishes and feelings both in individual decisions and the development of arrangements?
- How does your agency quality assure and performance manage safeguarding practice?
- What were your agency’s top five safeguarding achievements between October 2018 and the time of completing this response (June 2019)?
- Can you set out your agency’s top five safeguarding priorities in the next 12 months?

Responses to the latter 2 questions can be found in Section 9. A report on the Section 11 activity and next steps was presented to the Partnership Board in October 2019. Section 11 visits have been planned to take place by March 2020 with the following objectives:

- Follow-up on Section 11 responses in questionnaires
- To engage with all relevant agencies rather than focus on the 3 statutory leads
- To identify any current practice issues for the relevant agency in relation to multi-agency working
- To check the effectiveness of the safeguarding champions network within that relevant agency
- To provide any partnership updates on current priorities
- To check on attendance at multi-agency training including any obstacles to attending.

13.6 Partnership self-assessment of statutory responsibilities

Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.’s operational team led on the production of a self-assessment template to review the partnership’s statutory responsibilities in line with Working Together 2018 following initial discussions with and agreement by the 3 lead safeguarding partners in March 2019. The self-assessment was completed and discussed in Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive in September 2019 and shared with the Partnership Board in October 2019. Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D.’s operational team will review the self-assessment quarterly and report on updated versions to Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive.

13.7 Operational team

In 2018/19, the 3 safeguarding partners have been supported by Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. operational team who have coordinated all of the partnership’s activity including the work of the Learning Hub. The Practice Review and Learning Manager has led the team during the first year of the partnership; this has included establishing the team structure going forward including the provision of a consultant social worker post within the team from September 2019 on a fixed term basis to support the work of the Learning Hub and the development of the Children and Family Learning Circle.

13.8 Budget

Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board was funded through a Pooled Budget and this was formally transferred to the new partnership arrangements in October 2018. The budgeted expenditure for 2019-20 is £276,550 and has been funded by income from the Council, health partners, the Police and
Probation Services. Partner contributions for 2019/20 were confirmed in January 2019. Funding contributions for 2020/21 will be confirmed at the Partnership Board in January 2020.

13.9 Published arrangements document

The partnership’s published arrangements document was issued in October 2018 in line with statutory guidance and submitted to the Department for Education accordingly. The Department for Education confirmed the document was compliant with the requirements set out in Working Together 2018.

A revised version of the published arrangements will be submitted to the Department for Education in December 2019 with the following updated sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of published arrangements document</th>
<th>Updated information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>Updated for Year 2 of the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The architecture of Bexley’s safeguarding partnership</td>
<td>Add revised sections on Working Group (now Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive), Learning from Practice Group, CDOP, MASE, plans for independent scrutiny for Year 2 and changes to Partnership Board membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of children, young people and families</td>
<td>Add Children and Family Learning Circle model and project outline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The document can be found here: Bexley SHIELD Partnership Arrangements.

13.10 Annual reporting arrangements

The Partnership Board will review a final draft of the annual report in January 2020 following sign-off by the 3 safeguarding partners. The report will then be submitted to the Department for Education. This annual report will be available on the partnership’s website here: http://www.bexleylscb.org.uk/annualreports.

Future annual reports will be produced accordingly to provide an evaluation of the work of each year of the partnership’s activity including the work of the Learning Hub.
14. Year 2

The key activities for the partnership in Year 2 (from October 2019) are as follows:

14.1 Learning Hub 2 priorities for Year 2

The Learning Hub priorities for Year 2 were initially considered by Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive in March 2019 and planning progressed in July 2019 with the support and challenge of the independent scrutineer. It was agreed to use the period between September and December 2019 to consolidate the work of the Year 1 Learning Hub priorities and to focus on 2 specific areas for development:

- Progressing plans to set up a Children and Family Learning Circle – see Section 14.2
- Delivering restorative practice training to an initial multi-agency group of practitioners and plan a wider roll-out of awareness sessions to Bexley agencies – see Section 14.3.

Priority 4 will be co-led by the Police and the Local Authority and work will begin in the Learning Hub in January 2020. The priority will consider adolescent vulnerability with detailed scoping of the work to be undertaken completed in December 2019.

Priority 5 will be co-led by the Local Authority and the CCG and will focus on basic child protection practice. This work will begin in April 2020. The impact of the Year 1 priorities on practice will be examined as part of the work of the Year 2 Learning Hubs.

14.2 Children and Family Learning Circle

Bexley Safeguarding Children’s Board considered the voice of the child as a subject in the Learning Hub in April 2018. As part of the handover to the new partnership arrangements in September 2018, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. received a record of the Learning Hub’s work and proposed next steps. The record highlighted the Department for Education’s Early Adopter programme (Bexley’s tri-borough work with Greenwich and Lewisham) which included a priority around setting up a Children and Families Partnership Board. Whilst this work has not progressed as a tri-borough arrangement, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. has continued to develop a consultative model and has made it a focus of the partnership’s Year 2 activity.

To support the development of the Children and Family Learning Circle approach, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. has examined the Family Advisory Board (FAB) model developed in Camden and is actively linked in with project leads in Camden. From discussions with colleagues in Camden, it is clear that the remit of the Family Advisory Board has developed organically over the last 6 years since it first met with an initial group of parents. In Bexley, the role of the Children and Family Learning Circle is something we hope will evolve over time as children, young people and parents learn about and come on board with the work. However, the 3 safeguarding partners have already considered the following ways in which the Children and Family Learning Circle might contribute to the work of the partnership:

- To provide feedback in relation to the partnership’s practice priorities, both in terms of
commenting on existing services and how they are performing, and in relation to the impact of any improvement recommendations made by the partnership

- To assist with the design of accessible and helpful information relating to Bexley services including statutory child protection services
- To develop a network of peer support and advocacy for parents involved in statutory child protection services (including when this is their first time experiencing these processes)
- To contribute to the work of the Learning from Practice Group in designing and delivering learning events in response to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and supporting to the involvement of parents involved in these reviews.

A project lead has been appointed and a project plan developed. An initial gathering of interested parents has been scheduled for December 2019.

14.3 Restorative practice

An introduction to restorative practice was given at the Partnership Board, within the Learning Hub, and at a System Learning Event in April 2019. Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive agreed for representatives from Bexley’s relevant agencies to attend a 3-day certificated programme on restorative practice with a view to developing local awareness training and a network of restorative champions. The training for 25 practitioners will take place in November 2019 with a follow-up session to plan local awareness sessions in December 2019.

14.4 Training and development plan 2020/21

The partnership’s training and development plan for 2020/21 will be presented to the Partnership Board in January 2020. Activity will include the following:

- Masterclasses on the multi-agency response to missing children and young people (following on from the work of Priority 1)
- Masterclasses on parental mental health (following on from the work of Priority 2)
- Multi-agency training on statutory child protection meetings (following on from the work of Priority 3).

14.5 Independent scrutiny activity

The 3 safeguarding partners met with the independent scrutineer in July 2019 to consider the programme of independent scrutiny in 2020/21. Areas for scrutiny discussed included:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Learning from Practice Group
- Engaging with Members of the Children and Adults Scrutiny Committee within LB Bexley to consider opportunities for alignment of scrutiny activity
- Engaging the wider Bexley community in children’s safeguarding
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the MASE arrangements.

This programme will be finalised in November 2019 in a series of meetings with Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Executive and the independent scrutineer.

14.6 Section 11 visits

The purpose of the visits is described in Section 13.5. Visits are due to take place by the end of March 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant agency</th>
<th>Lead from 3 partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthwatch Bexley</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB Bexley Libraries Service</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>London Fire Brigade</td>
<td>CCG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.7 Tri-borough work

Following the work of the Early Adopter Programme (see Section 12), the Steering Group (made up of senior leaders from the 3 safeguarding partners in Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham) met in September 2019 to review the effectiveness of their joint working and agree next steps. The future programme of work for the Tri-borough will include:

- 6-monthly Steering Group meetings (with revised terms of reference) – the next meeting is in March 2020
- Partnership operational team managers will meet quarterly (to plan the programme of Tri-borough meetings and events)
- The Tri-borough Learning Forum will meet 6-monthly (see Section 12.3)
- An annual learning event will take place to consider a shared theme emerging from learning reviews from all 3 areas. The first of these events will include the follow-up to the Police-led event on missing young people held in October 2019 and is scheduled to take place in spring 2020.
## Appendix 1 – Training and development activity October 2018-October 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/event</th>
<th>Target group(s)</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>No of attendees</th>
<th>Agencies represented</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| S.H.I.E.L.D.  | 1, 2            | October 2018 – October 2019 | 270 | ● Schools  
● Early Years  
● Children’s Social Care  
● LB Bexley Education & Schools Improvement  
● LB Bexley (non-Children’s Services)  
● Voluntary Sector  
● Health  
● Adult Social Care | ● Safeguarding children - background and the law  
● Child abuse awareness  
● Recognising abuse and neglect  
● If you have a concern  
● Responding to a disclosure – what you should do |
| Basic safeguarding e-learning module | | | | |
| S.H.I.E.L.D.  | 4               | 14th February 2019 & 7th March 2019 | 40 | ● Education and Schools Improvement  
● Schools  
● Children’s Social Care  
● Early Years Providers  
● Probation  
● Health  
● Voluntary Sector  
● Children and Family Centre  
● Substance Misuse Team  
● Police | ● The partnership’s Priority 1  
○ Overview and success measures  
○ Feedback from the Learning Hub and recommendations to improve multi-agency practice  
○ Feedback from the Department for Education’s Early Adopter Programme  
○ Measuring the impact of this work and next steps / your pledges  
● The partnership’s Priority 2  
○ Overview and success measures  
○ Next steps  
● Review of the safeguarding champions network  
● Update on the partnership’s current learning reviews  
● Update on the partnership’s lunchtime briefing sessions & future training opportunities  
<p>| Safeguarding Champions events | | | | |
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/event</th>
<th>Target group(s)</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>No of attendees</th>
<th>Agencies represented</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3rd October 2019 | 20 | • Early Years Providers  
• Substance Misuse Team  
• Police | • Voluntary Sector  
• Early Years Providers  
• Charity  
• Police  
• Education and Schools Improvement  
• Schools  
• Children’s Social Care  
• Health | • Children and Family Learning Circle  
○ Our success measures  
○ Year 2 priorities  
○ Our plan  
○ “Camden Conversations” & the Camden FAB story  
○ Bexley ‘Learning from Practice’ groups  
○ Group Activity  
○ Learning from Practice  
○ Current learning reviews in Bexley  
○ ‘Learning from Reviews’ event feedback  
○ Partnership Updates  
○ Year 1 priorities – Where are we now?  
○ Year 2 priorities |
| BSCB Lunchtime Multi-agency briefing sessions | 3, 4 | 21st November 2018 | 20 | • Children’s Social Care  
• Voluntary Sector  
• Health  
• Education and Schools Improvement  
• Schools | New Partnership arrangements |
| 18th December 2018 | 7 | • Voluntary Sector  
• Schools  
• College  
• Children’s Social Care  
• Probation | New Partnership arrangements |
| 24th April 2019 | 4 | • Children’s Social Care  
• Health  
• Schools | Overview of the safeguarding partnership arrangements |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/event</th>
<th>Target group(s)</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>No of attendees</th>
<th>Agencies represented</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29th May 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>29th May 2019</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Health • Schools • Education and Schools Improvement • Community Safety • Community Partnership • College</td>
<td>Working Together 2018 statutory guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th June 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>26th June 2018</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Community Safety • Schools • Health • Early Years Providers</td>
<td>Effective support document and levels of support and need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th July 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>24th July 2019</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Health • Schools</td>
<td>Attending core groups and case conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th September 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>25th September 2019</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>• Health • Education and Schools Improvement • Schools • Children’s Services • College</td>
<td>Introduction to Signs of Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd October 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>23rd October 2019</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>• Education and Schools Improvement • Schools • Children’s Services • Community Safety • Substance Misuse • Police</td>
<td>Overview of the safeguarding partnership arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masterclass on Fabricated Induced Illness</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>7th November 2018</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>• Voluntary Sector • Police</td>
<td>• Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) A Wider View and an Alternative Approach – presentation by Dr Danya Glaser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity/event</td>
<td>Target group(s)</td>
<td>Date(s)</td>
<td>No of attendees</td>
<td>Agencies represented</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masterclass on Contextual Safeguarding</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November 2018 &amp; 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May 2019</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Early Years/Children’s Centres, Health, Children’s Social Care, Community Safety Services, Schools, Voluntary Sector, Legal, Youth and inclusion, Education Welfare Service, Children with Disabilities</td>
<td>The duty of all professionals coming into contact with children and their families where there are suspicions of fabricated or induced illness, Identification of worries, issues and questions, What is FII? How to respond effectively?, Preparing for court, Presentation from Adult Psychologist, The response from Social Services, Case studies – group work, Conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Abuse Masterclass on Engaging with Men who Abuse</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; October 2018</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Children’s Centres / Early Years, Community Safety, Health</td>
<td>Developing and practicing ways of engaging with abusive men, Understanding the motives and strategies that abusive men use in relationships, Understanding how workers can help children and victims live more safely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity/event</td>
<td>Target group(s)</td>
<td>Date(s)</td>
<td>No of attendees</td>
<td>Agencies represented</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Abuse Masterclass on DASH</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>17th June 2019</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Education and Schools Improvement, Health, Children’s Social Care, Voluntary Sector, Housing, Early Years Providers, Schools, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector, Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Recognise the prevalence of domestic abuse and where it occurs, To develop your existing skills and knowledge in relation to domestic abuse and risk assessment, which will support you to identify abuse and respond to it accordingly, Describe the typologies and characteristics of those perpetrating domestic abuse, Identify the impacts of domestic abuse on those experiencing it within the family, and why victims remain in abusive relationships, Explore the Stages of Change and how it might impact on victim’s response to services, Explain how to ask questions about domestic abuse and the importance of timely risk assessment, Review the DASH risk identification checklist, how and when it should be completed and how to respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Abuse Masterclass on Routine Enquiry</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>28th June 2019</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Schools, Education and Schools Improvement, Children’s Social Care, Adult Social Care</td>
<td>Definition of domestic abuse, Prevalence, Stereo Types, Different Types of Abuse, Routine (safe) Enquiry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Domestic Abuse Masterclass on Routine Enquiry**

- **Date:** 28th June 2019
- **Attendees:** 21
- **Agencies Represented:** Schools, Education and Schools Improvement, Children’s Social Care, Adult Social Care
- **Content:** Definition of domestic abuse, Prevalence, Stereo Types, Different Types of Abuse, Routine (safe) Enquiry
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/event</th>
<th>Target group(s)</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>No of attendees</th>
<th>Agencies represented</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
| System Learning Event for Year 1 Priorities of the Learning Hub | 3, 4 | 29th January 2019 | 115 | • Health  
• Housing  
• Early Years Providers | • Signposting / Resources  
• Priority 1 To reduce the number of children and young people who are missing and are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation  
• Feedback from the Learning Hub and recommendations to improve multi-agency practice  
• Presentation by Missing People  
• Panel discussion  
• Feedback from the Department for Education’s Early Adopter Programme  
• Measuring the impact of this work and next steps / your pledges  
• Updates from the partnership  
• Priority 2 Respond effectively to the mental ill health of parents so they are supported to give their children the best start  
• Launching the priority – overview and success measures  
• Presentation by Dr. Susan Pawlby (King’s College London, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience) |
| System Learning Event for Year 1 Priorities of the Learning Hub | 3, 4 | 29th April 2019 | 115 | • Children’s Services  
• Children’s Social Care  
• Early Years Providers  
• Education and Schools Improvement  
• Emergency Services (non police)  
• Health  
• Police  
• Schools  
• Voluntary Sector | • Introduction to Restorative practice  
• Learning Priority 3  
• Recommendations from Priority 2 (parental mental health)  
• A parent’s perspective  
• Overview of Oxleas Perinatal Mental Health Service |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/event</th>
<th>Target group(s)</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>No of attendees</th>
<th>Agencies represented</th>
<th>Content</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Hub Workshops for Priority 3</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>8th July 2019</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>- Children’s Social Care</td>
<td>• Revisiting the scope of priority 3</td>
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<td>- Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>• Workshop plans – table discussions to review each of the issues identified</td>
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<td>- Schools</td>
<td>• Teaching input on restorative practice from Mark Finnis – video</td>
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<td>- Health</td>
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<td>- Early Years Providers</td>
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<td>- Education and Schools Improvement</td>
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<td>- Voluntary Sector</td>
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<td>- CAMHS</td>
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<td>- Police</td>
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<td>- Youth Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning from Reviews event</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>13th September 2019</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>- Children’s Social Care</td>
<td>• Learning from families</td>
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<td>- Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>• National and local learning reviews</td>
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<td>- Adult Social Care</td>
<td>• Key themes emerging from reviews</td>
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<td>- Health</td>
<td>• Restorative practice introduction &amp; group exercises</td>
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<td>- Education and Schools Improvement</td>
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<td>- Police</td>
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<td>- Early Years Providers</td>
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<td>- Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bexley SHIELD Partnership Conference</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>14th October 2019</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>- Health</td>
<td>• Bexley SHIELD – the story so far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- Education and Schools Improvement</td>
<td>• Highlights from Priorities 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
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<td>- Children’s Services</td>
<td>• A talk from Dr Danya Glaser on Fabricated Induced Illness</td>
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<td>- Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>• Year 2 priorities</td>
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<td>- Police</td>
<td>• Children and Family Learning Circle</td>
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<td>- Early Years Providers</td>
<td>• Signs of Safety by Barry Tilzey</td>
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<td>- MASH</td>
<td>• Restorative activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs of Safety for Partners event</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>24th October 2019</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>- Children’s Social Care</td>
<td>• What is Signs of Safety?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Community Safety</td>
<td>• How can it be used at work?</td>
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<td>- Early Years Provider</td>
<td>• What to do if you are worried about a child or young person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity/event</td>
<td>Target group(s)</td>
<td>Date(s)</td>
<td>No of attendees</td>
<td>Agencies represented</td>
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<td>Education and Schools Improvement</td>
<td>o Safeguarding Leads</td>
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<td>Health</td>
<td>o Working Together</td>
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<td>Probation Services</td>
<td>o Effective Support</td>
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<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>o Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>• How to make a referral (MASH)</td>
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<td>• How does Children’s Social Care make a decision about what to do next?</td>
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<td>• Family support network &amp; safety plans</td>
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<td>• Using Signs of Safety in Child Protection Conferences</td>
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<td>• Using Signs of Safety in Family Network Meetings</td>
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