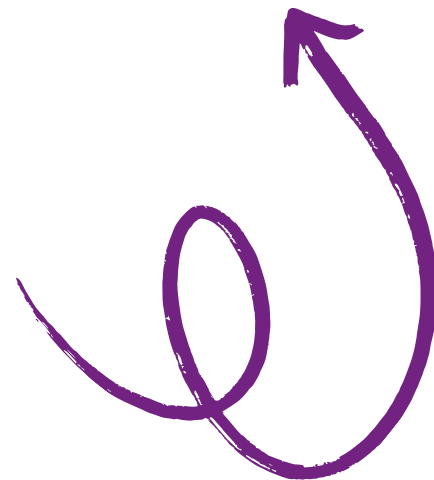




**Brent Safeguarding Adults Board**

# **Strategic Plan 2026-2028**



# Chair's Message

The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) agreed the previous strategic plan in January 2024. This strategic plan progressed over the two years to the evaluation undertaken in January 2026, as part of the Board Development Day.

The evaluation identified areas of success as well as remaining gaps. It was pleasing to see the progress made by the Board over the past two years. However, it also became clear that some aspects of the ambitions of the previous strategic plan proved a challenge to measure effectively. Therefore, I have agreed with the members that these aspects will be reviewed and moved into a BSAB 'business as usual' plan.

This document sets out an evaluation on progress of the previous strategic plan, followed by the presentation of the new strategic plan covering 2026 -2028. I have defined actions for year 1 against these new priorities, there will be a review of the strategic plan in January 2027 to check the progress of the work.

I have agreed with the members of the Board that the strategic plan needs to be tightly managed for short term work. This will aid a change in strategy depending on the national drivers emerging and the impact of national or international issues on the Brent communities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Nicola Brownjohn'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Nicola Brownjohn - Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Independent Chair**

# Understanding the purpose of the Board

## Who are the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB)?

The Board members come from the key partner agencies in Brent. Three of which, are statutory members: the Local Authority, Integrated Care Board and Police. In addition, a wide range of relevant agencies from health, care, voluntary sector and public sector also hold membership.

Work of the Board is overseen by the Independent Chair, co-ordinated by the Strategic Partnership Lead, and carried out by the members.

## What does the Safeguarding Adults Board do?

The Board members have a responsibility to ensure that their respective agencies contribute effectively to the development and delivery of:

- The Board business plan
- The strategic plan
- The annual report
- The work of the Board and its respective subgroups

All work is undertaken with an aim to continually improve the safeguarding outcomes for the Brent community.



# Care Act 2014: Compliance

Understanding the **key requirements** of the Care Act 2014 is crucial for our strategic plan, ensuring alignment with statutory responsibilities and fostering collaboration.

## **The Statutory requirements for a Safeguarding Adults Board are:**

- Assure that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and working well across all relevant agencies
- Prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- Provide timely and proportionate strategic actions when abuse or neglect is likely or has occurred

## **The Statutory duties if the Safeguarding Adults Board:**

- To publish a Strategic Plan that sets out what the board has achieved and what it aims to achieve for at least the next year
  - To publish an Annual Report detailing what the Board has achieved during the year in line with its strategic plan, and including learning from any Safeguarding Adult Reviews
- Carry out Safeguarding Adult Reviews as required

# Recap of 2024-26 Priorities

The progress of the work has been presented in the annual report for 2024-2025, and this final evaluation will be included in the annual report for 2025-2026. In January 2024, the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board agreed to focus on the following 3 strategic priorities:

## Self-Neglect

**The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board set out the ambition that ‘good’ would be a self-neglect protocol embedded across the multi-agency system, this vision included:**

- Publication of self-neglect protocol
- Dissemination of learning across the system
- Scrutiny of safeguarding data regarding self-neglect
- Multi-agency audits
- Feedback from those with lived experience of self-neglect
- Liaison with voluntary groups and agencies providing support for those who self-neglect

## Housing needs & Substance misuse

**The aim was to gain assurance that there are clear pathways in place to provide appropriate housing for those who misuse substances. Practitioners across agencies will have confidence in escalating concerns regarding the safeguarding of this cohort. This includes:**

- Feedback from those with lived experience of substance misuse
- Complete learning reviews, and disseminate learning across partner agencies
- Undertake multi-agency audits to assess impact of learning
- Monitor data regarding individuals with care and support needs who misuse substances and have housing needs
- Develop links with the Panels for Deaths through drugs and Alcohol
- Work with other strategic boards to develop more effective systems in tackling cuckooing

## Strengthening learning from SARs

**The ambition was to ensure that SARs are agreed and completed within 12 months of the referral to the Board. Recommendations and actions to improve are taken forward throughout the SAR process. This looks like:**

- Assurance of changed systems within 6 months of review completion
- Use of the SCIE quality markers to support management of the process
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities for decision making
- Feedback from families
- Sign off of report and publication process is clear
- Impact of learning can be shown throughout the Board partners and agencies
- Production of thematic action plans, linking SARs locally and nationally

# Recap of 2024-26 Priorities

## Priority 1: Self-Neglect

### What has been achieved?

The Board acknowledged the work undertaken to review and re-launch the self-neglect protocol/toolkit. It is positive that there has been training delivered and data has been scrutinised by the Performance and Audit Subgroup. There has been an increase in the referrals to the high-risk panel which can be helpful in discussing how to work with a person who appears to be self-neglecting.

### Work still needs to be taken forward and how?

#### The Board concludes that the business plan must include:

- A focus on the impact of the High-risk panel on improving outcomes for people who self-neglect. This will be led by the Performance and Audit Subgroup.
- There needs to be a system assessment of the reasons why people self-neglect, such as a result of experiencing trauma. This needs to include consideration of the levels of therapeutic support available for people who have suffered trauma.

### Where are the remaining assurance gaps?

There needs to be more assurance that the toolkit is being used by practitioners within agencies in an effective way. There has not been time to test the impact of the toolkit.

## Priority 2: Housing need & Substance misuse

### What has been achieved?

There is recognition that a considerable amount of work has been achieved within the substance misuse workstream, led by Public Health. There has been the development of a dedicated outreach team, engagement with those with lived experience and improved women's pathways. The relationship between VIA and housing has been strengthened. It is positive that there has been the development and recruitment of a housing and substance misuse worker.

The Board has led work on the development of mortality panels for those who die due to drugs or alcohol and completed two Safeguarding Adults Reviews in relation to this theme. The Board has connected with the Community Safety Team to consider cuckooing.

### Work still needs to be taken forward and how?

#### The Board concludes that the business plan must include:

A focus on how probation, mental health, drug services and housing connect to break the cycle of issues for those placed in temporary accommodation when released from prison.

### Where are the remaining assurance gaps?

There still needs to be better information sharing and understanding across the partnership on how to refer to the VIA drug service. Additionally, the partners agencies need to be more aware of the risks of emerging substances.

# Recap of 2024-26 Priorities

## Priority 3: Strengthening learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)

### What has been achieved?

The the Case Review Group (CRG) has achieved a good standard of work over the past two years. They have reduced the backlog of Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) referrals and moved the SARs which were in progress to completion. There is good evidence of thematic learning across the SARs and a constructive approach to undertaking SARs where there are similar themes to previously. Families have been included in the reviews and contact with some has continued after the publication of the SARs to show changes made since the review.

### Work still needs to be taken forward and how?

The Board concludes that the business plan must include:

- Strengthen assurance that learning is embedded throughout organisations
- Build on the work done for decision making regarding SAR referrals and formalise a rapid review format, as in the Children's Partnership. This will set timescales for agency information to be submitted.
- Publish learning briefings for SAR referrals not meeting the criteria, to share learning themes.
- Continue the connections made with Community Safety in relation to Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDRs) and share the learning through the safeguarding system.

### Where are the remaining assurance gaps?

The Board would like the Case Review subgroup to look more at learning outside of the SARs to help the key lines of enquiry for future SARs to be more focused. SAR referrals do not always lead to formal SARs, but there might still be learning. Therefore, the CRG will be asked to create thematic briefings to highlight learning from cases that have not met the criteria for a SAR. These briefings will not mention the detail of the 'case' but identify learning themes.

There needs to be improved agency responses to requests for information to the Case Review subgroup.

Not all members of the Board are aware of the links with other statutory reviews such as Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews which are led by Community Safety.

# Developing our Strategic Priorities

On 20th January 2026, Brent Safeguarding Adults Board held a workshop, where members discussed progress against the previous strategic priorities, what work still needed to be done via 'business as usual' and what issues were of most concern to them in relation to safeguarding. These discussions would go on to form a new set of Board priorities.

## **The group collectively identified the following areas of concern:**

- Suicide Prevention
- Impact of national drivers
- Professional curiosity and staff resilience
- Understanding the offers of other agencies
- Cultural capability
- Trauma informed approach
- Housing/Homelessness linked to safeguarding
- Complex needs
- Prevention/early help
- Understanding the development of the Integrated Neighbourhood Team
- Impact of the digital space on safeguarding
- Transitions

## **The group was mindful of the impact of national drivers on how the systems work for those with care and support needs, including:**

- Structural changes to the ICB
- Personnel/leadership changes
- Impact on the resources needed to safeguard those with care and support needs and to prevent harm
- Metropolitan Police Model changes
- National drivers for how Council can manage resources effectively to deliver day to day services for the population

There was a consensus that the system landscape is likely to undergo constant change creating new challenges over the coming years. Therefore, questions were posed as to how can the Board keep a clear lens on how effective safeguarding practices are in Brent.

The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board members in attendance agreed that there would no more than three new strategic priorities, along with golden threads. The strategic priorities need to be measurable and for the Board to be able to monitor progress and show the impact of the work undertaken. In light of the impact of the national drivers, it was agreed that the priorities would be set for one year initially and then will be reviewed. The golden threads identified are areas that are difficult to measure in a short time but need to be observed throughout the system.

# New Priority 1

## Safeguarding those people with complex care and support needs

There are growing levels of complexity for people with care and support needs. This can include mental health issues, housing deprivation and homelessness. Brent has developed a high-risk panel in recognition that people with complex needs have not always been identified as being abused. However, these are people about whom there will be statutory safeguarding concerns if agencies do not collaborate to find a way of working alongside the person to enable them to live safely.

### Part A - Mental health and suicide

#### What needs to improve in the system?

There are currently between 15-20 suicides a year in Brent, yet there is no clear system wide suicide prevention strategy and plan, no consistent understanding of the causes of suicide occurring in Brent, or a shared understanding of what support was offered to those who took their own lives. The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board is not assured that all professionals know how to respond when someone is visibly struggling to cope.

#### Actions for 2026-27

##### Action 1

The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board expects the multi-agency partnership to develop a Suicide Prevention Strategy and Plan, will seek assurance about the work being done to prevent suicides and to contribute to reducing these numbers.

##### Action 2

The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board will promote suicide awareness training for the workforce and agencies will be required to report on the impact of the training in supporting staff to talk to people with suicidal intent who are struggling to cope

#### Who will lead this work?

Public Health will lead on this and report to the Board. The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board team will liaise with the Coroner on learning from inquests into suicides.

# New Priority 1

## Safeguarding those people with complex care and support needs

### Part B - Homelessness linked to safeguarding

In May 2024, there was a Ministerial letter to Safeguarding Adults Boards asking for them to monitor homelessness with a link to safeguarding. The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board identified a lead member for homelessness and gained awareness of the type of issues affecting those who find themselves homeless. However, the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board consider that there remains insufficient links between housing and safeguarding. There are concerns that there is silo working in the system.

#### What needs to improve in the system?

There needs to be a better understanding of housing and homelessness issues across Brent and ways to find a more flexible approach to working with people who are homeless.

#### Actions for 2026-27

##### Action 1

The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board will gain assurance through monitoring the deaths of those living on the streets, through the mortality panel report.

##### Who will lead this work?

This will be led by Anita Silberbauer, Crisis, who is the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board lead for homelessness. There will need to be joint working by: JSNA (Public health), ASC, Housing, Health, Neighbourhood Policing & the Voluntary sector

The expectation is that the agencies will work together in a task and finish group to take this forward and then present back to the Board.

##### Action 2

The Brent Safeguarding Adults Board will be informed by the Built for zero work on how street homelessness is being reduced

# New Priority 2

## Prevention of harm of those with care and support needs

### What needs to improve in the system?

For this priority, the focus is on those people who would not meet the criteria for a section 42 enquiry, but where there are some growing concerns that they are at risk of harm. This might be due to their own actions, such as self-neglect or hoarding, or from the actions by others, through exploitation in the community or by the organisations supposed to help them.

### Actions for 2026-27

#### Action 1

For the all relevant member organisations to provide assurance on how they work with people with care and support needs to undertake risk assessments and safety planning to prevent harm

#### Action 2

For members to present to the Board, how they provide a personalised, flexible approach to people with care and support needs who seem to be difficult to reach

#### Action 3

For the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board to commission a multi-agency audit of s42 referrals for people in their own homes to explore what interventions are taken for those who do not meet the criteria for a s42.

### Who will lead this work?

This will be led through the Performance and Audit subgroup.

# Golden Threads of our Strategic Plans

The strategic plan for 2024-26 included two golden threads:

## Community engagement

The BSAB Chair led a project during 2025 to look at how the Board can engage with the community more effectively. This work was informative and culminated in a workshop for the BSAB in November 2025 led by the Brent Co-Production Team.

It was agreed that a formalised approach needs to be embedded into the Board. Therefore, this will be taken forward as a continuing golden thread in the strategic plan for 2026-2028.

## Transitional safeguarding

Work has been ongoing in collaboration with the Safeguarding Children's Partnership. There is a clear plan for focusing on three cohorts: care experienced, risk of exploitation, and those with additional needs. Focus groups have been held and the next stage of this work will be conducted through a discretionary, thematic, Safeguarding Adults Review.

## Moving forward

The following **3 golden threads** will drive the focus of the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board over the next two years. The plan sets out how the work will be done.





# Golden Thread 1

## Community engagement

### Why is this important?

This encompasses cultural capability across the system. There is a need for the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board to gain assurance that the Brent communities have trusting relationships with the services provided to safeguard those with care and support needs.

A group will be established that will give the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board community perspectives.

### Goals for Year 1:

Link with the ASC Co-Production group to help to start up the group

Allocate someone to lead on the group

Work with the Co-Production team to invite participants

For the group to give their perspective on the strategic priorities

Include informal carers experience

Include advocacy – is it being used as per the Care Act 2014



# Golden Thread 2

## Digital world

### Why is this important?

**It is recognised that the digital world is advancing rapidly. It can be extremely helpful in connecting the public to services, and in how the services manage their work. However, this has the risk of excluding those who cannot use computers, android phones, artificial intelligence.**

### Goals for Year 1:

All members will provide the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board assurance that there are arrangements in place to ensure that those who do not use the digital world are not excluded from gaining access to services to meet their care and support needs.

For the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board to be informed, by all members about how artificial intelligence (AI) is being applied used in safeguarding practice.

For the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board, in collaboration with partner agencies, to raise awareness across the system about the risks of online abuse and exploitation for those with care and support needs.



# Golden Thread 3

## Effective workforce for the Brent population

### Why is this important?

It is acknowledged that the good safeguarding needs an effective workforce across the system, from senior leaders to those Practitioners working directly with people with care and support needs.

In recent years, the recruitment and retention of staff working across both health and social care has been a national challenge.

All member agencies, to provide the Board with **reports on staff recruitment & retention, highlighting any risks to providing an effective service to those with care & support needs.** This is to include commissioned care providers.

### Goals for Year 1

All member agencies to keep the Board informed about **successful workforce development initiatives and structural adjustments.**

This should detail how any changes will continue **to ensure that quality services** for adults with care and support needs are adequately delivered.